Understanding Manitoba's Growing Indigenous Economy

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AN OVERVIEW OF MANITOBA'S INDIGENOUS ECONOMY

Within the Canadian context, economic development stems from the broader sphere of community development. In order for one to achieve their desired economic goals, foundational elements of community are needed as a starting point for future success. Across Canada, each province has their own developmental goals pertaining to social, cultural, and economic motivations; they in turn serve as a microcosm of Canadian development as a whole. Ironically, however, not all opportunity is equal throughout Canada's multicultural land. A multitude of Indigenous communities, reserves, and individuals struggle to achieve economic success at the same rate as non-Indigenous peoples. However, conditions are improving for many Indigenous peoples across Canada, and many are presently achieving economic sustainability. The province of Manitoba's economy fosters opportunities for Indigenous economic success. Within this paper several instances of prosperity in Manitoba's Indigenous economy will be highlighted.

The history of Indigenous economic development in Canada highlights the importance of traditional forms of economic self-reliance and reliance on traditional lands. Hence, control over traditional lands allows Indigenous peoples to decide what economic endeavours are best suited to sustained success. At the provincial level, the process of developing lands within Manitoba has allowed Indigenous peoples to generate own-source revenues, which flow back into Indigenous communities across Manitoba. Today in Manitoba, Indigenous economic development practices concentrate on the development of own-source revenue because it serves as a needed platform for obtaining economic sustainability (Ashton, Coueslan, Flett, et Jimenez, 2019, p. 5).

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The 53rd parallel separates the province of Manitoba into the north and south, and these two geographic regions will be used to highlight economic development across Manitoba. Infrastructure constitutes the "backbone of an economy; including, roads, airstrips, Internet connectivity, water and wastewater treatment, housing, education, health, and other community facilities and services" (Ashton et al., 2019, p. 65). In 2016, $420 million was spent on reserve infrastructure in Manitoba. Unfortunately, no data shows spending on off-reserve infrastructure. Arising out of this expenditure come direct and indirect employment, including the creation of 606 direct and 28 indirect jobs in the north, and 754 direct and 99 indirect jobs in the south. Furthermore, aside from the creation of jobs, this investment has induced opportunity for training in "trades, project management skills, and more" (Ashton et al., 2019, p. 68). On the whole, not only has infrastructure spending provided viable economic opportunities for Indigenous peoples across Manitoba, the developmental success of Indigenous economies constitutes a vital part of the larger Manitoba economy. A variety of successful initiatives will be reviewed in the following sections, beginning with profiles of two urban reserves.

URBAN RESERVES

"Urban reserves provide opportunities to expand and diversify revenue sources for First Nations" (Ashton et al., 2019, p. 102). An urban reserve is the addition of land that "has been transferred to a specific First Nation following a governmental process and fulfilling certain required conditions, such as the signing of a Municipal Development and Services Agreement" (Ashton et al., 2019, p. 103). Ultimately, urban reserves are designated as such due to their proximity to urban municipalities, which allows for a new stream of economic revenue for a community. Further, this allotment of land fulfills outstanding treaty obligations on behalf of the Government of Canada. Urban reserves provide Indigenous peoples with the opportunity to achieve their cultural, social, and economic goals, in addition to own-source revenue and economic self-reliance. Currently, there are 8 urban reserves throughout Manitoba, and 17 presently being evaluated through the Addition to Reserve process (ATR) (Ashton et al., 2019). An ATR is "a parcel of land that adds to the existing reserve or creates a new reserve", frequently leading to the creation of an urban reserve (Ashton et al., 2019, p. 105). Included amongst these 8 urban reserves are: Long Plain First Nation, Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation, Roseau River Anishinabe, Sapotaweyak Cree Nation, Swan Lake First Nation, and Opaskwayak Cree Nation. Despite each urban reserve having distinct characteristics and developmental goals, five common themes are present that interlink them in the end, highlighting how economic development goals extend throughout the entire Indigenous population of Canada (Ashton et al., 2019, p. 114):

1. Strong relationship with local governments and surrounding communities
2. Corporate structure and governance
3. Infrastructure
4. Land Development
5. Revenue Management

An analysis of two urban reserves in Manitoba will be provided for insight into how these Indigenous communities are working towards their economic goals. Overarching all

eight urban reserves is well-structured management of revenue. Revenue generated on an urban reserve is immediately "reinvested to improve the quality of life of First Nations' members and further the First Nations' economic development" (Ashton et al., 2019, p. 116). Likewise, revenue that is not reinvested is placed in a community trust fund, the reason being; applications for government funding will no longer be necessary when urban reserves set aside a "percentage of funding for programs that will socially benefit the community" (Ashton et al., 2019, p. 117). Overall, revenue that is generated throughout various Indigenous economies is used to better the community and its individual needs as a whole, in turn setting up success for future generations.

Long Plain First Nation

Long Plain First Nation has experienced exceptional economic success, starting with the initial land transfer of 45 acres in 1981 up until the completion of their urban reserve in 2013, progressing steadily so that social, cultural, and economic goals for the community are gradually achieved. In 2006, the purchase of 2.81 acres of prime property in central Winnipeg occurred, situated on Madison Street adjacent to Polo Park Shopping Centre. 2013 marked the official attainment of reserve status for the Madison Street property, which allowed Long Plain First Nation to develop new economic opportunities. Most notable was the development of a gas bar on Madison Street, renovation of Yellowquill College (Manitoba's first First Nations controlled post-secondary institution), and more revenue from "leasing space to commercial tenants" (Ashton et al., 2019, p. 128). The revenue generated from Long Plain First Nation's urban reserve has allowed children within the community to engage in several sports, together with providing social programming to 4,500 community members living on and off reserve. As a whole, Long Plain First Nation has reached a point of economic self-reliance. The future goal is to ensure a solid ability of self-reliance in five years. Long Plain First Nation aspires to have four urban reserves, a hotel and business centre at their main reserve in Portage la Prairie and their urban reserve in Winnipeg, a truck stop, and cannabis stores (Ashton et al., 2019). Furthermore, current and future development has allowed Long Plain First Nation to increase their sovereignty and develop into an autonomous nation, as "the main goal of the reserve is to generate revenue for the band to reinvest on the home community" (Bezamat-Mantes, 2014, p. 11). In particular, investing in reserve infrastructure leads to the creation of new job and economic opportunities. In keeping with this, Long Plain First Nation's urban reserve will accelerate growth and benefit other Indigenous peoples within Winnipeg, seen in potential "tax exemption on tobacco, gas and other products" (Bezamat-Mantes, 2014, p. 11). The revenue generated on the urban reserve will enhance Long Plain First Nation's economic independence, as the revenue is independent of government intervention, in turn strengthening their capacity for self-reliance. Equally, Long Plain First Nation's success benefits the entire Indigenous population of Winnipeg.

Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation

About 690 kilometres from Long Plain First Nation is Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation (NCN), which is based in Nelson House, Northern Manitoba. Starting in 2018, NCN embarked upon a mission to "assert sovereignty and to ensure there is accountability and transparency in the decision-making process" (Ashton et al., 2019, p. 156). One approach NCN has taken to develop their economic sector is through the process of developing urban

land in Thompson, Manitoba, only 88 kilometres away. Stemming from this is a joint effort to establish a Development Corporation that would funnel profit generated by NCN into "capital, business development, and NCN government run programs" (Ashton et al., 2019, p. 157). Within the confines of the 4.21 acreage, the urban reserve in Thompson has several streams of income that work towards establishing sustainable development for NCN and across Northern Manitoba. The Mystery Lake Hotel, Trappers Tavern, and gas station are the primary sources of revenue, supported by the training provided by NCN to community members in hospitality, management, and accounting (Ashton et al., 2019). Such strategies are vital in diversifying a community's economic interests.

THE WUSKWATIM PROJECT

Urban reserves in Manitoba have unlocked success for some of its Indigenous population; however, Northern Manitoba-based Indigenous communities face different challenges, such as the limited access to a central urban centre and lack of government funding. Some feel a common theme prevailing across northern Indigenous communities has been the failure to prioritize long-term planning, as short-term economic ventures that yield fast profit are given precedence (Freylejer, 2012). In 1997, George Erasmus, former National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, emphasized the importance of creating businesses that can compete profitably over the long run in the global economy. Fast forward 22 years, the statements he made still resonate (Anderson, 1997). Completion of the generating station on the Burntwood River occurred in 2012 for the Wuskwatim dam, with construction and negotiations commencing in 1997. The project addressed some of NCN's community need for self-reliance. NCN became a business partner with Manitoba Hydro. NCN community members were a part of the planning process, and had the option to provide suggestions/insight in prospective planning. Furthermore, the Hydro Northern Training Initiative (HNTI) was a vital aspect of this project, due to the provision of funding it provided. Nonetheless, the success produced by the HNTI would only become sustainable if NCN and additional Indigenous communities were able to successfully "transfer this funding to managerial and business related training" (Freylejer, 2012, p. 26). Community leaders could focus on providing projects for newly skilled community members thus minimizing dependence on outside private forces, a counter-intuitive result that would hinder the success of the Wuskwatim project (Freylejer, 2012).

There were opponents to the Wuskwatim project. In 2004, Dr. Peter Kulchyski highlighted the unjust underpinnings of the Wuskwatim project that could pose serious complications for NCN in the future. NCN's agreement with Manitoba Hydro outlined a "maximum of one-third ownership" (Kulchyski, 2004, p. 5). Furthermore, NCN's ability to raise revenue hinged upon loans from Manitoba Hydro. Overall, NCN ran the risk of perpetual debt if the project did not reach success (Kulchyski, 2004).

> It is not my position to determine whether the financial risk makes good business sense or not; it is my position to suggest that the principles underlying the SOU (*The Summary of Understanding between NCN and Manitoba Hydro with Respect to the Wuskwatim Project*) mean that NCN is making a significant concession to Manitoba Hydro, effectively surrendering the struggle for getting a better deal based on either of the two treaties it signed. Financial compensation for a project, in my view, should derive from NCN treaty and Aboriginal rights to their own traditional territories rather than from taking a significant financial risk. (Kulchyski, 2004, p. 6)

Kulchyski's comments carry weight, as they highlight vital considerations that Indigenous communities must take into account when engaging in any development project. Although today Wuskwatim provides clean renewable energy, jobs, training, and contracts for NCN, Kulchyski's arguments need consideration (Wuskwatim Power Limited Partnership, n.d.). In cases of development in Northern Manitoba, particularly hydro development, often the underlying motive for Indigenous peoples is financial gain to benefit their communities; and rightfully so, but future models structured in accordance with the Wuskwatim project have the possibility of producing a "legacy of distrust for the generations who will follow" (Kulchyski, 2004, p. 10).

"NCN's participation was coordinated through its Future Development Team that considered economic benefits to the NCN through jobs, training and business opportunities during construction, and long-term benefits through sustainable income from power sale" (Sajid, 2016, p. 3). Local economic benefits for NCN arose throughout the duration of the project and further materialized at its completion in 2012, and in subsequent years. Such benefits included $3 million provided annually to NCN for community programs. The retention of jobs and training following the project was important to ensuring that benefits would not travel south, a critical issue that had affected previous Indigenous hydroelectric projects.. Manitoba's Indigenous youth represent the future of the Indigenous economy in Manitoba, and NCN ensured that local and surrounding Indigenous youth would have the opportunity to further their own cultural, social, and economic development, as opposed to "inheriting the responsibility" of fixing community challenges (Sajid, 2016, p. 4). It has been well documented that the characteristics of a hydro development project often entail loss of control and self-reliance, in addition to damaged lands and broken promises. Nevertheless, success can result when Indigenous partnership is prioritized and valued. Once more, the statements made by George Erasmus are shown to be accurate, as the Wuskwatim project reflects an economic development undertaking centered on an individual First Nation. Moreover, Erasmus stressed the importance of creating a business that can compete profitably over the long run in the global economy and also assists in building the economy necessary to support self-government and improve socioeconomic conditions (Anderson, 1997). In my opinion, the success of the Wuskwatim project did prioritize NCN's long-term interests, leading to NCN establishing themselves as a model for "Indigenous communities as decision makers" (Sajid, 2016, p. 14).

THE LOOK NORTH INITIATIVE

Implementation of a framework is necessary for Indigenous communities, as action plans help nurture and imbue motivation within the collective community. Such an action plan is seen in the Look North initiative, primarily directed by Christian Sinclair, Chief of Opaskwayak Cree Nation. The Look North Initiative is a road map, "designed based on the dreams and aspirations of the people of Northern Manitoba" (*Look North*, 2017, p. 4). Stemming from this are three key goals (*Look North*, 2017, p. 7):

1. Inspiring an economic movement in Northern Manitoba,
2. Identifying sustainable and long-term solutions that lead to economic growth and diversification, and
3. Building understanding and collaboration across communities.

Starting in 2016, there has been considerable effort to generate direction from communities themselves, as they are the ones who understand their own needs and what is needed to achieve their future goals. Within this timeframe, meetings with several Indigenous communities occurred throughout 2017, including Oxford House First Nation, God's Lake First Nation, and St. Theresa Point First Nation. Engagement was also achieved through community members submitting ideas online through the Look North Initiative website. Common themes emerged:

Indigenous communities have stated that they are prepared to develop a framework that would allow them to enter into partnerships. Thus, partnerships hinge on the success of Indigenous cooperation between industries and government support. Infrastructure is critical, as it serves as a gateway into "northern prosperity" (*Look North*, 2017, p. 17). Here again, the need for sufficient infrastructure arises, as it is the backbone of an economy, while providing new economic opportunities. In addition, an Enterprise Eco-System of Support needs to be infused in school, which in turn will allow this perspective to become ingrained in youth, leading towards motivated youth who seek successful, responsible development for their community and Indigenous peoples of Manitoba (*Look North*, 2017).

Structural barriers play a large part in inhibiting Indigenous economic development, so in order to ensure success for the future, northern Indigenous communities must ask hard questions of internal, structural, policy and regulatory reform (*Look North*, 2017, p. 20). These questions could help in reducing government dependency, leading towards the infusion of initiative and an enterprise culture featuring new undertakings, ambition, and interest. As a result, "[this] behavioural challenge ... starts with raising awareness and increasing knowledge in order to change attitudes and behaviour to make enterprise the new 'business as usual' " (*Look North*, 2017, p. 22).

An action plan by the Look North Initiative suggests six issues that matter most to Northern Indigenous communities (Look North, 2017, p. 28):

1. Northern Mineral and Other Resource Potential
2. Indigenous Engagement and Partnerships
3. Strategic Infrastructure Investment
4. Housing Challenges and Opportunities
5. Enterprise Eco-System of Support
6. Education, Training and Workforce Development

Each action area will require identifying suitable strategies to achieve success in each sector. In my opinion, future Indigenous economic development in Northern Manitoba is destined for prolonged success, as the implementation of an Action Plan allows Indigenous peoples to focus on specific issues supported by a framework for action that could unlock the North.

The Métis Economic Development Organization

Within Manitoba, Indigenous economic development is demonstrated in the Métis Economic Development Organization (MEDO), which focuses on the goal of sustainable economic growth. MEDO is a for-benefit enterprise, meaning they "generate earned income but give top priority to an explicit social mission": in this case, the social mission being sustainable economic growth (Sabeti, 2011, p. 99). Blake Russell, CEO of MEDO, states that the

goal of MEDO is "to generate economic returns for the Métis government and a long-term sustainability model" (Collective Spark Communications, 2014). David Chartrand, President of the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF), stressed the importance of the Manitoba Métis body having the ability to "raise their own capital and own revenue (...) but more importantly having the ability to raise the ability of our Métis entrepreneurs to advance their businesses and grow their businesses" (Collective Spark Communications, 2014). MEDO is a facilitator for accomplishing both goals. Such goals reach fulfillment through MEDO subsidiary initiatives seen in the Métis Generation Fund, MEDO Developments LTD., and ESGS Marketing Group. In particular, the Métis Generation Fund allows Métis entrepreneurs to have the necessary capital and financial liquidity to participate in new economic and business ventures, particularly in "resource sectors such as mining, oil and gas, forestry, fishing, and renewable energy sectors", together with "major infrastructure projects" (MEDO, n.d.c). Additionally, MEDO Developments LTD. is a construction and land development organization that specializes in redevelopment opportunities, with participation from local community members at the forefront (MEDO, n.d.b). ESGS Marketing Group "provides clients with the communication, branding, marketing, sales, service, business development and procurement expertise required to provide sustained financial growth" (MEDO, n.d.a). Provision of services extends to Métis across Canada, accentuating MEDO's goal of creating economic opportunity for the entire Métis population on a national scale. In 2008, when the MMF was finalizing the implementation of the MEDO, it stressed the importance of "positioning Métis to seize economic opportunities when they are available; building networks, relationships, and partnerships among Métis, Métis businesses and the broader business community" (Hobbs & von Sicard, 2008, p. 13). Truly, MEDO has exceeded these goals; for instance, as noted by their $15 million real estate portfolio, which has allowed them to "create economic development through income earning properties, while at the same time the long-term strategies to actually create neighborhood development" (Collective Spark Communications, 2014). Indeed, MEDO has had resounding success that in all likelihood will bring about long-term economic sustainability.

Aki Energy, & Social Enterprise

The community of North Point Douglas hosts a social enterprise centre, containing several social enterprises, in particular the Indigenous social enterprise Aki Energy. Aki Energy seeks to provide employment for Indigenous communities in Winnipeg, while at the same time sustaining Indigenous economies (Policy Alternatives, 2018). For instance, Aki Energy worked with Garden Hill First Nation (GHFN) to build economic capacity and "sustainable business units" (Aki Energy, n.d.). Aki Energy worked with community members of GHFN to embark upon a new social enterprise: Meechim Inc. The proposed goal was to increase the production of food in GHFN. "Instead of planting a small batch of potatoes in the front yard, what if GHFN community members were planting 5 or 10 acres of potatoes, squash, and beans?" (Wood, Loney, et Taylor, 2015, p. 33). The revenue generated from the sale of this product on a larger scale would certainly add to their goal of prosperity and an independent economic stream of own-source revenue. Above all, supporting locally grown food allows for cyclical development of revenue that will continuously build up over time. Aki Energy and GHFN's efforts came to fruition in 2014, as 13 acres of land were devoted to this project, and spring of 2015 marked the commencement of their first growing season and new job opportunities for community members. Indeed, Meechim Inc. is a first-rate example

of a successful social enterprise, as its overarching goal works towards increasing GHFN sovereignty and sustainable economic development, in which case Meechim Inc. is an elemental factor in achieving this goal (Wood et al., 2015.).

Aki Energy addresses a concept called the *Leaky Bucket Economy*. "A place where money that comes into the community flows right back out again — creating no local jobs or economic benefit" (Wood et al., p. 10). In order to maintain the circulation of money within a community, Indigenous communities across Manitoba must train and educate community members, as well as supporting local business development. As a result, dependency is drastically diminished, and self-determination and reliance are achieved. Aki Energy uses the social enterprise approach, an approach that prioritizes positive community outcomes over the generation of profit. Increased revenue and job generation also occurs through energy reduction in Indigenous communities — that is, reduction through green energy. In addition, Indigenous peoples' use of green energy creates job opportunities and increases money retention. Geothermal energy is an example of green energy, and it provides heat and air conditioning through "the stable temperature of the ground just a few feet beneath the earth's surface" (Wood et al., p. 22). Aki Energy has worked with Indigenous communities across Manitoba in upstarting green energy projects, above all else, avoiding substantial up-front payments through Manitoba Hydro's Pay as You Save Program (PAYS). The *Energy Savings Act* was introduced in 2012 by the Government of Manitoba, connecting itself with PAYS, which enabled Indigenous communities to invest in green energy; Manitoba Hydro thereby pays the up-front cost and

> [collects] its money back over 20 years through small monthly charges on the utility bill. That monthly charge — and this is key — is guaranteed by the Manitoba Energy Savings Act to be lower than the monthly bill savings associated with the green energy. In other words, even though you are paying back the upfront cost, your overall bill is still guaranteed by Manitoba Hydro to be lower than when you started. (Wood et al., p. 22)

Implementation of PAYS occurred in 2013, with Peguis First Nation and Fisher River Cree Nation each installed 260 geothermal units respectively, amounting to $50, 000 a year in savings. In addition, this project created local job opportunities for Peguis First Nation and Fisher River Cree Nation, as 15 individuals from each community became certified geothermal energy installers and operators. More importantly, construction for both projects was completed using the local level of support, thus implicitly instilling initiative and social enterprise (Wood et al., 2015).

Cannabis Industry

While Winnipeg's social enterprise centre provides opportunities for Winnipeg's Indigenous peoples to engage in economic development initiatives, increased funding is still needed in order to provide equal opportunities for the entire Indigenous population of Winnipeg. "There is a need for resources to be made available at the neighbourhood level to enable people to develop and realize their ideas" (Loxley, 2010, p. 185). As a result, this will induce the mobilization of Winnipeg's Indigenous community to "draw on its inner strengths and abilities which will determine the paces of Aboriginal development in Winnipeg" (Loxley, 2010, p. 188). However, in the face of limited funding, social enterprises continue to nurture the development of Indigenous communities, in turn allowing for

exploration into new business ventures, as a result of the reinvestment of revenue into Indigenous communities. A contemporary commercial operation that has recently emerged is the cannabis market. Bill C-45, introduced in 2017 and became law in 2018, "enacts the *Cannabis Act* to provide legal access to cannabis, and to control and regulate its production, distribution, and sale" (Wilson-Raybould, 2017). In return, a new economy for Indigenous peoples is opened up, with significant economic implications. Cannabis has become an extremely profitable industry, with more than 10 licensed cannabis shops currently operating in Winnipeg. The National Indigenous Cannabis and Hemp committee has underscored the economic benefits that will affect "our communities for generations to come" (Doherty, 2018). Recently, the National Indigenous Cannabis and Hemp Conference occurred in February of 2019 in Toronto, Ontario. Invitees were leaders of Indigenous communities seeking to "create economic diversification, promote harm reduction, drive revenues, and generate job opportunities" (3rd National, n.d.).

A goal of Long Plain First Nation's urban reserve was achieved in the opening of Winnipeg's first urban reserve cannabis shop, Meta Cannabis Store. More importantly, all employed staff are from Long Plain First Nation's urban reserve, which underscores the importance of this economic endeavour (CBC News, 2018). In a similar manner, in July of 2018, Opaskwayak Cree Nation loaned $35 million to the National Access Cannabis Corporation in an effort to construct 50–70 cannabis shops across Western Canada. Chief Christian Sinclair considered the partnership to be a result of OCN seeing cannabis investment as "potentially more margin in retail than in any other parts of the industry value chain" (Opaskwayak, 2018). Indigenous communities across Manitoba have begun to capitalize on the economic returns of the thriving cannabis industry; Peguis First Nation makes no exception. One of the primary reasons Peguis First Nation has invested in cannabis is the opportunity to create sustainable development and long-term employment. Employment opportunities will be created through one of Manitoba's largest cultivation centres located in Winnipeg, owned and operated by Peguis First Nation. "These jobs will allow for careers for First Nations people in the cannabis industry" (Monkman, 2018). Chief Glenn Hudson makes note of this investment as a way to maintain and build their sovereignty through the generation of own-source revenue projected between $10 and $16 million annually (Monkman, 2018). Despite the cannabis controversy, the cannabis industry has opened up new employment opportunities for Indigenous peoples in Manitoba and across Canada. Having the opportunity to expand their respective economies through cannabis investment has produced new jobs and has placed Indigenous communities in a position for sustainable economic success.

Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce & The Indigenous Procurement Initiative

As stated by the National Aboriginal Economic Development Board, "there is a $2.8 billion gain available when First Nations achieve the same economic status of living as other Canadians" (Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce, 2018, p. 1). However, more important than the economic gain, this statistic highlights the persistent inequity in the Canadian economy, explicitly showing the structural barriers that continue to limit Indigenous people's participation in economic development. Originating in 2004, the Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce strives to improve Indigenous businesses and their growth, in addition to assisting in the development of new businesses. Recently, in conjunction with the Government of Manitoba,

the Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce developed the Indigenous Procurement Initiative (IPI). The IPI has several positive benefits, including: "stimulation of Indigenous business development and use of procurement practices to assist in the development of Indigenous businesses" (Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce, 2018, p. 2). Structural barriers still exist, inhibiting the full potential of the IPI. Procurement of major commodities in Manitoba is exempt from the IPI, such as "construction related procurement, construction of capital projects (i.e. buildings) and capital works programs (i.e. winter roads)" (Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce, 2018, p. 3). Thus, until the development of a more effective IPI, the realization of its full benefits will be limited. Of note, on April 11, 2019, the Procurement Opportunities for Indigenous Business event, sponsored by the Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce and Western Diversification Canada, took place in Winnipeg and provided procurement opportunities for Indigenous businesses. Each registered business had the opportunity to meet with several procurement officers in 15-minute segments (Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce, n.d.). This event marked a positive step forward for the economic development of Indigenous businesses in Manitoba.

LOOKING FORWARD

Indigenous economic development throughout Manitoba has reached a tipping point; that is, the current positive progress is moving to a threshold of achieving Indigenous economic prosperity through (1) Own-Source Revenue, (2) Curtailed Dependency, and (3) Sustainable Economic Practices. The impact of social enterprise cannot be forgotten; although not an explicit goal, it is an important vehicle in achieving self-determination. Development within Manitoba represents an opportunity for Indigenous peoples across Canada to consider current practices and make adjustments for their particular contexts. Ultimately, when one considers economic development, thoughts of profit, financial acquisition, and increased market share come to mind. Indigenous economic development embraces these aspects, but emphasis and priority are most commonly placed on community based perspectives, social missions, and increased self-determination. Economic development enables Indigenous peoples to achieve these goals, as their approach often captures traditional Indigenous foundations of honour, caring, sharing, and respect (Anderson, Dana, & Dana, 2006, p. 52). Indigenous economic development separates itself in its more holistic approach to achieving success, prioritizing social objectives over financial ones.

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