

# GENDER ANALYSIS OF THE NEW FEDERAL FRAMEWORK FOR ABORIGINAL DEVELOPMENT

## *Discussion Guide and Annexes*

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### INTRODUCTION

Published in 2008, the “New Federal Framework for Aboriginal Economic Development” was designed to both outline the federal government’s approach to Aboriginal economic development and to solicit feedback and input from diverse Aboriginal communities and stakeholders across Canada regarding the framework. The Native Women’s Association of Canada (NWAC) commissioned a review of the framework from a gender perspective. The assessment that follows provides this analysis, as well as recommendations regarding how the new Federal Framework for Aboriginal Economic Development (FFAED) could be made more gender-sensitive and responsive to the specific needs and priorities of Aboriginal women.

These recommendations and analysis focus on ways that the FFAED can serve as a strategy and instrument that can be used by Aboriginal men and women and the federal government to help restore economic and social balance in Aboriginal communities, as well as to recognize the significant contribution of women to Canada’s economy and to their communities. The report also analyzes why an investment in women leads to a solid return to both community and family and explains the need for increased recognition of Aboriginal women’s roles as change

agents in their communities. Finally, it outlines ways in which the FFAED can integrate a gender-sensitive, cultural approach to economic development and demonstrates the value-added benefits of using a gender analysis to inform programming decisions.

Key findings of the analysis offer the following conclusion:

- Aboriginal women and men experience different conditions in life and as a consequence women will have significantly different access than men to the resources and benefits offered by the Framework.
- The three spheres for development (Activation, Base, and Climate) proposed in the Framework should be strengthened to be more inclusive of women.
- Research and analysis on existing structures is necessary to formulate the foundation for understanding how women are impacted by economic development.
- Revisions to policies, strategies and options that gave rise to the Framework can help establish a culturally-based, gender sensitive approach.

### Key Concerns

The gender-based analysis conducted raises several serious concerns:

1. The Framework is almost completely gender-blind. It only mentions a need to pay attention to gender issues in one sentence and does not make any other attempt to disaggregate or identify if there are any significantly different issues and priorities for Aboriginal women and men.
2. The Framework focuses heavily on economic development built on a foundation of natural resource and energy sector development. This focus, due to the strong predominance of male employment and ownership in those sectors, therefore heavily skews federal attention, support and benefits in the Framework for Aboriginal men.
3. The Framework has overlooked the importance of the creative economy in building sustainable jobs in Canada and of the existing and potential role of Aboriginal women and men in this sector.
4. The Framework outlines a long list of barriers and obstacles to economic development within Aboriginal communities. However, there is no analysis of whether these factors affect Aboriginal men and women differently or any recognition of the fact that most of these barriers and obstacles are significantly greater for Aboriginal women than men.
5. The guiding principles outlined also fail to take into account the different socio-economic conditions affecting Aboriginal women and men and as posited would serve to maintain the existing socio-economic division between them.
6. One of the Framework's guiding principles is the need for this economic development to be culturally sensitive in nature. However, on the surface, the Framework appears to ignore one of the greatest assets within Aboriginal communities, that of, Aboriginal culture itself. Within this context, it is also important to understand and recognize that Aboriginal women often play a strong role as keepers of tradition and passing on traditional, indigenous knowledge. This needs to be recognized as one of the cornerstones of the Framework, as does the importance of Aboriginal sense of identity in approaches to developing the economy.

7. The Framework also fails to differentiate between the different needs and economies found in Aboriginal communities in Southern and Northern Canada and of the different roles that Aboriginal women and men play in these economies.

This being said, the Framework does provide a foundation on which it should be possible to build effective economic development for Aboriginal peoples. To do this it will need to incorporate the results of a basic gender analysis in its approaches. Related recommendations and analysis follow in the subsequent sections, and pages.

### Gender-Based Analysis

It is quite surprising that the Framework is gender-blind as Canada has an official policy requiring all of its policies, programs and legislation to be informed by a prior gender analysis (refer to *Setting the Stage for the Next Century, The Federal Plan for Gender Equality* presented to the 4th UN World Conference on Women).

Status of Women Canada defines gender-based analysis (GBA) as follows:

a tool for understanding social [and economic] processes and for responding with informed, effective and equitable options for policies, programs and legislation that addresses the needs of all Canadians.

GBA recognizes that treating women and men identically will not ensure similar outcomes because women and men occupy different socio-economic statuses and experience different living conditions. GBA views women in relation to men in society rather than in isolation, that has meant at times the marginalization of women's realities in public policy development.

There are multiple approaches to gender-based analysis that institutions can take depending upon the context. In this instance given that the focus of the "New Federal Framework for Aboriginal Economic Development" is predominantly economic, the gender analysis methodology selected for this analysis focuses on an assessment of Aboriginal women and men's access to and control over the resources they need to be able to support themselves and their families and to live as full citizens within their communities.

The Access and Control Framework is essentially economic in nature. One underlying premise is that gender inequality, in addition to being inequitable and unfair, is also a form of economic inefficiency, and that, policies, programs, and projects will be more effective if they ensure more balanced gender equality. The Access and Control Framework is based on an analysis of the division of labour by sex in the reproductive, productive, and community spheres of the economy and on an analysis of the differential access that women and men have to the resources and benefits involved in the economic development process.

A detailed outline of this gender-based analysis framework can be found in Annex 1.

### Definition of Terms

In the context of this analysis economic development is understood to mean:

The growth of the means by which Aboriginal women and men support themselves and their families in ways that respect their cultural traditions and close relationship to the land and environment, as well as their respective roles and contributions to its stewardship and to each other.

Throughout this analysis there also are three key terms used to describe the approach needed for economic development for Aboriginal men and women.

The first is that this economic development needs to be *gender-sensitive*, meaning that any approach to economic development needs to be based on and informed by a sound understanding and prior analysis of the differences between Aboriginal women and men's socio-economic conditions and challenges in life and in the economy, and the nature of their respective contributions to the economy. It means not assuming that any action, policy or approach will have the same impact on women and men. It requires all analysis to disaggregate data by sex to help determine and recognize these different challenges and contributions, as opposed to making generic statements that aggregate the entire Aboriginal population (i.e., referring always to Aboriginal peoples instead of Aboriginal women and men).

The second is *gender-equitable*. This refers to the process of treating Aboriginal women and men fairly so that any government policies and programming ensures that both sexes benefit equally from this support. Due to the very different socio-economic conditions facing Aboriginal men and women, sometimes this will mean treating them differently to address the different priorities, needs and situation of each sex. It also sometimes means that there is a need for sex-specific programming in some areas in order to address historic sex-based economic disadvantages for both sexes.

The third is the term *culturally-sensitive*. This refers to the need for any economic development support that targets Aboriginal men and women to be based on an understanding of and respect for the diverse Aboriginal cultural relationship with the land and the environment and not to assume that Aboriginal businesses will always operate on all of the same principles and approaches found in businesses in the non-aboriginal population. It also means understanding and recognizing that Aboriginal men and women often have different cultural views of business and economic development. These cultural viewpoints also differ from nation to nation.

### DISCUSSION OF THE GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS OF THE NEW FEDERAL FRAMEWORK FOR ABORIGINAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This analysis reviews each of the main sections of the Framework from a gender perspective, using different elements of the GBA methodology outlined above. The sections reviewed include the following:

- Guiding Principles
- Context
- Dimensions of Economic Development
- Discussion Questions
- Prior Research on Aboriginal Economic Development

#### Guiding Principles

The proposed guiding principles that would define the Framework are not presently gender-sensitive, but could be made so with some edit-

ing and a slight shift in approach. Currently although the Guiding Principles note that the Framework should be flexible with regard to “the different conditions, *gender issues*, regional needs and important economic issues of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples” this is actually the only reference to gender in the entire document.

To make this part of the Framework gender-sensitive the document could consider using the following language:

- **Flexible**, respectful and responsive to the different conditions, gender issues, regional needs and important economic issues of First Nations, Inuit and Métis *women and men*.

*Rationale:* if the principles are not explicitly disaggregated by men and women, there is limited or no accountability to assess all of the factors outlined by sex and to determine where the significant gender issues lie.

- **Opportunity-based** to enable Aboriginal *men and women* to assess their individual and collective assets, capacities *and priorities*, and realize their *respective* potential to be economically self-sufficient, focusing investments where opportunities exist, *and where they have access to the assets needed to develop these opportunities*.

*Rationale:* Aboriginal women often have significantly different access to the assets needed to be able to develop new economic opportunities than do Aboriginal men. They also have different types of assets, not all of which are financial in nature. This would need to be taken into account in the development of programs to support the development of new economic opportunities.

- **Market-driven**, with measurable returns on investment, and accountable, results-based objectives to ensure the best possible outcomes for Aboriginal *women and men*, communities, government and industry *from both an economic and social, cultural perspective*.

*Rationale:* How Aboriginal women and men measure returns on investments may not be solely from a financial perspective. Men and women also will often have different economic and social priorities and definitions of what defines a best possible outcome for

themselves, their families and their communities, as well as a different perspective from government and industry.

- **Coordinated** across all federal departments and agencies, including *gender and culturally sensitive* policy development, program design and implementation and service delivery to ensure a focused “whole-of-government” approach for maximum effectiveness;

*Rationale:* By stating explicitly that this policy development, program design, implementation and service delivery should be gender and culturally sensitive it places greater onus on the government to conduct the prior gender and cultural analysis needed to ensure that their policies, program and services are meeting the needs of women.

- **Partnership-based** to promote effective relationships among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal businesses *owned by men and women*; and include all levels of governments and institutions; to share risks, leverage private sector capital, and enter into joint ventures.

*Rationale:* There is a need to support increased understanding of different cultural approaches to business among Aboriginal and non-aboriginal business owners, e.g., different approaches and beliefs about the commercialization of indigenous knowledge.

There is also considerable research that demonstrates that male and female entrepreneurs often build their businesses and partnerships using different approaches. These differences need to be taken into account in the development of partnership programs. For example, a number of different research studies show that the gender specific characteristics exhibited by many women-owned businesses include the following:

1. A strong commitment to their local community, particularly in terms of sourcing and employment.
2. A perception of themselves as being at the centre of their business organization with teams and working groups emanating from that central position, rather than developing rigid hierarchical structures in which they are positioned at the top.

3. A strong commitment to a vision that encompasses both their private and business lives. This means that they constantly strive to develop sustainable business with manageable growth rather than aiming for immediate high growth and overtrading.
  4. A focus upon the personal relationship aspects of business contacts, which supports long-term ambitions, (which include high turnover and profitability).
  5. A tendency to develop contacts through active networking, which they perceive as a rich business resource.
  6. A pattern of growing their business through a range of relationship alliances that frequently enable the creation of more businesses and trade. This results in slower growth of women run businesses, as measured traditionally by increased number of employees, but it also generally fosters much more sustainable growth (Muir, 2002).
- **Culturally-sensitive** and environmentally sustainable to see economic development as a means of promoting and preserving Aboriginal cultures, *women and men's different roles in this process* and their deep relationship/respect for the environment.

*Rationale:* As Aboriginal women and men often play different roles in their communities and depending upon their context also may have different roles and responsibilities within their families, they also generally will play different roles with regard to promotion and preservation of Aboriginal cultures and the environment, e.g., if it is men who are primarily responsible for hunting/trapping and women for dressing and preparing the meat, skins and bones from these animals this can influence their different approaches and attitudes to hunting when it comes to developing a hunting industry for tourists and men and women may have different priorities and skills related to this industry.

### Context and Annex B

The Framework notes that the economic landscape for Aboriginal Canadians has changed considerably since Canadian Aboriginal Economic

Development Strategy was announced in 1989. It observes that the Canadian economy has expanded rapidly, outstripping the supply of skilled labour in many fields and that this economic evolution presents real opportunities on a broad scale for Aboriginal Canadians, with more than 600,000 Aboriginal youth projected to come of age to enter the labour market between 2001 and 2006. The document then directs the reader to Annex B for a demographic profile of the Aboriginal population in Canada.

The limitation with the demographic analysis provided in the Context section and in Annex B is that while it mentions a few differences between male and female Aboriginal peoples no analysis is provided regarding the likely impact of these gender-based differences on Aboriginal women and men's respective access to new economic development opportunities. There are also serious gaps in the analysis related to other critical gender differences between Aboriginal women and men. These differences can and likely will have an impact on who benefits from federal economic development initiatives for Aboriginal peoples and communities.

#### *Education Levels*

Key amongst these is the fact that although there is a significantly higher rate of Aboriginal men who do not have a high school diploma, with approximately 60% of those without a high school diploma being men and only 40% women. As of the 2001 census this educational advantage had not translated into greater educational opportunities or income for Aboriginal women. Of the numbers of Aboriginal men who have attained a university degree, 56.5% are men and just 43.4% women. This is also quite a different trend than that found among the non-aboriginal population where female students generally represent the majority of university students. Based on observation and anecdotal information, this pattern may have shifted in the last eight years. However, it still means that there is still a large group of Aboriginal women who have not been able to access the economic benefits that can be derived from obtaining a university education.

There is also a similar pattern observable in trades education where 63.4% of the Aboriginal graduates are men and only 41.0% are women (Hull, 2007). This is also quite significant when viewed against the natural resource sector and

energy focus of the Framework where there is a greater demand for skilled trades and where the pay is much higher than in the service area where Aboriginal women are concentrated.

#### *Income Levels*

Income levels for Aboriginal men and women are also quite different, with Aboriginal women consistently registering the lowest income levels across all age groups when compared with Aboriginal men, as well as with non-aboriginal women and men. This is not to say that the incomes of Aboriginal men are high as they represent the second lowest income group in this comparison (Hull, 2007). Annex B however, does not disaggregate the income levels of Aboriginal peoples by sex or consequently, leaves one in danger of assuming that conditions for Aboriginal women and men with regard to income are similar. The 2001 census did show that on reserves women's incomes were 94% that of men's and among Inuit population 89% of men's incomes. This is actually less of a difference than among the non-aboriginal population and is likely related to the higher proportion of social assistance payments among these communities.

#### *Impact of Violence on Economic Development*

There is also a need to examine what is the impact of these low income rates for Aboriginal women on their ability to escape from situations of domestic violence and of the impact of intrafamilial violence on both the women's productivity and their ability to take advantage of new economic opportunities. A survey done in Nicaragua in 1999 found that domestic violence reduced women's earnings by US\$29.5 million which corresponded to 1.6% of Nicaragua's GDP (not including the multiplier effects of lost earnings, and led to women who had been abused to use health care services twice as much as those who had not been battered (World Bank, 2003). There is a high incidence of domestic violence in Aboriginal communities which likely has a disproportionately negative economic impact on the women who are the primary victims of this violence. This factor also needs to be taken into account in the FFAED as it will both limit Aboriginal women's ability to take advantage of the new economic opportunities to be generated, as well as the success of the overall strategy.

#### *Gender-Based Occupational Concentration*

It also likely has a strong correlation with the fact that Aboriginal women and men tend to work in areas which are male or female dominated, with the areas of work dominated by men tending to pay higher wages. Currently, Aboriginal women are concentrated in the service sector, with close to 50% working in this area and only 1.2% in skilled crafts and trades and 1.3% as trades supervisors. This is in contrast with Aboriginal men where only 20.5% work in the service sector, but 18.1% in skilled crafts and trades and 3.3% as trades supervisors. Men are also heavily represented in semi-skilled manual labour (21.4%) whereas for Aboriginal women this figure is 4.6%. There is also a significant difference between the percentage of professional Aboriginal women and men, standing at 12.3% for women and 6.2% for men (Hull, 2007). This pattern of occupational concentration of Aboriginal women and men by occupational categories also implies that the Framework needs to take different approaches to economic development for Aboriginal women and men.

From a business development perspective Aboriginal women also tend to be concentrated in the cultural industries, tourism and small business or micro-enterprises. Thus their main areas of work will not be covered by the Framework's focus on natural resource and energy sector development and there is a good chance that economic development programs developed under aegis of the Framework will predominantly benefit Aboriginal men.

#### *Unemployment Rates*

Annex B notes that the employment rate of Aboriginal peoples is much lower than that of non-aboriginal peoples—63% versus 76%, and that it is even less for Aboriginal women. The reason given for this gender differential is that Aboriginal women have lower labour force activity. This appears to be saying that fewer Aboriginal women have chosen to work in the formal sector as opposed to that there is a higher unemployment rate among Aboriginal women. This assertion needs to be clarified and an analysis provided of why there might be a lower labour activity rate for Aboriginal women. For example, it could be as there are fewer jobs

available in the areas in which women tend to predominate, or due to the lower wages across the board which then make these jobs less attractive. Another possibility could be that there is a stronger cultural tradition in many Aboriginal communities for families to provide elder care as opposed to using an institutional option (although this may be, in part, due to a relative lack of access to elder care support in rural areas). As the primary responsibility for elder care falls upon Aboriginal women this would also limit the time women have available for paid employment. Aboriginal economic development experts also suggest that lack of access to childcare is a major factor preventing many Aboriginal women from being able to seek paid work. This is of a particular concern given the rising rates of single parent households headed by women in Aboriginal communities.

Further development of any economic development programs for Aboriginal women therefore will need to both assess what are the underlying factors that are contributing to lower labour force activity among Aboriginal women. If this is not done and if economic development programming does not take these factors into account then Aboriginal women's access to these federally funded support services is likely to be more limited than it is for Aboriginal men. There is also a need to take into account the fact that not all Aboriginal women and men are a part of the wage economy. This does not mean that they are unemployed or not economically active, but that either part or all of their subsistence comes from non-waged activities. It would be important therefore to assess whether there is a significant difference in the numbers of Aboriginal women and men who work outside of the wage economy and what is the significance of this for the FFAED.

#### *Geographic Location*

There are significantly higher proportions of Aboriginal women living in urban areas. Currently among the Inuit and Registered Indian populations less than half live in urban areas, 27 to 31% of Inuit living in urban areas, and 43% to 47% of the Registered Indian population. For Aboriginal women at least 5% more in the age group 15 to 64 live in urban areas than do men. This rises to 9% more for Aboriginal women over the age of 65 (Hull, 2007). This again begs

the question of the focus on developing natural resource and energy industries outlined in the Framework as in general Aboriginal peoples living in urban areas will have less opportunities and access to economic development opportunities in those sectors, and given the geographic location differentials among Aboriginal women and men, women will have even less access.

#### *Access to Assets*

Aboriginal women living in major cities across Canada also have higher rates of government transfers than Aboriginal men and the non-aboriginal population. Rexe in a critique of the Framework presented at Trent University's Indigenous Women's Symposium noted that,

differences in income, employment and government transfers are supplementing the needs of families, not just individuals. This also indicates women and families are relying on the social welfare state to meet their basic needs. (Rexe, 2009)

The significance of this and the fact that income levels are so low among Aboriginal women is that many of these women will have little or no financial assets they can use to invest in new business development or existing business expansion. Given that on most reserves there is no individual property ownership, for those women living on reserves, this means that they have to rely on savings or government-backed loans to finance business investment. With their lower incomes this generally means that Aboriginal women living in rurally based reserves also will have lower savings levels than men. This makes access to credit or start-up grants an even more critical form of support for Aboriginal women than it is for Aboriginal men—although both groups experience high levels of poverty.

#### *Existing Aboriginal Businesses*

Annex B notes that there are 27,000 self-employed Aboriginal people in Canada and that they are creating businesses at approximately nine (9) times the rate of the non-aboriginal population. The statistics provided are not disaggregated by sex so it is not possible to determine if there is any significant differential between male and female self-employed. Access to this sex-disaggregated is a key piece of information needed to determine the extent of

economic development support needed for Aboriginal women and men and if there is a need to tailor particular programs to women and others for men, depending upon the sectors in which they are working.

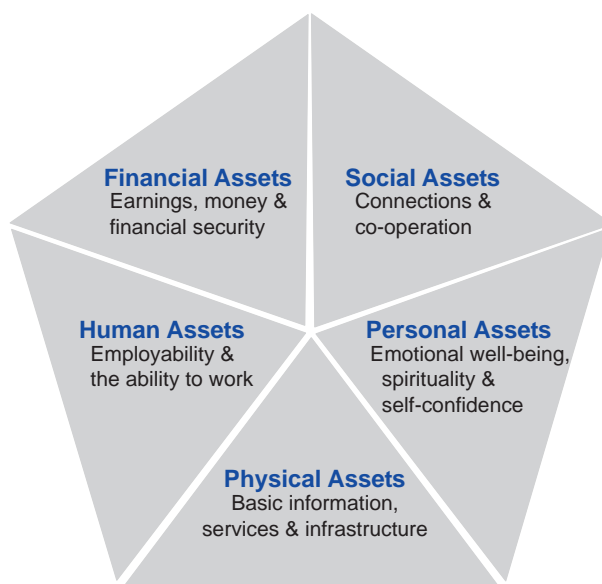
Annex B also does not note that there appears to be a new trend towards a decline in Aboriginal business start-ups. Also of concern is that fact that even the rate of business start-ups outlined in the Annex is not sufficient to keep up with the growing demand for jobs among the Aboriginal population. It is a relatively young population with a higher growth rate than among the non-Aboriginal population. Therefore while the creation of new Aboriginal-owned businesses is an important plank in the FFAED, it has to be complemented fairly substantially by programs to ensure that Aboriginal women and men can access jobs in non-Aboriginal owned businesses and other institutions.

The Annex also notes that there 50 Aboriginal Financial Institutions grouped under the National Aboriginal of Capital Corporation Asso-

ciation that provide developmental business financing and advice. It would be critical to find out from these institutions what percentage and quantity of money they are lending or giving to business owned by Aboriginal women and men and if there are any differences in the lending criteria for women and men. For loans which have collateral requirements, Aboriginal women will be at a significant disadvantage and there may be a need for these institutions to consider alternative models of asset assessment that take into account.

The Assets Map outlined in Figure 1 provides an example of an alternative approach which assesses an individual's ability to run a business and pay back any loans given from the perspective of financial, social, human, physical and personal assets. For example, in this assessment model personal assets include factors such as emotional well being, spirituality and self-confidence and social assets a person's connections and networking abilities. Thus if an Aboriginal woman had little or no capital but is well

**FIGURE 1**  
Assets Map



Source: Adapted from *Women in Transition Out of Poverty* by Eko Nomos (Women and Economic Development Consortium, 2001).



grounded in her community and could count on the cooperation and support of her network of family and friends, this would be counted as a positive factor that would likely influence her business success and ability to pay back her loan. There are also assets assessment models that are Aboriginal-focused and which take factors such as community, geographic location, and nation into account as assets.

#### *Relevance of Economic Focus Area*

Current analysis of the federal government's overall economic stimulus package also calls into question whether a focus on natural resource and energy sector development will create sustainable jobs, or predominantly those that are seasonal in nature. The business areas in which Aboriginal women predominate may have a greater potential for creating sustainable development and job creation.

The other critique of an economic development framework focused on natural resource and energy sector development is that it ignores the economic area where Canada has seen a great deal of growth in the last decade, that of the creative sector. Further study would be needed to determine how Aboriginal women and men could take advantage of this growth and what kinds of skills training programs would be needed to facilitate this. The lower levels of secondary and post-secondary education among Aboriginal peoples in Canada would be an important factor to address in developing related economic development programs. There would also be a need to look at the impact of the digital divide from a geographic and gender perspective on the development of future businesses and job opportunities for Aboriginal women and men in the creative economy.

#### *Control and Ownership*

The New Federal Framework encourages the fostering of partnerships between Aboriginal peoples and the non-aboriginal population, particularly in the natural resource and energy sectors. While Annex B notes the number of self-employed Aboriginal people in Canada it does not address who owns or controls most of the businesses in these sectors (i.e., predominantly members of the non-aboriginal population) and how this kind of unequal economic relationship

might affect the ability of Aboriginal women and men to enter into positive and constructive business partnerships in these industries. Cultural and economic issues have also created a situation in which Aboriginal men generally have more experience in public leadership than Aboriginal women. This experience can also affect how well members of each group are able to negotiate equal partnerships and to ensure that all partners are benefiting equally or fairly from the new partnerships. Therefore training in negotiating partnerships and in determining what kind of partnership and control Aboriginal women want and need will also be an important input needed from the programming generated by the Framework.

#### *Barriers to Economic Development*

The Context section also provides a list of common barriers to economic development encountered by Aboriginal men and women:

- Inability to access capital
- Legislative and regulatory barriers
- Limited access to lands and resources
- Deficits in human capital
- Infrastructure deficits
- Lack of governance capacity
- Fragmented federal approach to economic development and limited federal funding

These barriers also need to be analyzed from a gender perspective as there are significant differences in the degree and type of barriers encountered by Aboriginal women and men. For example, significantly more men than women have experience in band and business governance; Aboriginal women have lower incomes than men and therefore have less capital, etc.

#### *Summary*

Overall the context section and Annex B do not provide a gender analysis and do not identify the key gender issues affecting Aboriginal women and men related to economic development. It also does not identify how these gender issues and difference could influence which specific groups of men and women will benefit from the "New Federal Framework for Aboriginal Economic Development". Therefore there is a strong need for a revised Framework to include this type of more in-depth gender

analysis and to discuss the implications of the results of this analysis in the development of any related policies and programming stemming from the Framework.

## DIMENSIONS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The dimensions of economic development looks at three broad areas: Activation, taking advantage of opportunities; Base, building economic potential; and Climate, creating the right economic conditions. To make these dimensions more inclusive and gender-sensitive, a more in depth understanding of the foundation of women's development, roles, and contributions they make to the economy can be constructed by adding to the knowledge of the following categories to each section:

### Activation

- Business development for Aboriginal women and men
- Balanced job creation for Aboriginal women and men
- Community investment strategies that strengthen the base by focusing on a holistic approach to asset mapping
- Recognition of the returns to the community and family of an investment in women
- Recognition of and support for women's role as change agents
- Both major and small project participation
- Fostering of private sector partnerships that recognizes that different ways men and women build their businesses

### Base

- Land and natural resources
- Tourism and cultural industries
- Micro-enterprise and small business
- Physical and social infrastructure
- Aboriginal women and men
- Rebuilding pride and healing

### Climate

- Impact of legal and regulatory climate on Aboriginal women and men
- Gender-balanced governance and institutions
- Fiscal capacity and arrangements
- Impact of poverty on Aboriginal women and men's potential

- Impact of lateral violence on Aboriginal women

This section then presents a series of discussion questions that different stakeholders can address for each of these three areas. None of the questions outlined address any of the gender issues related to any of the three dimensions. The following represents some suggestions for how these questions could be revised to integrate a gender equality element.

### The Economic Activation

- How can linkages and *equitable* partnerships be established with the private sector, especially with energy, major resource development projects *and in the tourism and cultural industries?*
- Are the right supports in place for labour market development *for both Aboriginal women and men?* Business development? Community development?
- Do communities have the tools and supports to identify their economic potential and plan for its development *for both men and women?*

### What Can Be Done?

- How could *Aboriginal women and men's* access to commercial capital (debt and equity) be improved?
- How could the network of Aboriginal financial institutions be strengthened to serve as the key platform for small business development *for both women and men?*
- How could investment partnerships for major projects in the resource, energy, *tourism and cultural industry sectors* be better promoted?
- How could economic development programming be reformed to emphasize pooling assets and raising levels of expertise *among both Aboriginal women and men?*
- How could new partnerships within the federal family be formed to better promote *gender-sensitive and equitable* economic development?

### The Economic Base

- How can the economic potential of Aboriginal land and resources be fully assessed and realized *by both Aboriginal women and men in a*

*way that respects cultural values and practices related to Aboriginal land and resource use and ownership?*

- How can we ensure that Aboriginal *women and men* receive the skills and training they need to participate in the labour market *and ensure that both sexes have access to jobs that pay a reasonable wage?*
- How can infrastructure better support *gender equitable* investment and development?
- How could investments in *Aboriginal women and men*, such as education and social assistance, be better connected to economic development *and delivered in a way that is gender equitable?*

### What Can Be Done?

- How could innovative approaches to infrastructure financing be developed to better leverage private investment *in businesses owned by both Aboriginal women and men?*
- How could a demand-driven employment strategy connected to education and Aboriginal business development better facilitate *gender-sensitive and equitable* economic development?
- How could there be a systematic identification of the economic potential of community assets and opportunities *for both Aboriginal women and men?*

### The Economic Climate

- How can we ensure that the legal environment best serves the business sector and economic activity?
- Do Aboriginal governments have the fiscal capacity to support economic development *for both women and men?*
- Are institutional structures appropriate to, and effective in, support of *gender-sensitive and equitable* economic development?

### What Can Be Done?

- How could *gender-sensitive and equitable* partnerships between the private sector and Aboriginal people be better facilitated?
- How could these partnerships be structured to address the duty to consult/accommodate *both women and men?*

- What are the main barriers (*including gender barriers*) to economic development in the Indian Act?
- What could be done to address these barriers?
- What are the barriers to the full participation of *Aboriginal women and men*, communities and businesses in these opportunities?
- How can these barriers best be addressed?
- How can the federal government improve its contribution to the economic development of *Aboriginal women and men*, businesses and institutions?
- What can *Aboriginal women and men*, businesses, institutions and leaders do to realize their role as full economic partners?
- How can we best engage the commitment of all stakeholders to ensure that the new framework continues to evolve and reflect new economic conditions and opportunities?

### Some General Questions

- What specific opportunities, now and in the future, do you see for *Aboriginal women and men* and businesses to participate more fully in the Canadian economy?
- How can the strengths of *Aboriginal women and men*, businesses and institutions contribute to making these opportunities a reality?
- What investment and contribution can government and non-Aboriginal institutions and businesses make *to support culturally and gender sensitive economic development among Aboriginal men and women and in Aboriginal communities?*

### PRIOR RESEARCH ON ABORIGINAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Despite representing slightly over 50% of the Aboriginal population, only 6% of the 120 research studies on Aboriginal Economic Development focused on Aboriginal women and the specific conditions affecting their success rates and access to new economic opportunities. The literature that focused on Aboriginal women included the following:

1. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Women's Issues and Gender Equality Directorate. (2001). *Aboriginal Women: A*

- Profile From The 2001 Census*. Ottawa, Ontario.
2. Indigenous Research & Policy. (2003). *Filling in the Gaps: Supports for Aboriginal Women Entrepreneurs Phase 1: Mentoring Services*. Ottawa, Ontario: Sinclair, J.
  3. Maxim, P. (2002). *A Sectoral Analysis of Aboriginal Women in the Labour Force*.
  4. Native Management Services. (2006). *Empowering Aboriginal Women in Economic and Community Development: Results of a National Consultation*. Ohsweken, Ontario: Jamieson, M.
  5. Native Women's Association of Canada. (2004). *Background Paper for the Canada-Aboriginal Peoples Economic Opportunities Roundtable*. Ottawa, Ontario.
  6. Prime Minister's Task Force On Women Entrepreneurs. (2003). *Report and Recommendations*. Ottawa, Ontario.  
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The contents of these studies bear careful reading to help provide a more in-depth background on what are the differences between the socio-economic conditions of Aboriginal women and men and how these differences should be addressed by the New Federal Framework for Aboriginal Economic Development in order to ensure more equitable economic development among the Aboriginal population

## REVIEW OF ANNEXES

### Annex A: Spending on the Aboriginal Portfolio

This annex provides a Web link to a compendium of Government of Canada programs and expenditures directed specifically to Aboriginal people. Almost all of the programs outlined feature a gender-integrated approach and appear to address the needs of the Aboriginal community at large. It is not clear from the program titles if these programs are reaching more women or

men or if Aboriginal men and women have equitable access to these services. That would require a program by program review and likely differs a great deal from program to program depending upon the nature of the program, e.g, high school education appears to be benefiting Aboriginal women more while economic development programs seem to be having a stronger impact on Aboriginal men. Only two of the multiple programs provided appeared to be explicitly directed towards women, the Women's Program Policy and External Relations (SWC) \$1,220K and the Women Offenders Substance Abuse for Aboriginal Offenders (CSC) \$766K. Neither of these explicitly addressed economic development issues affecting Aboriginal women.

It would not be practical or feasible to review each program from the perspective of the relative access of Aboriginal women and men to these services. However, as a part of the research and gender analysis needed to reformulate the New Federal Framework for Aboriginal Economic Development it would be useful to review any of the programs related to economic development to assess male/female usage of these services, based on existing program performance reports. This information could then be used to help determine where some of the key gender gaps in economic development services lie.

### Annex C: Government Response to the Sixth Report of the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples — Sharing Canada's Prosperity — A Hand Up, Not a Hand Out

This response statement reiterates support for a focus on natural resource and energy sectors and does not address or identify any of the differences between Aboriginal women and men's socio-economic conditions as a significant factor that will help determine which specific groups benefit from any new programming generated by the Framework.

#### *Procurement Recommendations*

It states that the Procurement Strategy for Aboriginal Businesses will be reviewed to determine its effectiveness. This review should also include an assessment of how many Aboriginal businesses owned by women and by men have

been successful in obtaining government contracts and what have been the size of these contracts. The review should further develop some case studies to generate an understanding of the experiences of women in access opportunities, and the general impact of the program on their business development. This would provide the federal government and the Aboriginal business community with a sense of whether there are any significant gender differences in the contracts awards processes and if there is a need to analyze if there are any hidden gender barriers in these processes.

#### *Aboriginal Financial Institutions*

The response describes the Aboriginal Financial Institutions (AFIs) that will continue to receive federal government support, but does not provide any indication if there will be any assessment of the reach and performance of these institutions with regard to Aboriginal women and men. A disaggregated review of the users of the existing financial services would be a critical first step in determining if there is a service gap with regard to business financing for either Aboriginal women or men.

In a recent program audit of AFIs done by KPMG it is noted that there are currently 59 AFIs in operation and that these AFIs provide financial lending services to Aboriginal clients in remote, rural, and urban areas across the country that would generally not be provided through conventional financial institutions due to the high risk nature of these loans. Their audit defines two primary types of AFIs. One are the Aboriginal Capital Corporations (ACCs) established as non-governmental entities, owned and controlled by Aboriginal people, to provide loans, loan guarantees and related services to this market in their local constituencies. These ACCs typically serve First Nations businesses, First Nations communities, Métis and Non-Status Indians, and other sectors such as agriculture, fishing, energy, etc. (KPMG, 2007) It would be critical to analyze which sectors these ACCs are supporting to determine if there is a bias towards male-dominated sectors or if Aboriginal women's businesses are being under-served.

The second type of AFI includes the Aboriginal Community Futures Development Corporations (ACFDCs). These are local community-focused institutions that typically have

smaller loan portfolios than do ACCs. The KPMG program audit notes that the ACCs were intended to be self-sustaining while ACFDCs were designed to receive annual operating subsidies and selective increases in investment capital. All of these AFIs need to participate in a gender audit to determine if there is an equitable reach to Aboriginal women and men.

#### *Increased Access to Lands and Resources*

The recommendations in this section need to be expanded to include a definition of indigenous knowledge as a community resources and culturally and gender-sensitive protection extended to cover these resources in any new economic development partnerships and agreements initiated through the new Framework.

#### *Training and Education*

The recommended actions include the following:

- Strengthen apprenticeship, literacy and numeracy programs targeting Aboriginal learners
- Provide fiscal incentives to companies that develop/offer Aboriginal apprenticeship programs, including workplace literacy and numeracy programs.

The Government of Canada's response is supportive of these recommendations. However, as with the rest of the Framework there is a need to ensure that there is equitable access to these education and training services for both Aboriginal women and men. There is also a need to ensure that the skills training programs offered do not reinforce the existing gender-based occupational segregation that is predominant among the Aboriginal population. The education and skills training programs also need to work to ensure that Aboriginal women have increased access to skills training that will bring them increased income and not maintain them in low wage positions or businesses. Any skills training programs will also need to take into account the full scope of the challenge. For example, a recent government report noted that nearly three-quarters of Nunavut's working age population do not meet the minimum level required to participate in a modern knowledge-based economy (O'Neill, 2009).

### *Indian Act Barriers to Economic Development on Reserve*

There remain some significant gender barriers and forms of gender discrimination in the Indian Act, particularly with regard to land tenure and ownership. From a gender perspective, predominant among these are matrimonial property issues. While the Indian Act has been changed so that there is no longer discrimination against women who marry non-Aboriginal husbands, there is still an issue of who owns the family home in the event of divorce. The problem stems from a legislative gap between the federal Indian Act and provincial jurisdiction which does not provide clear property rights to Aboriginal women in the event of death of a spouse or marital separation. The provincial laws on these issues do not apply to land on reserves, and therefore are governed by the Indian Act. This Act, however, has no provisions for equal division of property and other assets when a marriage ends on for a couple living on a reserve (Petitpas-Taylor, n.d.).

This problem is further aggravated by the fact that in the past, INAC only gave Certificates of Possession (CPs) for home ownership to the eldest male member of a family. This system replaced the traditional, and in some cases, matrilineal system of land-holding. It also has meant that Aboriginal women can wind up being forced to live off the reserve as she has no clear title to the matrimonial home and as there is often a shortage of alternative housing. In 1986, for example, in the Derrickson case, the courts held that a woman cannot apply for possession of the matrimonial home unless the Certificate of Possession is solely in her name. The most she can hope for is an award of compensation to replace her half-interest in the house (Petitpas-Taylor, n.d.).

This can have a negative impact if the divorce is acrimonious and lead to the non-registered partner not having access to collateral for credit to pay for retraining or a business start-up. However, the Framework and the government response have not addressed any of this type of legal issues that have a gender base. A gender analysis of these barriers and the development of a strategy to either address these issues or a mitigation strategy are absolutely

essential as a part of the overall development of any new programs based on the Framework.

### *Infrastructure Deficits*

In setting up the proposed infrastructure projects it will be critical to determine what kinds of jobs these infrastructure projects will create and who will have access to them. If, as is likely due to occupational gender segregation in the infrastructure sector, the majority of these infrastructure jobs will be held by Aboriginal men, then there is a need to invest a similar amount of funding to invest in the economic sectors that will help generate jobs for Aboriginal women. This would be essential in order to maintain a degree of equity with regard to new job creation for Aboriginal women and men.

### *Partnerships with Industry*

It was recommended that the federal government take a lead role in facilitating partnerships between Aboriginal people and industry, including implementing tax incentives to encourage such partnerships. The government response highlights their existing partnership programs, several of which appear to have been fairly successful. For future initiatives of this nature there is a need to ensure that both the government personnel and different industry partners involved are trained to be sensitive to the cultural and gender differences in how Aboriginal men and women do business. The Aboriginal women and men involved also may need training on cross-cultural business approaches and how to negotiate effectively in this context.

## **CONCLUSION**

The "New Federal Framework for Aboriginal Economic Development" as it is currently presented has not adequately represented either the significant differences between Aboriginal women and men's socio-economic conditions or their respective contributions to their communities. Instead it focuses attention on economic development in sectors that are male-dominated in terms of ownership and employment. If left as presently structured, the implementation of the Framework will both reinforce and exacerbate existing inequities between Aboriginal women and men and will miss out on some highly viable opportunities for economic develop-

ment in which Aboriginal women predominate. Consequently, there is a need for greater balance in the approaches the Framework takes and in the sectors where new funding and attention will be focused.

The framework does not include any gender analysis nor does it appear to be informed in a significant way by the results of a prior gender analysis. The government response to the Framework is equally gender-blind. The Framework's main principles and approaches therefore need to be revised to ensure that the approach is both culturally and gender-sensitive and gender equitable. To do this, the entire Framework needs to assess and take into account the primary differences in access to economic resources and opportunities for Aboriginal men and women and their respective contributions to their communities and families, as well as develop approaches that both take these differences and contributions into account to ensure more equitable solutions.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

To do this adequately the Framework needs to be based on an in-depth analysis of the following issues and factors:

1. A gender analysis of the key barriers to economic development for Aboriginal women and men.
2. An assessment of existing businesses owned by Aboriginal women to determine if the barriers and obstacles they encounter are similar or different in nature and degree than those faced by those owned by Aboriginal men, to determine in which sectors men and women's businesses are concentrated, as well as what kinds of supports and catalysts would be most effective to support the growth of their respective businesses.
3. A gender analysis of what factors need to be in place to stimulate new business start-ups for Aboriginal women and to which resources they have access, as well as what are their priorities for economic development and in which sectors they would concentrate new business start-ups.
4. A gender analysis of the Aboriginal labour force to determine both what human resources are available to support new economic development for Aboriginal businesses, as well as what factors are limiting Aboriginal women from being able to benefit from their higher levels of high school graduation.
5. A gender audit of AFIs to determine if their policies and programs are reaching relatively equal numbers of Aboriginal men and women.
6. The impact of poverty and violence on economic development for Aboriginal women and men.

The Framework also needs to consider ways to be more inclusive of the priorities, needs and contributions of Aboriginal women. This would include, but not be restricted to, the following:

1. Including supports for a continuum of different types of programming to support different business approaches (e.g., social enterprises, small, micro-start-ups, etc.).
2. Expanding the sectoral focus to include tourism and cultural industries.
3. Ways to ensure balanced job creation for Aboriginal women and men from the perspective of both the numbers of new jobs created and their respective remuneration levels.
4. Recognizing Aboriginal women's valuable role as change agents in their communities.
5. Developing economic development strategies that take into account the different realities, challenges and opportunities facing Aboriginal women living in rural and urban areas and whether they are located in the North or the South.
6. Determining what kind of supports would be needed to ensure that Aboriginal women and men can take advantage of the new opportunities being generated by the creative economy.
7. Formation of an Advisory Board on Economic Development for Aboriginal women.
8. Making a strong commitment to work with women and women's organizations to ensure mechanisms that are identified are put in place to support, promote and advance the equitable distribution of benefits and opportunities that expand the life

<b>ANNEX 1</b> Summary of Key Access and Control Framework Elements	
<p><b>1. The division of labour by sex</b> Analysis of the division of labour by sex in the productive sector, as well as at the community and household levels.</p>	<p>Women and men's responsibilities in any given sector vary from culture to culture and from community to community.</p> <p>This division of labour is dynamic and can change over time.</p> <p>It is often based on the perception that certain characteristics are inherently male or female and are unchangeable, when in fact they are shaped by ideological, historical, religious, ethnic, economic and cultural factors, all of which change over time.</p>
<p><b>2. Types of work</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Productive</li> <li>• Reproductive</li> <li>• Community</li> </ul>	<p><b>Productive work:</b> Refers to any work related to the production of goods and services for consumption and trade.</p> <p><b>Reproductive work:</b> Involves the care and maintenance of the household and its members (bearing and caring for children, food preparation, water and fuel collection, shopping for household support and consumption, housekeeping and family health care).</p> <p><b>Community work:</b> Involves the collective organization of social events and services, ceremonies, celebrations, community improvement activities, local political activities, etc. This can be voluntary or paid work.</p>
<p><b>3. Access to and Control over Resources and Benefits</b> Analysis of which sex has control over and access to the resources they need to support their activities in the productive, reproductive and community spheres and how this affects economic development.</p>	<p>Men and women traditionally have different levels of access to resources and control over the means of production and the right to obtain services, products or commodities in the private (household) or public spheres.</p> <p>Gender gaps in access to and control over resources are a major obstacle to development for women, girls and marginalized men.</p>

Source: Adapted from Kartini International. 2006. Staff Gender Toolkit. Washington D.C.: Organization of American States.

chances and choices of Aboriginal women and girls.

In addition, since the unequal power relations that exist between women have led to women having a subordinate status even within the same class, gender analysis has tended to focus primarily on women's situation. However, it is important to conduct any gender analysis from *both* a male and female perspective to understand how any given inputs will affect both

sexes — both as separate groups and in relation to each other.

The primary categories of analysis in the Access and Control Framework are as follows:

### **Division of Labour by Sex**

#### *Reproductive Labour*

- Since women tend to have the main responsibility for reproductive labour, they work an average of two to five hours more per day



than men in almost all countries, especially in the rural areas.

- Gender analyses of the sexual division of labour often shows women's labour is actually over-utilized as opposed to under-utilized. Therefore, it is critical to ensure that new policies, programs and projects do not increase women's workloads or work and recognize their availability to take part in the training programs, etc. required to establish a new business or to grow an existing one.

#### *Productive Labour*

- Within any given sector, women and men's labour still tends to be fairly differentiated by sex. This is particularly the case in natural resource industries where many of the jobs require high levels of strength or else long periods of absence from one's family.

Due to the division of labour by sex government policies and economic development programs often have a differential impact on women and men's conditions of life and the work that they each do.

#### *Community Labour*

- Community (or social) labour generally does not confer power on the worker. However, it often can bring people increased social status.
- Political labour at the community or micro level:
  - ✧ can be either paid or unpaid.
  - ✧ confers power and status on the person doing the work.
  - ✧ is often predominantly done by men, e.g., serving as chief.
  - ✧ requires a public presence.
- Community work done by women is generally unpaid and is often ascribed a lower status than that done by men.
- Because the division of labour by sex differs greatly from community to community and from country to country, it is not safe to assume that a policy, program or project will have a uniform impact on women and men.
- The impact that community labour has on economic development is also closely related to how much time women and men have to develop new businesses or grow existing ones,

depending upon who is performing which type of community service.

- It also affects who has access to and control over which community resources are used to develop which kinds of community resources and who is funded.

#### **Other Categories of Analysis**

- Access
- Participation
- Control
- Influencing Factors

The key categories of analysis used in this framework are outlined below. This is followed by a short list of questions related to each empowerment level that are specific to health information systems. This list and analysis is intended as a guideline only at this stage of this assignment.

#### *Access*

Access refers to women and men's access to resources such as information, the Internet, land, credit, labour, services and other factors of production and finding ways to measure if women and have equitable access to these resources.

#### *Participation*

Participation refers to decision-making at all levels of development. The gender gap between women and men's participation in both formal and informal decision-making processes is a highly visible phenomena and one that is easily quantified. It is critical in this context from the perspective of who will be making the decision regarding resource allocation to support Aboriginal economic development, as well as who makes the decisions within the businesses and partnerships.

#### *Control*

Gender gaps are also due to unequal power relations between women and men. It is based on an imbalance between male and female ownership of the means of production and control over decisions regarding their allocation and use. Gender analysis at this level examines who owns what or controls what (to determine if gender is a factor in these decisions and if

there are constructive and practical mechanisms for addressing any significant gaps found).

### *Influencing Factors*

The Access and Control Framework also assesses what are the external influencing factors in a particular context, such as the political and economic climate, prevailing beliefs regarding property ownership, urban or rural location, etc.

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