A scenic sunset over a body of water with a wooden canoe in the foreground. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm glow over the scene. The canoe's interior is visible, showing a woven mat and wooden ribs. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent white band across the middle of the image.

*Strengthening our Nation through  
community success - Mawi'lukutik*

Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw  
Nation Economic  
Development Strategy





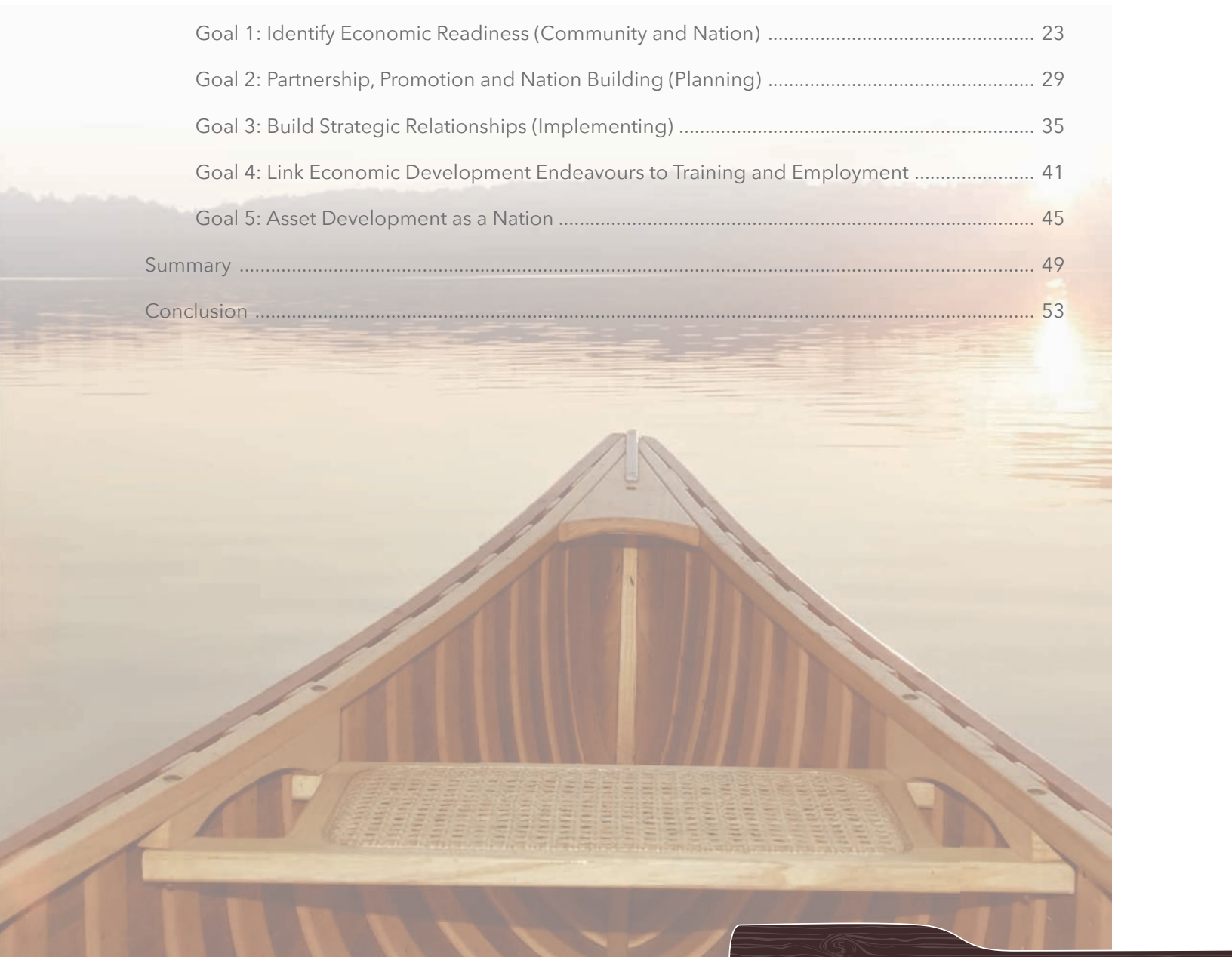
*Through a Nationhood approach to long-term economic and social well-being that is grounded in Mikmaq culture and language, and connected to our land and resources, the Nova Scotia Mikmaq Nation is vibrant and prosperous.*



# CONTENTS

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P'jilasi .....	01
Executive Summary .....	03
Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Nation .....	07
Our Vision .....	13
Priorities .....	15
Goals and Objectives .....	17
Next Steps For Implementation .....	19
Goal 1: Identify Economic Readiness (Community and Nation) .....	23
Goal 2: Partnership, Promotion and Nation Building (Planning) .....	29
Goal 3: Build Strategic Relationships (Implementing) .....	35
Goal 4: Link Economic Development Endeavours to Training and Employment .....	41
Goal 5: Asset Development as a Nation .....	45
Summary .....	49
Conclusion .....	53







# P'JILASI

On *Mi'kmaq Treaty Day*, October 1, 2008, the 13 First Nations in Nova Scotia (herein referred to as the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Nation) proclaimed and asserted Mi'kmaq Nationhood, one voice, one people over its traditional lands and waters working towards the betterment of the overall well-being and quality of life for our people. As a Mi'kmaw Nation we are commonly bound together by our *culture, traditions, values, and language*, strengthened and empowered by our commitment towards Nationhood.

In recognition of the importance of this proclamation and in asserting a Nationhood approach to economic development we, as the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia, have developed the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Economic Development Strategy. This Strategy is built on the principles of our Seven Sacred Teachings, a foundation for the Aboriginal and Mi'kmaq way of life<sup>1</sup> rooted and built around the seven natural laws, or sacred teachings. Each teaching honours one of the basic virtues intrinsic to a full and healthy life.<sup>2</sup>



## LOVE

- Good governance practices and law
- Healthy relationships, communities and Nation
- Visionary



## WISDOM

- Understanding the benefits of working as a Nation
- Grow and explore new avenues
- Sustain a healthy Nation through working together as one



## RESPECT

- Caretakers of the Nation
- Build mutually beneficial relationships and partnerships
- Create a successful and sustainable Nation



## HUMILITY

- Equality
- Strength and perseverance
- Respect for the Nation



## COURAGE

- Understanding boundaries
- Protectors of the Nation
- Challenge to broach new horizons



## TRUTH

- Promoting change
- Preserving culture and language
- Preserving consistent laws and focus



## HONESTY

- Power and control
- Ownership and responsibility
- Be true to the Mi'kmaw spirit, teachings and values

Through the celebration and support of the successes of our communities, building on our strengths to work together as a Nation we, the Mi'kmaw people of Nova Scotia, are *"Setting a Pathway to Prosperity"* for our communities, our Nation, our home.

1 - Dorene Bernard, IRS Legacy Coordinator, Mi'kmawey Debert Cultural Centre Project

2 - The Sharing Circle: [http://www.thesharingcircle.com/sacred\\_teachings.html](http://www.thesharingcircle.com/sacred_teachings.html), accessed July 2013







# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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In preparation for the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Nation Economic Development Strategy (herein referred to as the Strategy), an Economic Base Study was completed to provide background, input and guidance for the Strategy. The Economic Base Study contains extensive best practice and industry research, and incorporates information gathered from a number of engagement sessions. As part of this engagement, a number of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Chiefs, Nova Scotia Aboriginal and Mi'kmaw Organization Executive Directors and key staff members were interviewed to collect thoughts and opinions for the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Nation's (herein referred to as the Nation) Strategy and potential next steps to continue to strengthen and build the Nation.

The Economic Base Study is a background document for the Strategy and its goal is to provide an overview of existing support in the Nation and offer details that communities and organizations can use to create their own strategies to work toward a Nation driven approach to economic development. It is also intended to identify gaps within communities, Aboriginal and Mi'kmaq support organizations and in the Nation, as a whole. In addition it provides an analysis of what can be completed to continue the success of the Nation.

Moving forward, it is intended that the Economic Base Study be utilized as a resource document to provide additional context for the Strategy, as required, and it will provide additional information for a variety of audiences.

The Strategy is focused on the five-year period, 2014-2019; however, the achievements made during this time will provide continued success beyond that timeframe and will continue to build the strength of the Nation.

Five priorities with associated goals and objectives were established for this Strategy. The purpose of the priorities is to complement the Vision and direct all activities, which are conducted as part of the Strategy. The goals and objectives equip the Strategy with "action-able" elements to allow for the progress of the Strategy to be measured on an ongoing basis.

Interviews and best practice research completed in the Economic Base Study identified six common gaps throughout the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Nation which are potential barriers to economic development. Gaps include: land and infrastructure, economic development funding, education and skill development, governance structure and leadership and Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq business support.



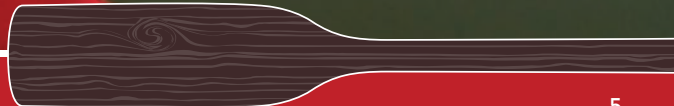




To close the gaps, partnership development is key to the Nation's success; however, levels of economic readiness, of both the individual communities and the Nation as a whole, must be determined prior to partnership development. The Nation must first establish its capacity in terms of the initial baseline analysis, economic development capacity and community economic development capacity, as this capacity will influence the Nation's ability to form new partnerships. Planning is necessary when clearly outlining the Nation's needs in terms of partnerships, and communication is essential in representing the "state of the Nation" to potential partners. Planning, communication, business development, training and employment will ensure that partnerships align, and that all of the recommended next steps are taken to achieve the Nation's priorities, goals and objectives.

Buy-in is needed for the Nation to achieve its goals and success is only possible when all stakeholders work together. Success will come when everyone works toward the same goals and objectives.











# NOVA SCOTIA MI'KMAW NATION

Within the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Nation there are 13 Mi'kmaq communities and 34 reserve locations. In addition, there are over 800 sites of early Mi'kmaq occupation scattered across the province, including primary locations at Blomidon, Debert, Kejimikujik and the Mersey River system.<sup>3</sup> The Nation holds approximately 35,500 acres of reserve land,<sup>4,5</sup> which are tracts of land that have been set aside for First Nation and Aboriginal communities in Canada by the Government of Canada and are held in trust for the Bands by the Crown.<sup>6</sup>

Although the land appears to be plentiful, not all locations are ideal for economic or other development due to various challenges such as geographic location and accessibility. In addition to existing reserve land, a number of Mi'kmaq communities have been purchasing land in various locations in Nova Scotia [and beyond] as part of economic development activities. The purpose is to take advantage of potential opportunities and planning, which may not have been available previously. In addition, this land may or may not be converted into reserve land.

The Aboriginal population is the fastest growing and youngest population group in Canada. Based on the 2006 census data, the Aboriginal population of Nova Scotia was 24,175, which was 42 percent higher than in 2001. This increase was repeated in 2011 with approximately 33,845 Aboriginal people living in Nova Scotia<sup>7</sup> and a growing portion of the Aboriginal population resides in Halifax (5,320).<sup>8</sup>

*42.6% of the Aboriginal population is under the age of 25 compared to 28% of Nova Scotia, as a whole. This is a great opportunity for the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Nation to promote success through one of the Nation's most valuable assets - our people!*

3 - The Mi'kmaq: <http://www.novascotia.com/en/home/discovernovascotia/history/routestoyourroots/settlementpatterns/themikmaq.aspx>, accessed July 2013

4 - The Mi'kmaq: <http://www.novascotia.com/en/home/discovernovascotia/history/routestoyourroots/settlementpatterns/themikmaq.aspx>, accessed July 2013

5 - Statistics Canada. 2007. Nova Scotia Aboriginal Population Profile. 2006 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 92-594-XWE. Ottawa. Released January 15, 2008. <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/prof/92-594/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=BAND&Code1=12630005&Geo2=PR&Code2=12&Data=Count&SearchText=Acadia&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=All&GeoLevel=PR&GeoCode=126300-05>, accessed July 2013

6 - University of British Columbia: <http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/?id=8356>, accessed July 2013

7 - Of the 33,843 Aboriginal people in Nova Scotia, 21,893 identified themselves as Mi'kmaq: <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/fogs-spg/Pages/FOG.cfm?lang=E&level=2&GeoCode=12>, accessed July 2013

8 - Nova Scotia Office of Aboriginal Affairs: Facts Sheets and Additional Information: <http://www.gov.ns.ca/abor/aboriginal-people/demographics/>, accessed July 2013



Of the Aboriginal population, there were 15,695 Mi'kmaq residing both on and off reserve in Nova Scotia in 2012, both within the reserves held by the 13 communities and in various locations.<sup>9</sup> The Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq communities are growing at a faster rate than the Nova Scotia average.

One of the most important cultural aspects of the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Nation is the Mi'kmaq language. The Mi'kmaq language stems from the Algonquian linguistic family, and is related to other Algonquian languages such as Cree, Delaware and Ojibway.

Until recently, the Mi'kmaq language was becoming endangered, largely due to governmental policies and residential schools that discouraged the use of these languages in the last century. However, in recent years, there has been a revival of the language, and classes are now offered in high schools and universities as well as in elementary schools located within some communities. It is estimated that approximately one-third of the Mi'kmaq population is able to speak or write in the Mi'kmaq language.<sup>10</sup>

There are a number of Aboriginal and Mi'kmaq organizations that support the development of Mi'kmaq communities in Nova Scotia in a variety of ways, which include but are not limited to: economic development, governance and advocacy, education and training, and social programming.

## Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Nation - Working Together - One Nation

Creating success for the Nation and for Nova Scotia is only possible when all stakeholders work together. Success will come when everyone works toward the same goals and objectives and through collaboration and partnership.

Building a Nation cannot be completed in isolation and there are many players and partners that are essential to its success. It is also critical to adjust the mindset of working in collaboration versus in competition.



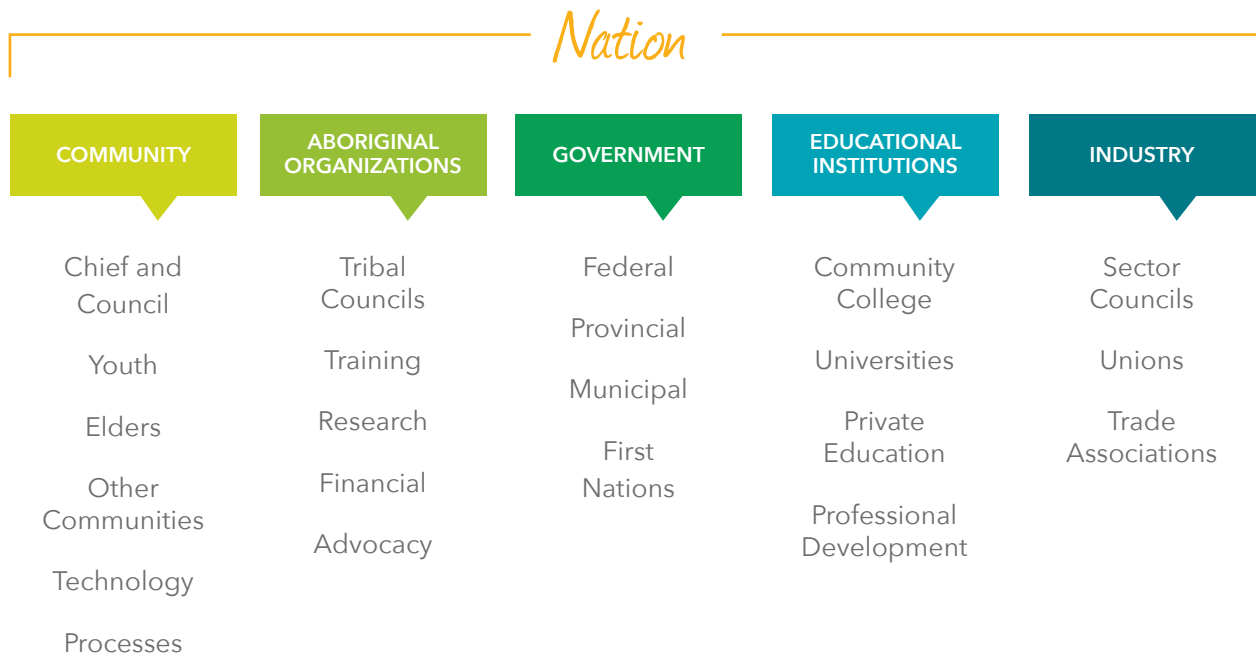
9 - Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) Indian Registry System (IRS), "Indian Register Population affiliated with Mi'kmaq by Gender and Residency", December 31, 2012.: [http://www.gov.ns.ca/abor/docs/demographics/NS\\_RegisteredPopulation\\_31Dec2012.pdf](http://www.gov.ns.ca/abor/docs/demographics/NS_RegisteredPopulation_31Dec2012.pdf), accessed July 2013

10 - Mi'kmaq Resource Guide 4th Edition



Each community and organization within the Nation currently operates under its own set of priorities and goals; however, most are very similar. Although similar, each community operates within its own timelines, structure and operational capacity based on need, placement along the prosperity path and tools which it has or requires. This has created a perceived silo approach to economic development.

The following is a current example of how each is operating under the nation:



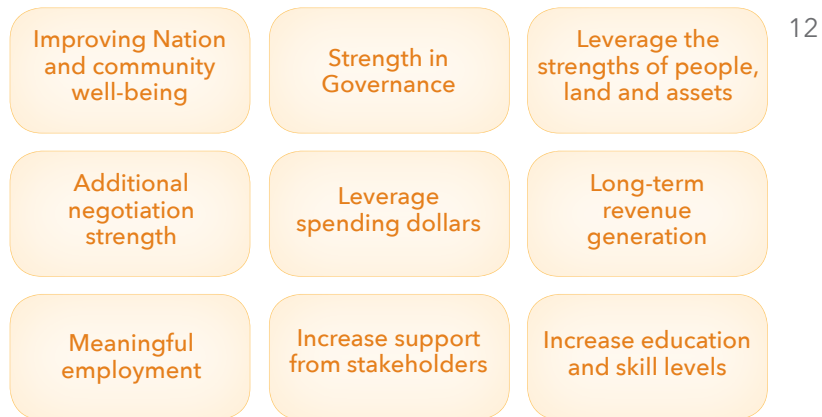
*When everyone feeds into the Nation together, there is success.*

- Economic Base Study

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Communities that work together as one Nation with a collective voice have increased economic opportunity, capacity and success. Nations that are built and have strong economic standing, employment, social well-being and culture, benefit in many ways and this will be a similar output for the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Nation.<sup>11</sup>

**KEY MESSAGES OF APPROACHING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AS A NATION INCLUDE:**



Nationhood and the nation-building approach understands that nations are challenged not only with improving community life, but with preserving the culture and well-being of communities. Building a solid plan to work through the challenges will help to build a stable foundation for the Nation.

*Working as a Nation is a contributing factor to creating a successful Nova Scotia for all. Nova Scotia could lead the way and be a shining star in Canada and the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Nation could be an economic benchmark for success.*

- Economic Base Study

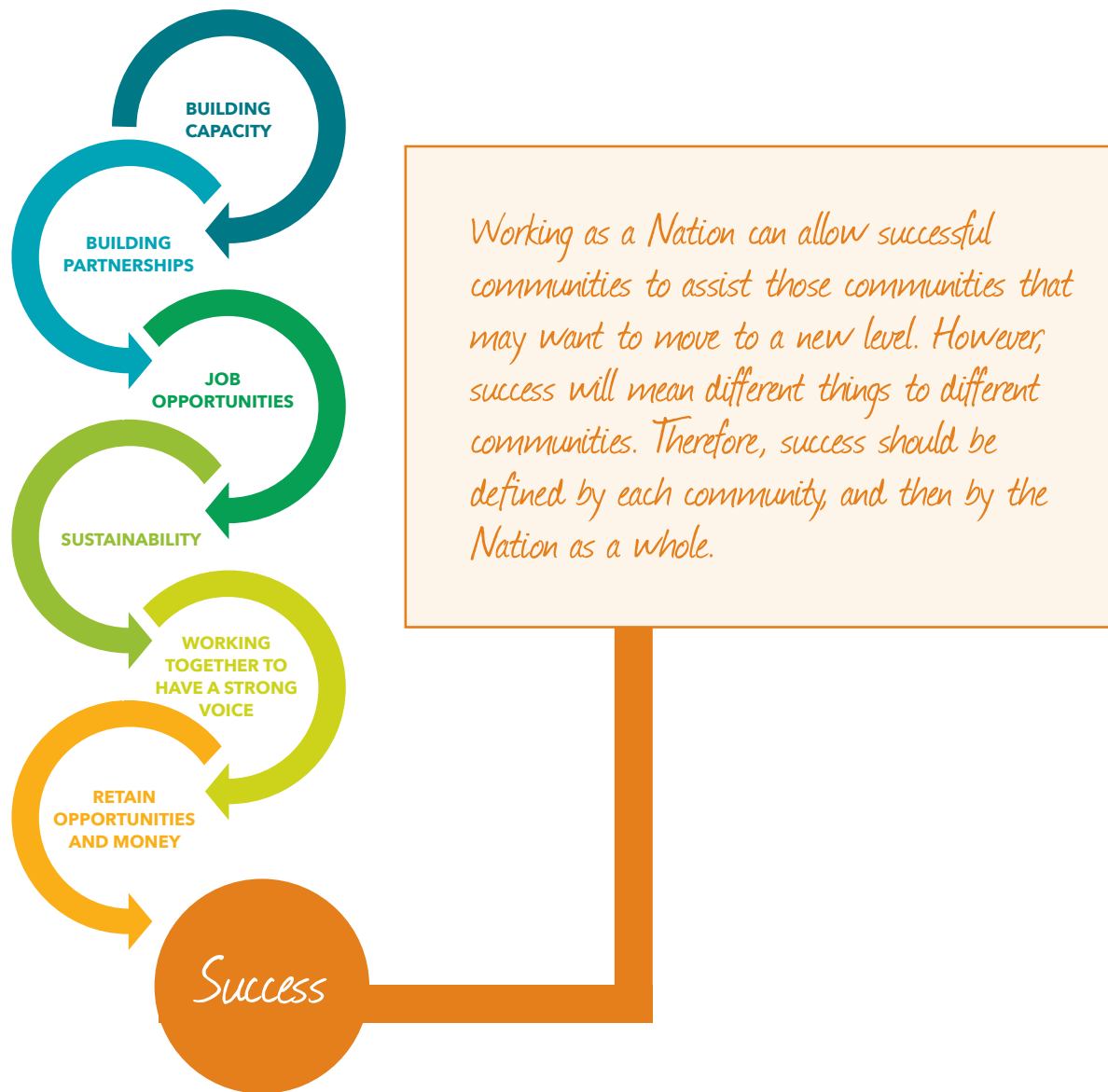
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11 - Western Economic Diversification Canada: Community Economic Development: What is community economic development?: <http://www.wd.gc.ca/eng/106.asp>, accessed, July 2013

12 - Western Economic Diversification Canada: Community Economic Development: What is community economic development?: <http://www.wd.gc.ca/eng/106.asp>, accessed July 2013



It was determined, through interviews completed with a number of Nova Scotia Chiefs and Executive Directors (refer to Economic Base Study) that success for the Nation can mean different things. A sample of success factors provided include:<sup>13</sup>



13 - Telephone interviews completed with Nova Scotia Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Nation Chiefs and Executive Directors of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Organizations in June and July 2013









# OUR VISION

*Through a Nationhood approach to long-term economic and social well-being that is grounded in Mikmaq culture and language, and connected to our land and resources, the Nova Scotia Mikmaq Nation is vibrant and prosperous.*

## THIS STRATEGY IS GUIDED BY THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES:



**Respect** the uniqueness of each community, sharing and celebrating successes.



**Foster** strong leadership and accountability.



**Embrace** Nationhood through the collective development of opportunities and strategic partnerships.



**Honour** the Seven Sacred Teachings, and be respectful to the culture, language, lands and resources.



**Enhance** community economic readiness and strengthen capacity.







# PRIORITIES

Five priorities were established for this strategy. The purpose of the priorities is to complement the Vision and direct all activities, which are conducted as part of the Strategy.

## CAPACITY

Assess and identify the economic readiness and capability of each community and the Nation to develop, implement and manage economic development opportunities. Working with communities to identify what success means to each and to create action plans in order to increase capacity. Establishing strong operational plans and practices, transparency in decisions and direction, accountability and sound financial management will create a path to success.

## PLANNING

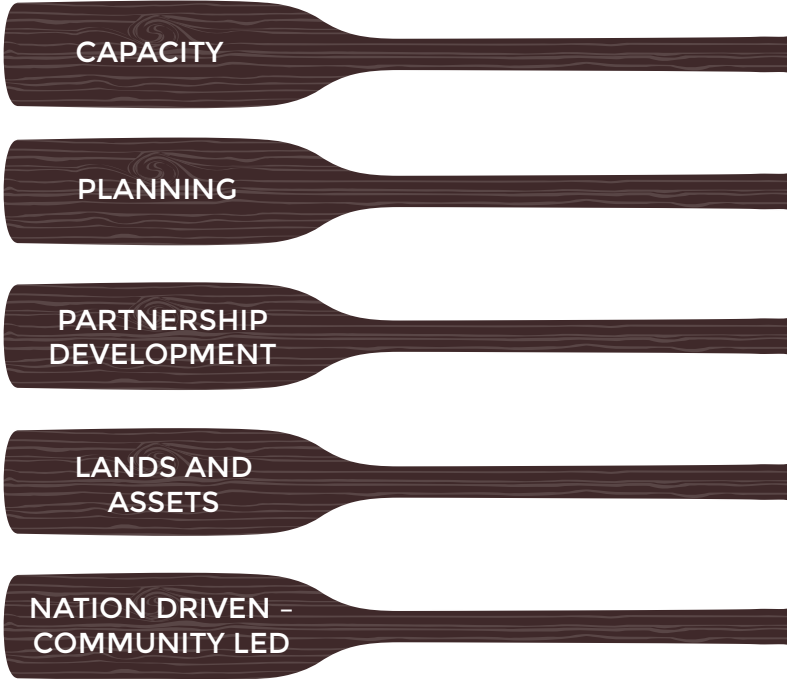
Develop and implement a plan to generate and build an understanding of the benefit of working as a Nation, develop meaningful and mutually beneficial partnerships, and lay the groundwork to develop the proper partnerships and business development opportunities for long-term benefit.

## PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Seize opportunities and create meaningful and beneficial partnerships through; new business development and diversification, business agreements, community revenue and development, skills and capacity, meaningful employment and social well-being within the Nation.

## LANDS AND ASSETS

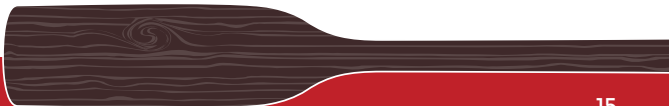
Strive to ensure the Nation continues to invest in and preserve the Mi'kmaw culture, language and connection to the land and its resources. Develop the Nation's people to increase skills



and employment while developing strong leaders and promoting life-long and cultural learning is essential to reach the Nation's goals. In addition, through the further expansion and development of land and other physical assets, the Nation will be provided with the avenues and additional tools which will be leveraged for economic development opportunities.

## NATION DRIVEN - COMMUNITY LED

Owning the future by establishing clarified roles and responsibilities between communities, the Nation and support organizations and by revitalizing a culture of participation through prosperous individuals, communities and the Nation.







# GOALS & OBJECTIVES

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The following are the goals and associated objectives for the Strategy. The objectives provide the Strategy with the “action-able” elements required to achieve each goal and will allow for the progress of the Strategy to be measured on an ongoing basis.

## ● **GOAL 1: IDENTIFY ECONOMIC READINESS (COMMUNITY AND NATION)**

Identify baseline of readiness, gaps and actions in communities, support organizations and the Nation

## ● **GOAL 2: PARTNERSHIP, PROMOTION AND NATION BUILDING (PLANNING)**

Develop a plan and message to generate and build an understanding of the benefits of working as a Nation

Evaluate and understand the benefits of partnerships

Communicate and promote the message in order to help build relationships

Create a framework and support structures for developing meaningful partnerships in preparation for partnership development

Create a plan for business development

## ● **GOAL 3: BUILD STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIPS (IMPLEMENTING)**

Promote messages to generate and build an understanding of the benefits of working as a Nation and communicate the link between community and the Nation (internally in each community and the Nation and externally to potential partners)

Generate new businesses and diversification opportunities

Create relationships and/or partnerships

## ● **GOAL 4: LINK ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ENDEAVOURS TO TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT**

Create relationships with employers, industry, and training providers

Create a plan to assist with the social aspects of economic transition

Create Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw skills and partnership agreements

Develop mentorship programs and support

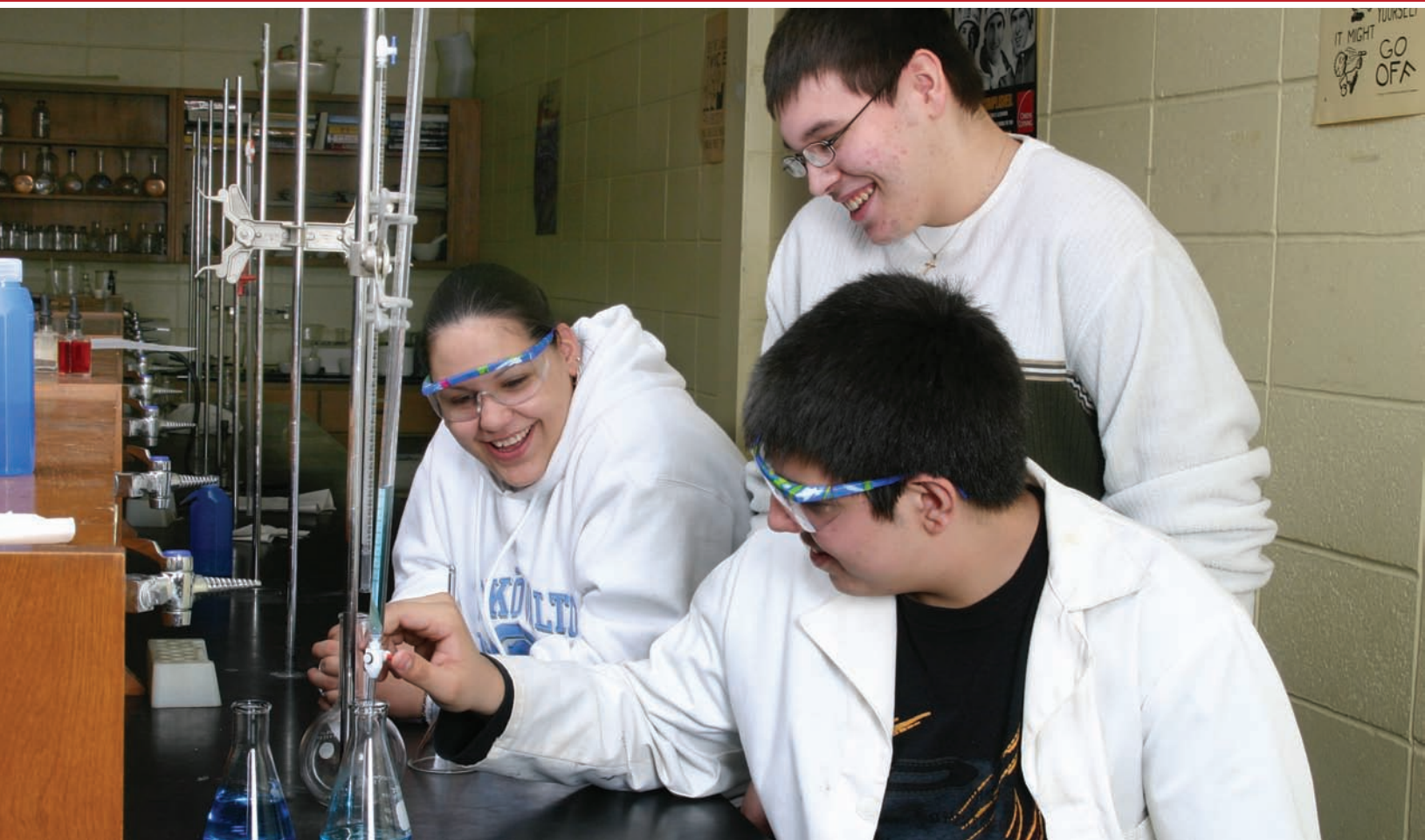
Develop meaningful partnerships with other companies, departments and support organizations

## ● **GOAL 5: ASSET DEVELOPMENT AS A NATION**

Develop people (human resources)

Develop land and physical assets





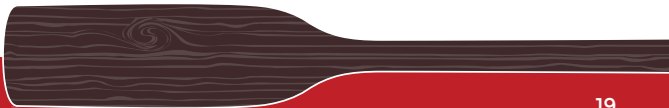


# NEXT STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Through interviews and best practice research completed in the Economic Base Study, six areas of opportunity were identified as common gaps throughout the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Nation. The gaps are potential barriers to economic development and pose as challenges to the Nation. Such gaps include:



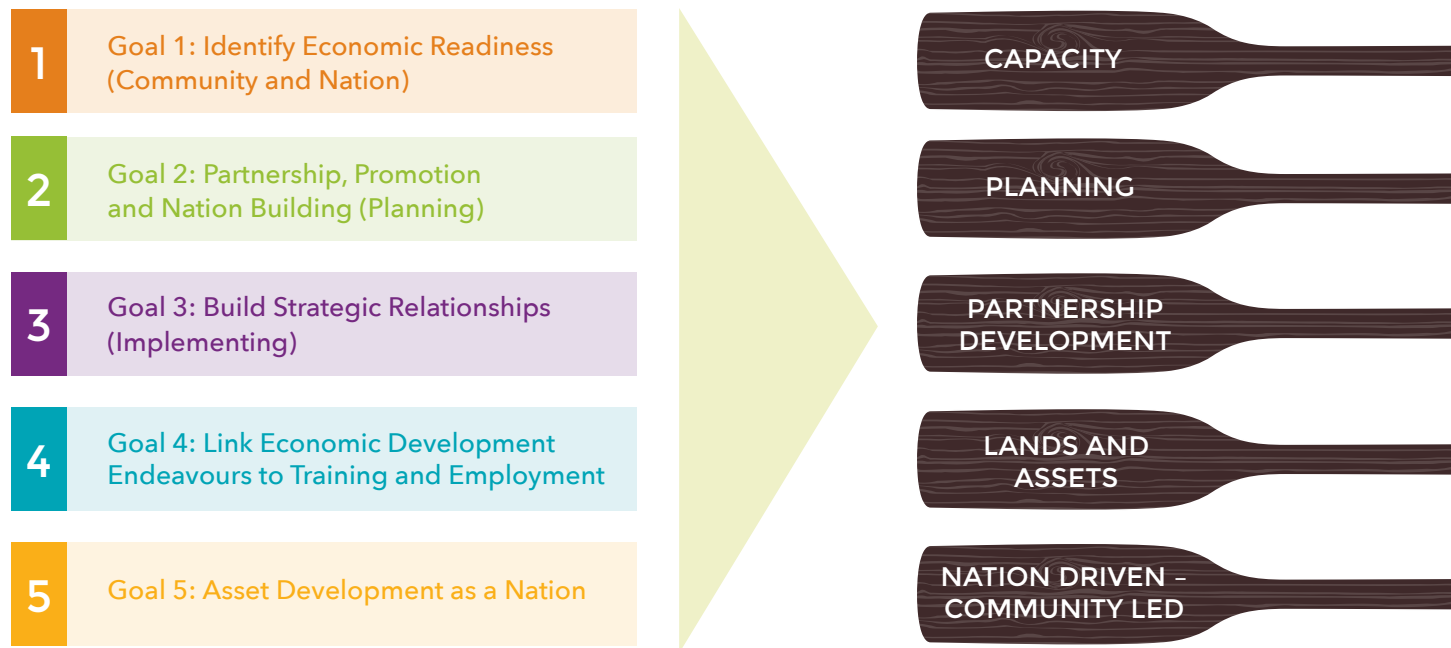
On the following page, is a summary of the gaps as related to the Nation. It is through the analysis of these gaps that the next steps to implement the strategy have been developed. Each of the next steps will help to close the gaps and achieve the priorities, goals and objectives of the Strategy.



GAP	SUMMARY ANALYSIS
<p><b>Land and Infrastructure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Viable land</li> <li>• Fee simple vs. addition to reserve process</li> <li>• Accessible roads</li> <li>• Reliable tele communications</li> <li>• Adequate meeting and training space</li> <li>• Sufficient buildings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Much of the current reserve land is not optimal for economic or other development opportunities due to current locations and conditions</li> <li>• Process of converting land to reserve is lengthy and can stall economic development activity by a decade or more</li> <li>• Due to rural and remote areas of some of the communities, accessible roads and telecommunications are a challenge</li> <li>• Availability of buildings vary across communities in that some communities do not have enough buildings or space, while in others, it is the age and/or condition of the buildings that creates challenges for economic development and training</li> </ul>
<p><b>Economic Development Funding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mainstream financial institutions</li> <li>• Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq organizations</li> <li>• Operating subsidies</li> <li>• Commercial funding</li> <li>• Government funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community members often do not possess the assets required in order to obtain funding for start-up businesses from mainstream financial and commercial institutions</li> <li>• Economic development funding is the least supported initiative of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq support organizations</li> <li>• Many Federal government programs and operating subsidies are offered on a short-term project basis, rather than the multi-year funding that is required to complete larger scale initiatives</li> </ul>
<p><b>Education and Skills Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literacy, culture and personal development skills</li> <li>• Personal financial knowledge</li> <li>• Business and leadership training</li> <li>• Employment specific training</li> <li>• Linkage with partners and industry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower education and employment levels</li> <li>• Need for training in literacy, culture, personal development skills, personal finance, business and leadership</li> <li>• Disconnect between the top three fields of study and the top three occupations and/or industries in the Province</li> <li>• Locations of communities, inability to relocate or have access to programming, services and employment</li> </ul>
<p><b>Regulations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land and resources</li> <li>• <i>Indian Act</i></li> <li>• Internal regulations, policies and procedures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Nation has many rules and regulations to follow regarding land and natural resources</li> <li>• Need for internal regulations, which are vital in providing consistency and transparency, and outlining roles and responsibilities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Governance Structure and Leadership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentorship programs</li> <li>• Differing priorities</li> <li>• Support systems/structures</li> <li>• Election terms</li> <li>• Time</li> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Collaboration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of time, communication and collaboration has resulted in differing priorities with weak support systems/structures</li> <li>• There is lack of effort to build support systems that work</li> <li>• Frequent changes in Band Council and community leadership may result in a void of strong leaders who can provide mentorship to the next generation</li> </ul>
<p><b>Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Business Support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication with the Nation, neighbouring communities, partners and the private sector</li> <li>• Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq input on government policies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of effective communication and support between Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq owned businesses and stakeholders</li> </ul>



The gap analysis identified the activities which will be implemented through the five year Strategy and beyond. This implementation will close the identified gaps and achieve the overarching priorities and goals throughout the term of the strategy, and beyond



Although highlighted separately, the goals and priorities are linked together in a way that each goal will fulfill multiple priorities. This will allow the Nation and each community to contribute at varying levels of readiness, and enable communities to succeed in ways which are deemed to be successful for each community. As all goals are aligned with the priorities and will fulfill multiple priorities at one time, all gaps will be closed, allowing for greater success and the continued strengthening of the Nation.





# GOAL 1: Identify Economic Readiness (Community and Nation)

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It is common for communities within a nation to be at varying levels of economic readiness and success. In order to strengthen the Nation further, it is important to determine the current state of economic readiness for each community within the Nation. As identified in the Economic Base Study, a number of economic indicators linked to the strategic priorities of the Nation have been identified.<sup>14</sup>

Such indicators can help to support strategic planning and long-term sustainable economic development by measuring a community's and Nation's capacity. These indicators look at all aspects of what a community and Nation identify as important for successful economic development, even if the definition of success differs per community.<sup>15</sup> Using these indicators, an Economic Readiness Toolkit will be created which will include the most appropriate method of measuring the economic readiness of each community, based on best practice research. This toolkit will assist communities in capitalizing on opportunities by assessing the strengths, weaknesses, and economic and capacity growth opportunities.

Upon creation, a method of initial baseline measurement will be established, in addition to guidelines regarding when and how to measure economic progress in communities and the Nation. Establishing the baseline will assist each community in identifying what will need to be completed moving forward. It will also help determine what success means to each community and outline what planning and steps are needed in order to achieve that level of success.

Linked to the five strategic priorities and identified through the research completed in the Economic Base Study, economic indicators will be utilized to measure economic readiness. Examples of these economic indicators include, but are not limited to: leadership, community resources, access to capital, infrastructure and technology supports. For a full description of the identified economic indicators, including links to the Nation's priorities, refer to the Economic Base Study.

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<sup>14</sup> - Refer to the Economic Base Study for further information

<sup>15</sup> - Resources for Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Communities: <http://www.chiefs-of-ontario.org/ec-dev-resources>, accessed August 2013



# GOAL 1: Identify Economic Readiness (Community and Nation)

## Gaps and Next Steps Addressed by the Achievement of Goal 1: Identify Economic Readiness (Community and Nation)

Elements of each of the six gaps will be closed through the implementation of Goal 1: Identifying Economic Readiness (Community and Nation).

### GAP: Land and Infrastructure

As the communities within the Nation differ in the readiness of the land and infrastructure required for economic development, the economic indicators will provide a framework from which a benchmark will be created and an Economic Readiness Toolkit developed. The Economic Readiness Toolkit would close the land and infrastructure gap, as one element of the toolkit would involve conducting a community inventory.

This inventory will help to identify what communities have in comparison to other communities, highlighting potential gaps within the Nation, as well as areas that could be leveraged to help other communities.

As part of the Economic Base Study, a high level inventory of the Nation was completed to gain a further understanding of the assets owned by the Nation, as a whole. In moving forward with the Strategy a more extensive inventory of land, assets and resources will be completed for each of the 13 Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq communities, which will help the Nation establish a baseline measurement for each community and develop strategies for economic development.

Completing this inventory will ensure that there are no oversights with regard to asset ownership throughout the Nation, as it will determine:

- Population demographics of each community based on the 2011 Census data<sup>16</sup>
- Total land by each band, both on and off reserve, by location and economic development potential
- Band-owned buildings on reserve and the condition of these buildings, road conditions, water accessibility and telecommunication reliability

*An extensive inventory of assets and resources within each community will be conducted as part of the economic readiness toolkit, helping the Nation plan for economic growth.*



# GOAL 1: Identify Economic Readiness (Community and Nation)

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- Band and privately-owned businesses both on and off reserve
- Initiatives that communities are currently pursuing or planning to pursue in the near future (one to five years)
- Options of acquiring new land, if applicable, and the probability to convert it to reserve land or have it remain as fee simple

A survey document and script for the assessment and inventory will be created to obtain this information through interviews with key members of each community. Interviews will be conducted with the economic development officers and/or band managers<sup>17</sup> in each community to document all assets and resources in the communities, as well as the condition of these assets.

## GAP: Economic Development Funding

The economic development funding gap can be closed through the use of the economic readiness toolkit and community inventory by providing funders with concrete support of funding needs. required funding areas will become more clear once it has been established what infrastructure, skills and businesses the Nation currently has versus what is needed to reach the economic development goals. Sharing the results of the economic readiness toolkit with funding agencies will highlight the correlation between proposed initiatives and sustainability of the Nation, which may increase the Nation's likelihood of obtaining support for development.

In addition, a number of community members who may want to venture into owning their own businesses may not possess the assets or credit required to obtain the necessary financing for the business. As part of the inventory, community members will be included in the research to identify what steps, training, and support will be needed in order to assist community members to increase their chances of obtaining financing.

## GAP: Education and Skills Development

The Economic Readiness Toolkit closes the educational and skills development gap as it will determine the Nation's economic health by measuring revenue, employment, education and social well-being. Utilizing the toolkit will confirm the industries in which community members should be trained in order to obtain employment. This assessment will identify overlaps in training, as well as highlight industries

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<sup>16</sup> - The 2013 Census Data is scheduled to be released in the fall of 2013

<sup>17</sup> - Or other staff members as identified and required.

# GOAL 1: Identify Economic Readiness (Community and Nation)

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in which more training is needed. This information can then be provided to funders to request proper training dollars to educate more community members in industries which require workers and will result in long-term meaningful employment. This will be done in conjunction and partnership with other industry partners and support organizations.

Determining common industries and initiatives throughout the Nation will assist in identifying possible partnerships for training, location of training and employment, which will lead to further economic growth. Action plans will be developed to help the communities achieve education and skill development goals, as set upon completion of the Economic Readiness Toolkit Assessment.

## GAP: Regulations and Governance Structure and Leadership

Determining economic readiness will also be used to close the regulation and governance structure and leadership gaps. By identifying all regulatory documents currently utilized in every community, as well as the governing bodies affiliated with each Band, the Nation will be able to determine which communities are lacking in regulatory resources, which resources are required and which governing bodies overlap. In addition, it will help to highlight all of the required priorities and identify where the priorities align. This will enable steps to be taken to work together on the aligned priorities in order to eliminate the duplication of efforts and to promote collaboration. As part of this, all parties will need to be in agreement to work together to promote the strengthening of the Nation and to effectively communicate in order to achieve the desired results.

This will also assist in allowing communities to implement continuity and consistency within operations in the event of a change in leadership due to an election. As partners may have a concern with leadership changes and that may affect the relationships and agreements, consistency will help to alleviate this possible challenge.

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*Determining economic readiness of each community will assist in streamlining regulation and governance, ensuring consistency, transparency, accountability and continuity throughout the Nation.*



# GOAL 1: Identify Economic Readiness (Community and Nation)

## GAP: Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Business Support

Finally, the Economic Readiness Toolkit will close the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq business support gap by identifying where gaps are in Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq businesses, where there is overlap, and where additional support can be provided. As part of the inventory, both band and individually owned businesses will be included in the research to identify what steps, training, and support will be needed in order to move businesses to the next level. In addition, this will help to increase the amount of businesses within the communities which will allow more money to remain within the communities.

Money that is not staying within the Nation could be a result of a lack of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq-owned business within the communities due to various factors such as a lack of economic opportunity and capacity, as well as the increasing operational costs that businesses have been facing.

By identifying what, when and where purchases of these goods and services are made, the Nation will be better equipped to highlight potential areas of economic opportunity. With approximately \$194 million spent on goods and services for band operations and by community members annually,<sup>18</sup> only approximately \$37.8 million<sup>19</sup> is spent within the communities.<sup>20,21,22</sup> This equates to approximately \$156.2 million leaving the communities.

Therefore, it is evident that there is opportunity to funnel more money back into the communities and support Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq businesses.

*Approximately \$156.2 million is leaving the Nova Scotia Mikmaq Nation annually, to support non-Mikmaq businesses.*

18 - Approximately \$107 million is spent by the Unama'ki Bands and households and \$87 million by 7 of the 8 mainland communities

19 - Unama'ki Band and household spending is approximately \$26.5 million and 7 of the 8 mainland communities expenditures are \$11.3 million

20 - Unama'ki Economic Leakage Study Phase 2, Final Report, November 8, 2011

21 - Paqtnkek Mi'kmaw Nation Economic Leakage Study Final Report, May 31, 2012

22 - KMKNO Economic Leakage Study Final Report, March 31, 2013





## GOAL 2: Partnership, Promotion and Nation Building (Planning)

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An essential part of the economic development process is planning and communication. Through the development of this Strategy, the Nation has solidified its vision, priorities, goals and objectives.

Planning is an ongoing process that will occur in all steps of the Nation's Strategy. Moving forward, the Nation will first clarify its message and what it is striving to achieve before approaching potential partners or attempting any business development activities.

Working together to develop the Nation's message will help deter communities and organizations from working in silos and address the perception of competitiveness between the Nation and the communities. Collectively, it is important for the Nation to define what it means by words such as Nation, benefit and success. This will help ensure that all are on the same page, striving to meet the Nation's goals, and that everyone will recognize the success of the Nation when it is achieved.

In order to effectively work as one Nation, each community and stakeholder will need to understand what's in it for them. It is much easier to gain buy-in when people can see how the change will positively affect them. Therefore, the benefits of working as one Nation rather than individual communities will be communicated to gain buy-in.

An Internal and External Communications Plan will be completed to properly generate the message that the Nation wants to convey and identify the target audiences with which to share this message and the methods of communication. All benefits, along with examples of communities that have worked together to increase economic opportunities and capacity, will be included in the communication to stakeholders.

Providing stories and sharing wisdom of best practice examples in which collaboration worked in other Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw communities and other nations will help minimize some of the concerns around the competitiveness associated with individual communities versus one Nation. The Nation will work with other Aboriginal and Mi'kmaw organizations to help promote the message.

The Communications Plan will also be the platform for all of the next steps for the implementation of the Strategic Plan. The communication plan will highlight the link between the communities and the Nation and convey the importance of determining the economic readiness of all communities in order for economic development planning to begin at the Nation level.

In preparation for the development of partnerships, a Partnership Evaluation Tool will be developed, which will help communities and the Nation measure the proper partnerships to engage. The first step in creating the tool will involve establishing the criteria in which potential partners would be evaluated.



# GOAL 2: Partnership, Promotion and Nation Building (Planning)

## Examples of Evaluation Criteria can Include the Identification of:

- The economic benefit and an injection into the Nation
- The number of existing partnerships with Mi'kmaq owned businesses
- The number of infrastructure and employment opportunities created
- The number of community members trained and employed

The purpose of developing the evaluation criteria is to help identify the potential partner's values, methods and goals for a potential "fit" to ensure that the partnership will be beneficial and positive for all. The tool will also identify how the Nation and the individual communities can be positioned in the market.

Once the tool has been created and approved by all Chief and Councils, (if required) it will be implemented (in Goal 3) to identify the value of each relationship and partnership for existing and future businesses and employment opportunities. Sample policies and templates including, but not limited to, risk mitigation and partnership agreements will also be drafted in the creation of the Partnership Evaluation Tool.

## Gaps and Next Steps Addressed by the Achievement of Goal 2: Partnership, Promotion and Nation Building (Planning)

Elements of each of the six gaps will be closed through the implementation of Goal 2: Partnership, Promotion and Nation Building (Planning).

**GAPS: Land and Infrastructure, Economic Development Funding, and Education and Skills Development**

Planning and communication will help close the land and infrastructure, economic development funding and educational and skills development gaps by addressing immediate needs, and by identifying short, medium and long term goals for communication. As communication goals have been identified for the Strategy, additional actions and goals may be identified in the Economic Readiness Toolkit Baseline and Inventory and will then be added to this plan. Once the Nation has identified additional goals, if applicable, it will be easier to determine the land, infrastructure and skills development that will be required to reach these goals in the projected timeline. This will help to streamline potential funding programs and partnerships that will address those needs.<sup>23</sup>

23 - The gaps of what the Nation needs versus what it already has will be identified through the economic readiness toolkit and community inventory, which will be discussed further in Goal Three.



# GOAL 2: Partnership, Promotion and Nation Building (Planning)

Being proactive as opposed to reactive will be critical for economic growth and prosperity. In this planning stage, identifying funding programs, opportunities to combine funding programs and/or purchasing power, and partnership opportunities will be explored. Working together demonstrates to the public and private funders and partners that economies of scale are being leveraged and projects and processes are being shared and combined as a Nation.

Both internal partnerships within the community departments and external partnerships will have to be formed to help address infrastructure, funding and skill development. The communications plan will outline the messages and the strategies of communicating those messages to all potential partners that can help close these gaps.

## GAPS: Regulations; Governance Structure and Leadership

The regulations and governance structure and leadership gaps will be addressed through planning and communication. Creation and implementation of internal community policies and procedures would provide communities and the Nation with consistency, transparency and accountability. In addition, it will offer guidance to governing leaders in many areas including, but not limited to: communication, partnership development criteria, decision making, social, education and employment. Examples of such policies and procedures can include, but are not limited to:



The requirements per community would be different based on what was identified through the inventory completed through the use of the Economic Readiness Toolkit (Goal 1).

The creation of consistent policies and procedures will also assist in creating the consistency which may be required in the event of leaders being changed as a result of elections. With the proper processes in place, business will not be disrupted in the event of elections, which will create consistency regardless of leadership.



## Goal 2: Partnership, Promotion and Nation Building (Planning)

Communicating the importance of these documents will help with implementation and allow the Nation to maintain effective control and have policies and procedures for separating business and politics. Planning also creates a long-term view. Throughout the planning process, as identified through the best practices analysis in the Economic Base Study, band councils will also look for feedback from community members to increase engagement and buy-in.

Communicating the benefits and involving our people in the process will lead to better and easier decision making for the Nation. Creation and implementation of these regulatory documents will allow this Strategy to help the leaders of the Nation break the 'status-quo' and help the Nation achieve its vision.

### GAP: Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Business Support

The Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq businesses support gap will also be closed by planning and communication. Similar to the infrastructure and skills development gaps, once the Nation implements the strategic goals and includes additional support, as required, it will be easier to determine what the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq businesses would require to move forward. Also, including the existing Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq businesses in the planning process will help gain buy-in and strengthen the bond between the Nation and the businesses.



Improvements and increased communication between Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq businesses with the Nation's communities, the non-Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq population, the private sector and the government are required in order to increase awareness of the services offered by these businesses and to reduce and eliminate the economic leakage that is currently occurring in the Nation.

In addition to better communicate and market the existing businesses in the Nation, there is also a need for more Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq involvement and input into government policy regarding economic development for further growth and prosperity.

Communication with industry and sector partners will allow for the identification of market trends and the capitalization of market needs to provide both band and privately owned Mi'kmaq businesses with the opportunity to generate revenue, become sustainable and provide meaningful employment.









## GOAL 3: Build Strategic Relationships (Implementing)

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Building Strategic Relationships is the next step upon completion of the planning. Communicating the message, which has been developed in the achievement of Goal 2: Partnership, Promotion and Nation Building, to both internal and external groups will help to solidify buy-in from all key stakeholders.

Business development activities will provide the Nation with the opportunity to identify businesses and industries in which to partner based on the need of the Nation and the need to diversify. Responses gathered during the stakeholder interviews and engagement identified that some of the Chiefs, Executive Directors and key staff identified similar insights around the need to focus on relationships and partnerships. One suggestion was to focus on networking which means being visible in Nova Scotia and beyond as one Nation, both with Mi'kmaq and non-Mi'kmaq organizations, businesses, industry and government departments.

Round tables, meetings, and networking sessions with organizations such as with the Chambers of Commerce, attending Board of Trade events and meeting with neighbouring municipalities are examples of opportunities which will be explored to grow networks and to create and gain awareness. Business development takes networking to the next level and identifies what associations, boards and businesses to meet with to begin the creation of relationships and partnerships.

Throughout the achievement of Goals 1 and 2, the Nation will identify the value it can bring to potential partners, as well as how the Nation and the communities would like to be positioned in the market.

Once potential partnerships have been identified through business development activities, the partnership evaluation tool will be implemented, which will help communities and the Nation measure the proper partnerships in which to engage. The Nation will work with other Aboriginal and Mi'kmaw organizations to help promote the tool and its importance.

*Working together and forming collaborative partnerships are commonalities across all gaps that will help to solidify the success of the Nation.*

- Economic Base Study





# GOAL 3: Build Strategic Relationships (Implementing)

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## Gaps and Next Steps Addressed by the Achievement of Goal 3: Build Strategic Relationships (Implementing)

Elements of each of the six gaps will be closed through the implementation of Goal 3: Build Strategic Relationships (Implementing).

### GAP: Land and Infrastructure

Through the best practice analysis in the Economic Base Study, partnerships are a way to close the land and infrastructure gap. These partnerships will focus on communities and businesses, both Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq and non-Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq; and would provide the Nation with access to land, buildings, or other infrastructure that it may not currently have access to. There are several activities the Nation will undertake in order to form these strategic relationships.

The communication plan developed in Goal 2 will outline the messages and direction for the Nation in order to promote the benefits of working as a Nation to internal and external partners. Business development activities will provide the Nation with the knowledge of which partnerships to make in the communities and beyond in order to close the gap.

Once potential partners are identified, the Partnership Evaluation Tool will be utilized to help communities and the Nation measure the proper partnerships to engage.

#### Examples of partnerships can include:

- Aboriginal and Mi'kmaq support organizations
- Industry
- Government
- Educational institutions

### GAP: Economic Development Funding

The committee that worked on the report, *Sharing Canada's Prosperity – a Hand up, not a Handout*, identified that partnerships with the private sector created economic opportunities for Aboriginal communities which would work on closing any funding gaps.<sup>24</sup>

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24 – *Sharing Canada's Prosperity: A Hand Up Not a Hand Out: Final Report on the Special Study on the Involvement of Aboriginal Communities and Businesses in Economic Development Activities in Canada*, The Standing Senate Committee

# GOAL 3: Build Strategic Relationships (Implementing)

Building meaningful and strategic relationships and partnerships can help bridge the economic development funding gap by looking to capitalize on opportunities which may not have been available previously. Meetings, round tables, and working committees are all ways to get communication flowing. Partnerships will grow from initial communication fostering long-lasting relationships. These relationships allow for collaboration and greater synergy of efforts to create more impactful results as the relationships will increase the knowledge to make informed decisions, create buy-in to ensure the adoption of the Strategy, and gain more involvement to implement the strategic priorities and goals.

## GAP: Education and Skills Development

The education and skills development gap will be closed through partnership creation. The strategic relationships required will be identified through planning and business development activities. Partnerships with organizations and industry that offer training programs can close the educational and skills development gap. Forming partnerships in which organizations can train and possibly hire has proven successful. Looking for agreements, similar to those already completed with Emera and Bell Aliant, are keys to success as these partnerships will result in a transfer of knowledge and an increase in meaningful employment opportunities and income.

Also working with industry partners to identify what trends and opportunities exist in Nova Scotia, both for economic development and employment, will help the Nation target the proper markets in which to invest economic and training dollars to increase economic and long-term meaningful employment opportunities. This will also help to reduce and eliminate investments made in areas where there are not opportunities presently and will ensure that community members will be employed in industries which are emerging and require workers.

## GAP: Regulations

The regulations gap will be closed by forming partnerships with internal departments and community stakeholders to look at partnership opportunities and collaboration efforts for developing uniform policies and procedures. This will assist in creating consistency and reduce a duplication of efforts when embarking on new ventures, in communicating messages and when looking at economic and employment opportunities.

*Aboriginal communities which are outward-looking and willing to form partnerships with the private sector in the pursuit of economic opportunities seem to have the most economic success.*

- Economic Base Study



# GOAL 3: Build Strategic Relationships (Implementing)

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## GAP: Governance Structure and Leadership

In order for there to be an effective governance structure and leadership, the leaders will look for community engagement and buy-in. Communicating benefits and involving community members, both on and off reserve, will lead to a better understanding of the opportunities and will make decisions easier for Nation leaders. Some of the governance structure and leadership gaps also identified include differing priorities and collaboration within the Nation. Focusing on working together through partnerships and creating uniform policies and procedures will close these gaps. Partnerships will also build strong leaders by creating mentorship relationships with industry partners.

## GAP: Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Business Support

Partnering with other businesses and organizations closes the Mi'kmaq business support gap by providing Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq business owners the opportunity to leverage business expertise and connections, and to receive mentoring on business planning and implementation.

There is also a vast amount of economic leakage occurring across all the communities, as previously mentioned. Working together as a Nation can help to capitalize on and recapture some of this leakage to support Mi'kmaq business. The benefits will bring the dollars back into the community through economic development opportunities, partnership development and cost savings through purchasing agreements, group purchasing and negotiation power.









# GOAL 4: Link Economic Development Endeavours to Training and Employment

Linking economic development endeavors to training and employment uses planning and business development to take partnerships to the next level. At this stage in the Strategy, the Nation is proactively forming new relationships with a specific purpose.

Internally within band departments and organizations, the Nation will ensure that Employment Officers are working with Economic Development Officers and any other relevant department, such as education and social, so that any efforts to grow the Nation's economy will be supported by a skilled and ready labour force. Research completed within the Economic Base Study identified that economic development has to simultaneously occur with training and employment. A skilled and trained labour force will be crucial to business creation and growth and to the value proposition for any potential partnership.

When planning for what external partnerships to target in Goals 2 and 3, the Nation will examine successes that other nations have had and identify if those relationships would be beneficial to the Nation. Jack Blacksmith, with the Cree Regional Economic Enterprises Co., acknowledges the value in learning from other Nations who have done the work previously.<sup>25</sup>

The Economic Base Study also identified that there are several barriers to Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq furthering education and skills training which include, but are not limited to:

- Distance to the school/training programs from home
- No clear connection between training and employment
- Lack of motivation
- Lack of, or challenges with, transportation or child care

*Aboriginal partners who have achieved successes in the areas in which you are looking to build capacity can offer much in terms of understanding the challenges and opportunities you face*

- Economic Base Study

## Gaps and Next Steps Addressed by the Achievement of Goal 4: Link Economic Development Endeavors to Training and Employment

While it may be obvious that linking economic endeavors to training and employment will close the education and skills development gap, the Strategy will show that the achievement of this goal will close all six gaps.

25 - Sharing Canada's Prosperity: A Hand Up Not a Hand Out: Final Report on the Special Study on the Involvement of Aboriginal Communities and Businesses in Economic Development Activities in Canada, The Standing Senate Committee





# GOAL 4: Link Economic Development Endeavours to Training and Employment

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Elements of each of the six gaps will be closed through the implementation of Goal 4: Link Economic Development Endeavours to Training and Employment.

## GAP: Land and Infrastructure

Through planning and analysis, the Nation will uncover what would be required in terms of facilities, appropriate community space and sufficient buildings in order to offer education and training programs.

Partnerships among neighboring communities, private sector businesses, educational institutions, Nova Scotia Aboriginal and Mi'kmaq support organizations and some industry groups will help close the land and infrastructure gap. These partnerships may provide the training space the Nation needs by having neighbouring communities share existing space or the partnerships may result in the building of new space with an external partner.

## GAP: Economic Development Funding

With limited resources available for funding, funders are looking for ways to create the most impact with dollars invested. Linking funding dollars to education and training will result in employment and draw a direct link to its value on the economy and the sustainability of a funding program will help to establish long-term success.

The economic development funding gap can be closed by forming relationships with employers, industry and training providers. Tapping into existing funding programs, the Nation can look to offer price breaks, employment agreements, and procurement policies to attract partners. For example, if a construction program is to occur in the Nation, it could be negotiated that price breaks are provided to the external companies as long as there were a certain number of Mi'kmaw suppliers utilized, training programs offered and employment guarantees. These partnerships will close the funding gap through focusing on leveraging the existing programs.

## GAP: Education and Skills Development

It has been identified in the Economic Base Study that the Nation has gaps in education and skills development. While the Nation has many resources and assets, the education and skills development gap requires external partnerships for it to be closed. As mentioned previously, proactively seeking

# GOAL 4: Link Economic Development Endeavours to Training and Employment

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partners for education, training, mentorship and social support for individuals needing to leave home for training and providing training in the community creates a mutually beneficial strategic relationship between the Nation and the partner, while increasing the social well-being within the Nation.

## GAP: Regulations

The regulations gap will be closed by linking economic development endeavors to training and employment through the Nation's development and adoption of internal policies and procedures. Documents such as the Partnership Evaluation Tool, decision making criteria and procurement policies will provide uniformity to the Nation when attracting, maintaining and measuring partnerships.

## GAP: Governance Structure and Leadership

Focusing on the consistency of operations by using regulatory documents (identified previously) will help the Nation close the governance structure and leadership gap, when forming partnerships to support training and education in its economic development efforts. Regardless of a change in leadership, consistent operations will create positive experiences for partners with desirable results for the Nation.

## GAP: Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Business Support

Focusing on training and education closes the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq business support gap by providing Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq business owners with essential business skills and a skilled workforce. The business development and partnership activities will also identify where Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq businesses can focus, invest and be suppliers to large projects (keeping dollars in the Nation), in addition to providing skill transfer directly to the business owners and entrepreneurs.









# GOAL 5: Asset Development as a Nation

Asset development as a Nation is an evolution of all of the goals and objectives of the Nation. At this stage, the Nation has determined a baseline for economic readiness and used the inventory and Economic Readiness Toolkit to conclude what gaps exist in the communities and the Nation as a whole. This analysis will provide the background for any planning on land and infrastructure needed to grow the economy of the Nation and identify the education and skills training needed for our people. As previously mentioned throughout Goals 3 and 4, developing internal and external partnerships is integral to closing any asset gaps.

## Gaps and Next Steps Addressed by the Achievement of Goal 5: Asset Development as a Nation

Elements of each of the six gaps will be closed through the implementation of Goal 5: Asset Development as a Nation.

### GAP: Land and Infrastructure

The Nation will be able to close the land and infrastructure gap through working together. The economic readiness exercise and action planning process will have provided clear insight to what land and infrastructure is needed to support planned activities and development. The Nation will use this information to identify and target partners who will be ready to invest in land and infrastructure in the Nation or that currently own land and infrastructure from which the Nation can benefit.

### GAP: Economic Development Funding

As the Nation increases its level of educated and skilled community members, develops its inventory of land and infrastructure and becomes more self-sustainable, it will become less reliant on funding. With viable land, appropriate buildings and a skilled workforce, it is a goal that the Nation will be able to implement its own economic development activities without third-party funding. These assets will also make the Nation more attractive to partners as it becomes more of an equal partner. The more the Nation continues to partner and become economically sustainable, the less it will require funding for any of its programming or projects and the economic development funding gap will be closed.

### GAP: Education and Skills Development

The education and skills development gap will be closed by forming partnerships. As the Nation develops its people through partnerships, the benefits will be exponential as our educated people and skilled workforce will become mentors and champions for the younger generations who will inherit the



# GOAL 5: Asset Development as a Nation

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Nation. The more that community members can see success in individuals from similar backgrounds, the more motivating it will be for those community members to further their own education and skill development.

## **GAP: Regulations, Governance Structure and Leadership**

The regulations, governance structure and leadership gaps will be further closed as the Nation will focus on developing its leaders by implementing the identified internal policies, procedures and regulations. Policies, procedures, decision making criteria and planning tools create consistent, accountable, transparent and strong leaders and operations. Focusing on creating these guidelines will be key to developing strong leaders who will continue to build a strong Nation, and the strong operations which will support it. Partnerships will also help develop the human resources of the Nation through knowledge transfer and mentorship relationships. Over time, the Nation will have benefitted from these partnerships to be able to develop our people on our own.

## **GAP: Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Business Support**

Mi'kmaq business owners face challenges in terms of assets, land, infrastructure and people. Developing the Nation's assets through strategic relationships will close the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq business support gap by providing necessary land and infrastructure for business activities and a skilled workforce for the business owners and entrepreneurs. Development of the Nation's assets builds the economy and creates dollars that can be spent within the Nation, furthering the support of the Mi'kmaq business owners and entrepreneurs.







# SUMMARY

In summary, for each of the next steps for the implementation, each goal has a number of activities, as outlined below:

## GOAL 1: ECONOMIC READINESS (COMMUNITY AND NATION)

- Identify Economic Readiness Indicators
- Develop an Economic Readiness Toolkit
- Evaluate and develop a baseline for current and future measurements
- Complete a community/Nation inventory
- Identify commonalities and duplication of services and efforts
- Identify gaps in Mi'kmaq business support

## GOAL 2: PARTNERSHIP, PROMOTION AND NATION BUILDING (PLANNING)

- Plan and develop a Communication Plan and messaging for promotion
- Communicate the message and the benefits of continuing to strengthen the Nation
- Develop a Partnership Evaluation Tool
- Explore potential partnership opportunities
- Create and implement policies and procedures
- Develop and implement support structures and services for businesses

## GOAL 3: BUILD STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIPS (IMPLEMENTING)

- Implement Communications Plan, promotion and messaging
- Build partnerships through relationship development
- Engage in business development for partnerships, new business opportunities and diversification
- Implement the Partnership Evaluation Tool to ensure potential partnerships are the most appropriate in which to embark
- Develop mentorship opportunities through partnerships for businesses

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**GOAL 4: LINK  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
ENDEAVOURS TO TRAINING  
AND EMPLOYMENT**

- Create partnerships with internal community departments
- Build partnerships with support organizations, employers, industry sectors and educational institutions
- Continue implementation of policies and procedures
- Provide training and skill development to business owners and new entrepreneurs

**GOAL 5: ASSET  
DEVELOPMENT  
AS A NATION**

- Use the baseline from the economic indicators and toolkit to conclude what gaps exist in all assets (people, land, infrastructure)
- Create action plans to close the gaps
- Assign roles, responsibilities and actions with timelines
- Form partnerships with industry, employers, educational institutions and businesses
- Continue with policy and procedure development and implementation











# CONCLUSION

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The Economic Development Strategy for the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Nation: "Strengthening Our Nation Through Community Success" was completed with many stakeholders including community leaders, members, support organizations and the Mi'kmaq Nova Scotia Canada Tripartite Forum Economic Development Working Committee (TFEDWC).

In preparation for the Strategy an Economic Base Study was completed to act as a background for and to provide input and guidance for the Strategy. The Base Study contains extensive best practice and industry research and incorporates information gathered from a number of engagement sessions which took place with various stakeholders. Moving forward, it is the intent that the Economic Base Study be utilized as a basis to provide additional context for the strategy, as required.

To guide the strategy, five priorities were established to achieve the goals. The goals are a subset of the strategic priorities and through the achievement of the goals and the associated objectives, the strategic priorities will be achieved throughout the term of the Strategy and beyond. It is through the fulfillment of these goals that each priority will be achieved, allowing for continued success and the strengthening of the Nation. It will also allow each community to contribute at varying levels and, in turn, allow the Nation to continue to grow, evolve and move further along the path to long-term success.

Throughout the Economic Base Study, six areas were identified as common gaps throughout the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Nation: Land and Infrastructure, Economic Development Funding, Education and Skill Development, Regulations, Governance Structure and Leadership, and Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Business Support. The next steps for the implementation of the Strategy address each of the gaps and provide a detailed explanation of the steps which will be completed to close these gaps. These next steps have been outlined in relation to the Nation's five goals and the accompanying objectives. It is through these goals that the Nation will achieve its five priorities for this Strategy and achieve success as one Nation.

Buy-in is needed for the Nation to implement all of the next steps and to achieve its goals. Partnership development is key to that success; however, levels of economic readiness, for both the individual communities and the Nation, must be determined prior to partnership development. The Nation must first establish its capacity in terms of the initial baseline analysis and community economic development capacity; as this capacity will influence the Nation's ability to form new partnerships. Planning is necessary when clearly outlining the Nation's needs in terms of partnerships, and communication is essential for representing the "state of the Nation" to potential partners. Planning, communication, business development, training and employment will ensure that partnerships align and that all of the recommended next steps fulfill the Strategy's priorities, goals and objectives.

Nationhood and the nation-building approach understands that Nations are challenged not only with improving community life, but with preserving the culture and well-being of communities. Therefore, the building of a solid plan will allow our Nation to work through the challenges and help to strengthen the foundation for the Nation. To make this strategy a reality, community staff and leaders will be engaged and will be accountable for supporting the execution of the strategy.





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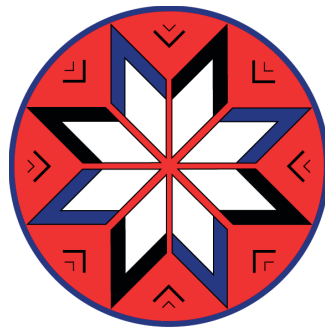
Communities that work together as a Nation with a collective voice have increased economic opportunities and capacity. Working together as one unified Nation will help to increase the likelihood of success and will achieve the desired results, which include: improved nation and community well-being, strength in the Nation's governance and increased negotiation power, have the ability to leverage the strengths of our Nations' people, land, assets and spending dollars to have a Nation which is rich with long-term revenue generation, meaningful employment, increased education and skill levels, while gaining additional support from all current and future stakeholders.

*Together we will make this happen. Together we will succeed.*





The development of the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Economic Development Strategy  
was led by the Tripartite Forum Economic Development Working Committee



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