First Nations Economic Development Readiness Questionnaire

Ontario Ministry of Economic Development and Innovation
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Executive Summary

The First Nations Economic Development Readiness Questionnaire is a series of questions that can be used by a First Nations community to help determine its capacity for economic development. The Questionnaire was developed after many First Nations communities asked for help in developing a tool for assessing a community’s strengths, weaknesses and economic growth opportunities, and for determining its readiness to capitalize on these opportunities.

Input was received from a number of partners across Ontario and Canada, including the Chiefs of Ontario, the Union of Ontario Indians, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC), several First Nations communities, Economic Development Officers (EDOs), Aboriginal organizations, Trent and Algoma universities, and the public and private sectors.

The hope is that by using the Questionnaire to measure community capacity for economic development, First Nations communities will be in a much better position to plan long-term sustainable economic development. Communities can also use the tool to develop a “score card” to measure economic progress, and to develop and implement economic development strategies.

The Questionnaire consists of 205 questions divided into three broad sections; community, infrastructure and economic development, which are further divided into categories based on nationally accepted socio-economic indicators, e.g., business environment, leadership, communications. Once the Questionnaire is completed, community leaders can analyze the responses and report the results to the Chief and Council, who are then in a better position to draw on the results to support community strategic planning.
Q1. **What is the First Nations Economic Development Readiness Questionnaire?**

A. The First Nations Economic Development Readiness Questionnaire is a series of questions used to help a First Nations community determine its readiness for economic development. The Questionnaire is divided into three broad sections: community, infrastructure and economic development. These broad sections are further divided into categories based on nationally accepted socio-economic indicators (e.g. business environment, leadership, communications) specific to community economic growth and development.

Once the Questionnaire is completed, an analysis of the responses is generally conducted by the community’s leaders and the results reported to the Chief. The Chief and Band Council will then draw on the results to support their community’s strategic planning processes (e.g. comprehensive community planning).

Q2. **Why was the Questionnaire developed and who developed it?**

A. The Questionnaire was developed because First Nations communities approached the Ontario Ministry of Economic Development and Innovation and requested their assistance in developing a measurement system to identify their community’s strengths, challenges, and economic growth potential.

Input was received from the Chiefs of Ontario, the Union of Ontario Indians, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, several First Nations communities, Economic Development Officers from across Ontario and Canada, Aboriginal organizations, Trent and Algoma Universities and the private sector. To finalize the Questionnaire, a working group was assembled and co-chaired by the Ontario Ministry of Economic Development and Innovation and the Ontario First Nations Economic Developers Association (OFNEDA). Membership included OFNEDA, the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, the Chiefs of Ontario and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

Q3. **How were the questions developed?**

A. The Ministry of Economic Development and Innovation (MEDI) spent several months researching a number of economic development indexes and literature, as well as primary source material from provincial and federal governments, the Business Development Bank of Canada, the Centre for the Development of Living Standards (Dalhousie University), Trent University’s Native Studies Program (Warren and Bowles Community Analysis model), the Oregon Economic and Community Development Department, the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, and many others.

Based on this research, MEDI developed a draft Questionnaire. The questions were vetted by First Nations communities, First Nations governments, Aboriginal training and employment organizations, First Nations Capital Corporations, First Nations
Economic Development Officers, Aboriginal Partnership Development Advisors, the Aboriginal Economic Renewal Initiative and provincial and federal representatives. Each time the Questionnaire was modified with input from partners (including the addition, deletion and revision of questions, it was sent out again for another round of feedback until it reached its final form. The goal of this approach was to ensure that throughout its development, the Questionnaire was built with First Nations for First Nations.

The Questionnaire was further pilot tested in 3 First Nations communities and modified where appropriate as a result of their experiences.

Q4. **How can the Questionnaire be used by communities?**
A. This Questionnaire can be used by any First Nations community to help determine its strengths, weaknesses and economic growth potential. First Nations communities can plan long-term sustainable economic development by using the questionnaire to measure their community’s current capacity. Communities can also develop a “score card” against which to measure economic progress, and they can develop and implement economic development strategies, including:
   - land use planning
   - business / entrepreneurship capacity development
   - natural resource development
   - utilization of traditional territorial lands
   - social capacity

Communities can also use the unanswered questions as an opportunity to improve their planning for the future. Unanswered questions may indicate that a community has gaps where knowledge, skills and awareness can be enhanced. In order to develop community plans in the most comprehensive way, information and data collection in these areas should be improved.

Q5. **How is the Questionnaire different from other economic development “questionnaires”?**
A. The Questionnaire was designed specifically with First Nations for First Nations. First Nations communities will decide who will answer the Questionnaire (e.g. Chief and Council, community members, Economic Development Officers, or a combination), making the Questionnaire a flexible and adaptive economic development tool. The Questionnaire also takes into consideration other significant First Nations community factors that contribute to economic growth, for example, culture, education, leadership, governance, natural resources, traditional lands, infrastructure, housing and more. This Questionnaire is a fundamental part of the economic development process, and the results will help First Nations communities compare its economic growth over time in a holistic way.

Q6. **Why use the Questionnaire?**
A. Administering the Questionnaire is the first step in beginning a comprehensive community planning process. The results will indicate a First Nations community’s
economic development readiness or tell the community where it needs to focus its attention to better prepare for economic development. First Nations communities will be able to assess their growth over time by comparing questionnaire results annually.

Q7. Will the Questionnaire help my community develop a community profile?
A. Answers to the questions will provide the framework for a community profile in order to market the community for economic development opportunities, investment projects, partnerships, job growth and other business development activities.

Q8. How will the Questionnaire help the leadership in my community?
A. Answers will assist Chief and Council to make fiscal decisions and to plan for short- and long-term sustainable economic, social and infrastructure development. The process of administering the Questionnaire also promotes comprehensive community engagement and informs leadership about members’ opinions and aspirations. Analysis of the completed Questionnaire will identify if current community processes and practices are in keeping with the community’s goals.

Q9. How will the Questionnaire help our Economic Development Officer?
A. Economic Development Officers possess information that may help in assisting entrepreneurship and business development in the community. Answers to the questions will help to expand an Economic Development Officer’s awareness and understanding of the assets within a community and the internal economic development challenges it faces. Answers to the questions will also provide Economic Development Officers with the necessary information to complete funding proposals.

Q10. Is the Questionnaire suitable for all First Nations communities in Ontario?
A. Yes, the Questionnaire was specifically designed to be used by any First Nations community in Ontario. Communities are able to tailor the Questionnaire to suit their needs by deleting or adding questions as they see fit.

Q11. Do communities have to answer all of the questions?
A. No, communities should answer only those questions that are relevant and applicable to their unique circumstances. The answers to the questions will give the community an idea of its strengths and weaknesses, and the opportunities for improving economic development readiness.

Q12. How is the Questionnaire administered?
A. The community will decide the best approach for its members. However, it’s suggested that once the Chief and Council have approved the use of the Questionnaire in the community, the Band Manager and Economic Development Officer, with the support of the community, will decide how to best administer it. Some suggestions include: town hall meetings, focus groups, youth group meetings, having portfolio leads answer those questions over which they have the lead (e.g. education, housing) and one-on-one interviews.
Q13. **How long will it take for communities to complete the Questionnaire?**
A. The community should agree on a completion date for the Questionnaire, since the results will likely inform decisions about business development, community and infrastructure planning, and fiscal management. Some communities may apply for funding in order to administer the Questionnaire and there may be a timeframe built into that application process.

Q14. **What funding sources can my community apply to for assistance in administering the tool?**
A. Communities should speak to their local Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) project officer to ensure eligibility with regional and program guidelines. Other funding sources may include the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario (FedNor), Northern Ontario Heritage Fund (NOHF), FedDev Ontario, and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC).

Q15. **How will success of the Questionnaire be measured?**
A. The Questionnaire should be deemed a success if:
   - Chief and Band Council are able to use the results to guide and develop a long range community economic development plan.
   - The community, including Elders and Youth, are fully engaged in positive discussion about economic planning and development.
   - As a result of using the information contained in the analysis of the Questionnaire, economic development strategies and funding proposals are more successful.
   - Relationships, communication and information sharing within First Nations communities are strengthened through the use of the Questionnaire.
   - Relationships, communication and information sharing with neighbouring communities or municipalities are strengthened.
   - Communities can chart their growth over time.
3) **First Nations Economic Development Readiness Questionnaire**

**Readiness Questions**

1) **Community | Planning Process**  
A successful community planning process depends on factors such as leadership skills and abilities, community resources dedicated to planning, opportunities for citizens to participate in the planning process, and many others. The following questions will help you evaluate your community’s planning process:

**Community Readiness**

1. Does your community have an overall vision of where it wants to be in the future?
2. Does your community have a current, comprehensive economic strategy, including a plan to implement it?
3. Do you believe your community is committed to creating and implementing a community development plan? A comprehensive economic strategy?
4. What skills and technical knowledge do leadership and administration need in order to improve community economic capacity?
5. Does your community have organizations involved in economic development?
6. Is economic development activity in the community well organized and well managed? What about the economic development organizations in the community?
7. Does a culture of entrepreneurship exist that recognizes and rewards new business start-ups, new ideas, innovation, partnerships and collaboration?
8. Is there community participation in local/regional economic events?
9. Do the public (federal, provincial, municipal) and private sectors participate and cooperate in local/regional efforts?
10. How often does your community stay updated on new policies, programs, information, issues and trends related to the provincial/federal/municipal governments?
11. What strategies can be put in place to ensure the community development planning process includes all community members?
12. How will you motivate people to become interested and stay involved in economic initiatives?
13. What steps need to be taken when creating an approach to community development planning?
14. What information do you need to determine your community’s readiness for economic development?

Community Resources
15. What resources and support does your community require to become ready for economic development?
16. Does your community have a recognized community or economic development organization with the required authority, structures and processes to help sustain positive economic development activities? (If not, proceed to question 18.)
17. The following questions relate to this recognized community or economic development organization identified in question #16:
   a) Are the organization’s processes open and participatory? Are community members willing to contribute and explore new ideas?
   b) Does the organization work to build successful partnerships with other groups in and outside your community?
   c) Is the organization successful in obtaining the necessary resources and assistance to carry out its project goals?
   d) Does the organization encourage active participation by a diverse mix of community members (diversity can be measured by factors such as education, occupation, age, length of residence, etc.)?
   e) Does the organization look for training and skills development opportunities to help improve the skills and knowledge of its members?
   f) Is the responsibility for carrying out the work of the organization shared among its leaders and members?
1.1) Community | Civic Capacity
Civic capacity can be viewed as your community’s ability to come together in a determined way to address major community issues. It involves elements such as relationship building across sectors; skills and abilities of community members and leadership; level of community volunteerism; level of community engagement in decision-making—and all of these factors play a significant role in the success rate of community planning. Civic capacity can be instrumental in the ability of a community to successfully form and implement any community or economic development plans. The following questions will explore your community’s level of civic capacity:

Community Members
18. How many community members live in your household?
19. How many household members are employed full-time or part-time?
20. Has your community recently completed a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis?
21. Are community members given the opportunity to join community and economic development efforts?
22. Are community members given the opportunity to provide input into community and economic development initiatives?
23. Are as many different people from the community as possible involved in economic development (e.g., elders, youth, leadership)?
24. Does your community work with other communities on policy and program development?
25. Does your community have business relationships with other communities, development institutions and organizations?
26. Is there active support of economic development activities from a range of community organizations?
27. Do community members feel empowered to make decisions? If not, how can you create this empowerment?
28. Are community members currently involved in organizing and running projects in the community?
29. Is there a strong volunteer force in the community?
30. Are community members well informed about economic development activities?
31. How are new ideas generated in the community?
32. Is there infrastructure to support innovation and innovative thinking?
33. Is there a track record of positive community action?
34. Is there a system in place for measuring progress and results?
35. Does your community celebrate success?

Leadership
36. Who are the most important people and organizations in your community that should be taking a leadership role?
37. How does leadership obtain community input about economic development, e.g., one-on-one meetings, consultations, online, combination of several methods?
38. Do you believe that your community’s current leadership:
   a) listens to the concerns of community members?
   b) has the capacity to effect change in the community?
   c) has the skills necessary to effectively represent your community?
   d) motivates and inspires members of your community?
   e) works well with the community? With other governments? With the private sector?
   f) has the support of the majority of the community?
   g) acts in the best interests of the community?
   h) has credibility in the community?
   i) has the resources needed to do its job?
39. Are there people in your community who are visionaries and action-oriented, and who could be recruited to serve in leadership roles?
40. Are there people in your community with the necessary skills to lead economic development plans from development to project completion?
41. Does leadership support development initiatives, for example, through active band council resolutions that support economic development?
42. What skills do you need to further develop your leadership abilities?
43. Is there a forum where Council, leadership and community members can discuss the past, present and future direction of the community?
44. Does the community share best practices among community leaders? With other communities?
45. Do leaders from the public and private sectors travel to other communities to see best practices firsthand?
46. What strategies can be put in place to help develop future leaders?

1.2) Community | Communications
An important part of economic development is a community's ability to communicate with its members and with external groups and organizations. Effective communication encourages information sharing and helps increase the level and quality of member participation in community planning and development. The following questions will help you think about your community's communications resources:

47. Does your community have a person designated as the primary contact for economic development-related matters?
48. Does your community have a person designated as the primary contact for land use planning and resources development?
49. How prepared are your primary contacts to respond to economic development and business questions from potential investors, e.g. industrial site availability, workforce, transportation and infrastructure?
50. Do community members know and understand your community's vision and plan?
51. Is there regular and effective communication among community groups to inform and involve each other?
52. Does leadership effectively share information with community members?

1.3) Community | Social Vitality
Social vitality is the ability of members of a community to work together to achieve common goals. It is an important factor in the success of community economic development initiatives. The following section will help you analyze your community's ability to collaborate, coordinate and cooperate in order to improve social vitality:

53. Have there been successful community projects that involved different groups coming together for a common goal?
54. Have there been instances where community members have worked together to achieve a common goal?
55. Are community members willing to work together on community and economic development initiatives?
56. Do community members recognize the importance of working together to make positive changes?
57. Is the relationship between leadership and community members a positive one?
58. Is your community prepared for new business opportunities?
59. Is there a common problem facing your community?
60. Would more or better development help solve this problem?
61. If so, what can you do to help your community work together?
62. Is there public participation in response to change?
63. Can your community effectively mobilize resources?
64. How does your community organize for planning purposes?
65. Are there ways to make your community development process more inclusive?
66. Is community development understood as a process that will bring about change?
67. What changes, good or bad, might come as a result of community development activity?
68. How might community members react to this sort of change?
69. What action can you and your community take now to help offset any negative impacts of change?
70. How would you go about finding the right information to help take this action?
71. How could you get others to become interested in community development?
72. Does your community have a spirit or tradition of people helping each other?
73. Do community members have a way to express their feelings of pride and attachment to their community?
74. Is community beautification seen as an ongoing priority?
75. Think about your community’s human resources capacity by answering the following questions:
   a) Does your community have a labour force skills inventory?
   b) How would you describe the level of quality of human resources in terms of past work experience, work habits, willingness to accept all forms of employment (tele-work, manual labour) and turnover rates?
   c) How would you describe the quality of employment opportunities based on availability, job-opening ratio, wage rates and employment statistics?
   d) What sort of jobs and careers are community members interested in?
2) **Infrastructure | Social Capacity**

A community’s readiness for economic and community development will depend in part on the education and social supports available to community members. Members who are better-educated and who have strong technology and social supports are in a much better position to create more vibrant and active communities. The following questions will explore your community’s social capacity:

**Education**

76. How many members in your household are in elementary school? Secondary? Post-secondary?
77. What is the highest level of education achieved by all members of the household?
78. How would you characterize the level of general education in your community?
79. Do children learn traditional teaching from Elders?
80. Do the elementary and secondary education systems in your community teach courses on problem solving or creative thinking?
81. To help provide job-readiness training, what kinds of educational facilities are available, e.g. community college, technical college, training centre, K-12?
82. Does your community have an adequately funded K-12 program?
83. Does your community have library services?

**Health and Social Services**

84. How many community members currently receive health services from the health department?
85. What types of health-related services are currently being provided in the community, e.g. dietician, health specialists, professional services?
86. What is the level of overall health in the community, e.g. low, medium, high?
87. Does the overall health of the community impact the future employability of community members?
88. What health promotion and employment support programs are in place to help the unemployed overcome their health issues and become employed?
89. What is the level of physical activity by community members, e.g. low, medium, high?
90. What programs or services are offered in the community to increase that level?
91. What is the level of obesity in the community, e.g. low, medium, high?
92. How many community members have diabetes or heart disease?
93. How many community members are employed in the health professions?
94. Does your community offer prevention programs? What is the level of community participation in these programs?
95. How many visits to health professionals outside the community take place each month? What types of professionals are being seen?
96. What are the major health concerns/diagnoses of community members?

**Technology Supports**
97. In terms of your level of technology, does your community . . .
   a) have access to a wide area network (WAN) or local area network (LAN)?
   b) have access to the Internet through either a local Internet Service Provider or a local school or college?
   c) have access to a technology centre?
   d) support a technology incubator?
98. Is your community responsive to attracting technology business?

**Community Supports**
99. In terms of your level of community support, does your community have:
   a) a community centre?
   b) recreation facilities available for residents of all ages?
   c) recreation equipment available for residents of all ages?
   d) a recreation coordinator?
   e) a senior centre and services?
   f) a youth centre and services?
   g) a cultural centre and services?
   h) sufficient childcare centres and services to meet community needs?
   i) any parks, e.g. mixed-use, provincial, seasonal?

**2.1) Infrastructure | Facilities & Services**
A community’s readiness for economic and community development will depend in part on the infrastructure available to support community projects, business activities and a variety of other development initiatives. This section explores your community’s available infrastructure for essential services:
100. Is your community located near an urban or a rural centre, or both?
101. Is your community close to a major highway?
102. Does your community have rail service?
103. Does your community have access to barge or river transport?
104. Does your community have access to commercial air services within 80km?
105. Does your community have competitively priced energy sources available?
106. Does your community have enough houses to ensure that every family can live in a single-family home if they desire?
107. Does your community have a water system that meets required quality standards (which may be based on government regulations, drinking water quality, community environmental standards, etc.)?
108. Does your community have a water system that has room for capacity growth as more homes or facilities are built? How much capacity is currently being used?
109. Does your community have a waste water system that meets required quality standards? Does it have room for capacity growth? How much capacity is currently being used?
110. Does your community have water meters?
111. Does your community have storm water drainage and flood retention system?
112. Are there local businesses providing goods and services to residents?
113. Are there local Emergency Services available?
114. Is there a hospital within a 60-minute drive?
115. Does your community have telephone service?
116. Does your community have public transportation?
117. Describe your community’s public facilities, as well as some of the challenges you face in maintaining and building capacity in these facilities:
   a) Streets
   b) Utilities
   c) Water
   d) Waste Disposal
   e) Fire Protection
   f) Policing Services
   g) Social Services
h) Education
i) Health Care
j) Recreation
k) Communications Systems

2.2) Infrastructure | Land Use Planning
A community’s land designations can influence how and where particular development takes place. Land use planning will assist a community in identifying and preparing for growth and development opportunities. The following questions will explore your community’s land use planning practices:

118. Does your community have an official land use plan? (If not, proceed to question 132.)
119. Is economic development addressed in the official plan?
120. How often does your community update its official plan?
121. Does the official plan have one general designation for each of the basic land use categories, e.g. residential, commercial, industrial, open space (institutional or industrial), agricultural, rural or traditional territory?
122. Does your community keep a list of topics related to each land use designation—regulations, policies, purpose—and criteria that must be met for each designation?
123. Does your community have industrial-zoned land available at reasonable market rates that is ready to be built on or occupied?
124. Does your community have industrial-zoned buildings available at a reasonable market rate that are ready to be occupied or renovated?
125. Are your zoning by-laws flexible enough to allow for desired development in your community?
126. Are there policies and procedures for the establishment of new structures?
127. Are your land management policies governed by the Indian Act or by the First Nations Lands Management Act, or have you instituted your own constitution related to land management?
128. Is the construction of new homes permitted in most areas of the community?
129. Are businesses permitted to promote and advertise by using outdoor signage and advertising?
130. Is there someone familiar with the land use planning and development approval process in your community?

131. Is there someone knowledgeable about the neighbouring municipalities’ plans, and how these policies and land use designations may affect proposed development in your community?

132. Do you know if there are land use planning or economic development consultants who you may be able to work with?

3) Economic Development
A community can improve its ability to undertake economic development activities by having dedicated and knowledgeable staff devoted to community economic development. Dedicated community resources for entrepreneurship and business development, along with supportive leadership and engaged members, are cornerstones of successful economic development. This next section will help you evaluate your community’s economic development resources and processes:

3.1) Economic Development | Planning and Resources
133. Does your community have a formal strategic plan for economic development?
134. When was the last time this strategic plan was reviewed?
135. Does your community have an Economic Development Officer (EDO) or an economic development committee, office or organization?
136. Does the EDO have other portfolio responsibilities in addition to economic development?
137. Does your community have a designated contact for economic development activities?
138. Does your community have an autonomous decision-making process (distinct from decisions made by leadership) to support business development?
139. Does your leadership or economic development office use best practices, guidelines or policies on economic development?
140. What are some of your community’s best practices for economic development?
141. Is there a budget for economic development activity in your community? Is it sufficient?
142. Could your community employ full or part-time professional planners or EDOs to deal with economic development and land use planning specifically?
143. Could your community use private sector economic development or land use planning consultants?
144. Does your community have an up-to-date community profile? Where can it be found?
145. Does your community profile include details of a proposed business or industrial park?
146. Does your community have an inventory of community member-owned businesses, contractors and entrepreneurs?
147. Does your community have adequate financial resources for business and industrial development?
148. Does your community have the resources to create a “one-stop” business services centre for all matters related to the development process?
149. Has your community established relations with regional economic development resources such as Economic Development Officers, Northern Development Officers and Advisors, Small Business Enterprise Centres, etc.?
150. Have you included these contacts in your economic development efforts? If not, are there opportunities to begin building these associations?
151. Do you believe that your community is adequately knowledgeable about existing federal, provincial and municipal economic development policies, programs and services?
152. To what extent does your community market itself?
153. Are your community businesses promoted in local, regional, national or international markets?
154. Does your community work with the local chamber of commerce or local business groups on economic development matters?
155. Does your community work cooperatively with neighbouring communities to pool resources and information on economic development?
156. Does your community jointly fund economic development initiatives and programs with private sector companies or levels of government?
157. Do you have a mechanism for determining those businesses and individuals who have left your community, but who may be interested in returning or investing locally?
3.2) Economic development | Civic Capacity
158. Does your community have an alternative dispute resolution process to overcome obstacles to economic development?
159. How does leadership/EDO coordinate or facilitate community input on economic development?
160. Does your community believe that the EDO plays a role in helping to meet the needs of community members who are on Ontario Works or suffering from mental, health and dependency challenges?
161. How can the community work together to transition these members toward economic independence?
162. Are your community and economic development groups proactive or reactive?
163. How does your community respond to economic development efforts?
164. Do you believe that your community needs to diversify and broaden its economy?
165. Is there a capable and productive workforce available in your community?
166. Is there at least one organization in your community that provides or is able to provide workforce education training?
167. Are there apprenticeship programs available to community members?

3.3) Economic Development | Entrepreneurial Readiness and the Business Environment
168. What is your community’s attitude toward local business development?
169. What types of businesses currently operate in your community? Are there others that you would like to see being developed?
170. Should the community pursue renewable energy initiatives, e.g. solar, wind, water, bio-energy?
171. What organizations or committees—Chamber of Commerce, Small Business Enterprise Centre, committees of business owners, committees under Council—provide assistance to entrepreneurs in your community to help them start new businesses?
172. Does your community have an incubator or other facility that helps support the creation and growth of new businesses?
173. Are youth aware of the concept of entrepreneurship?
174. Are youth given an opportunity to learn about the various facets of entrepreneurship, e.g. how to write a business plan, how to do a market analysis, how to develop a budget?

175. Has your community identified public and private sector leaders capable of creating an entrepreneurial environment and acting as mentors?

176. Does your community have a strategy for improving the entrepreneurial environment in the community?

177. Do you know what resources your community should be developing in order to create entrepreneurial opportunities?

178. Have you identified the features and benefits of your community that you should be promoting in order to attract and develop entrepreneurial opportunities?

179. Is there an organization or committee that provides assistance to help retain or expand local businesses and industry?

180. Is there an organization or committee that helps recruit new retail, service and industrial businesses?

181. Does your community market its local industrial properties? How are these marketed?

182. Are most local businesses owned and operated by community members?

183. Are local owners of business and industry committed to working with the community on improvements?

184. How many businesses have closed in the last year?

185. What is the failure rate of local businesses?

186. What economic development initiatives in your community have been successfully completed? Why were they successful?

187. Does leadership know what percentage of the community’s operating budget is spent on human, financial, material and technological resources compared with other communities?

3.4) Economic Development | Access to Capital

188. What are the lending policies of area financial institutions?

189. How competitive are their rates?

190. Do you know how much money leaves the community?
191. Does your community have a method for determining how well your investment dollars are spent?

192. Has your community completed an economic leakage study? If so how are you planning to incorporate that information into long-term economic planning?

193. How much (as a percentage) does the average community member/household spend on goods or services outside the community?

194. Do you know how this percentage compares with other similar communities?

195. Does the community have a good working relationship with area banks, bankers, Aboriginal Capital Corporations, Aboriginal Financial Institutions, and other lending agencies?

3.5) Economic Development | Economic Viability

196. How active is the informal economy?

197. Do traditional practices such as hunting, trapping, fishing and farming generate income?

198. Are there traditional goods that are grown and produced locally, but that are sold outside the community?

199. Does the revenue from community businesses stay in the community? To what extent does it leak out into the external economy?

3.6) Economic development | Resources From the Land

200. What resources from the land are available to your community, e.g. timber, minerals, water, agricultural land, hunting, trapping?

201. How are you taking advantage of these resources now?

202. What resources will most benefit your community in the future?

203. Does your community have positive working relationships with surrounding resource managers?

204. Are resources of cultural and environmental significance being identified and protected?

205. Is development in your community designed with sustainable development in mind?
This glossary is designed to help you as you complete your First Nations Economic Development Readiness Questionnaire. It was developed using standard economic development terminology and generally accepted definitions.

**Best Practices** – Generally, there are three main characteristics used to define the idea of best practices in economic development:

- **Long-term Perspective** – Requires a long-term commitment to build an economic development plan or organization with consistent goals and objectives, consistent funding, and a long-term commitment towards human and financial resources.

- **Focus on Outcomes / Successful Communities** – Focus on what initiatives, industries or opportunities are best suited to the community, prepare for these prospects, know the community’s strengths and weaknesses, and have a plan to create the right strategy for success.

- **Focus on Quality and Service** – Focus on deals or opportunities that have already begun rather than always searching for new ones, help reduce risk by ensuring the proper allocation of resources, and maintain a consistent service approach (this might relate to local business, community members, leadership, prospects, etc.).

**Business Development** – Business development involves creating or attracting new businesses to the community, or enhancing existing ones to make them stronger or larger. When we talk about “business” we mean any type of entity that offers goods or services. Business development can include many specialized activities, such as administering loan funds or venture capital funds, providing training in business management, helping complete market studies, establishing industrial parks or business incubators, or facilitating networks and organizations of businesspeople. It may also include the use of incentives to attract new businesses from outside the community into the area.

**Business Incubator** – A business incubator is an economic development tool designed to help create and grow new business in a community, within a specific building or location. It usually houses many small businesses in a flexible space at below-market rates. The businesses share spaces and services such as meeting rooms, copying facilities, and reception. Business incubators also provide support services such as business and marketing plan development, building management skills, obtaining capital, and access to more specialized services. They are sometimes referred to as an Enterprise Centre, a Business and Technology Centre, or an Innovation Centre — and there are even technology incubators that focus solely on the technology sectors.

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**Community Business Development** – This term usually refers to activities that promote community businesses that will be owned and operated by the residents of a particular (often disadvantaged) locality. Although the ownership is expected to involve community members, the format of this ownership is varied: non-profit ownership by a locally controlled social agency or development group; private for-profit ownership by local entrepreneurs; ownership through a co-operative; or combinations of any of these formats. The prime beneficiaries are expected to be members of the community. Benefits might include potential profits for the owners or community, more local employment, greater access to goods and services, and revenues to support other social and economic development activities.

**Community Development** – Community development involves all aspects of improving community organizational capacity, business development, labour force development, markets of interest, and investments in infrastructure, downtown areas, gateways, business parks, and public/private partnership opportunities. It is a proactive process for helping community members understand and enhance locally the economic, social, political, environmental, cultural, physical, and educational aspects of their community, by adopting a common vision, as well as goals, objectives, and an implementation plan. Community development helps support strong and vibrant social and economic interactions in a community.

**Community Economic Development (CED)** – CED involves a comprehensive, wide-ranging program of activities for the overall improvement of the local community as a place to live and work. Because it is a comprehensive approach, CED can include virtually any activity that might be viewed locally as community improvement (for example, promoting a cultural event, drug abuse services, increased police protection, housing rehabilitation). But CED always includes some type of business development activity. From such a wide range of potential activities, the over-arching goal of CED can be summarized as the creation of more effective community tools, tools such as new businesses, improved local facilities, modified practices by established institutions (e.g. banks), and other ways that make the community a better place to live and work. It is always a multi-functional strategy or development system, as opposed to an individual economic development or business development project, or other isolated efforts for community improvement, and it specifically integrates or merges social and economic goals in order to make a more powerful impact on community change and revitalization.

**Community Profile** – A good community profile is a collection of comprehensive data about a community that a person or business would find useful when conducting an evaluation of a business location, relocation or expansion. Examples of items to include in a good community profile include information on location, geography, labour force, transportation, utilities, taxes, services, regulations, education, housing, recreation, education, health care, cultural opportunities, economic base information, business climate, weather, important contacts, and many others.

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**Demographics** – These are data characteristics of a community’s population. They usually include education, age, sex, income, family make-up, and other significant characteristics.

**Economic Development** – Economic development is a process that influences the growth and well-being of a community through such means as job creation, job retention, improved tax base and maintaining a reasonable quality of life. Essentially, economic development is a deliberate effort to improve the economic well-being and quality of life of a specified geographic area or community, and it tends to be a complex, multi-dimensional process. No one definition encompasses all of the various aspects of this process, and there is no single policy, program, strategy or template for achieving economic success in a community, because each community has different strengths and weaknesses, and will therefore have many unique challenges. The intended economic improvements will vary from case to case.

**Economic Development Committee / Organization** – This is a local community agency with a mandate for planning, developing, re-planning, redesigning, approving, and implementing all or part of an economic development plan. The plans of this committee/organization must be compatible with adopted community plans.

**Entrepreneur** – An entrepreneur is a person who organizes and manages any enterprise, especially a business, usually with considerable initiative and risk. This person must be skilled at increasing the productivity of economic resources by searching for change, responding to it, and exploiting it as an opportunity. Successful entrepreneurs are usually “out of the box” thinkers who tend to develop new ideas/process through innovation.

**Entrepreneurial Training** – These are programs that provide guidance and instruction on business basics (accounting, marketing, finance) so that entrepreneurs and business owners improve their chances of success. There has been a push in many communities to focus entrepreneurial training on youth in order to help produce a culture of entrepreneurship.

**Environment** – This refers to the total environment in which economic developers and community developers operate. It can be divided into the following segments:

- **Economic** – Human resources, markets, transportation, utilities, commerce and others.
- **Political** – Governmental structure of a community that affects other segments of the environment through the adoption and implementation of regulations and laws.
- **Natural/Physical** – Air, land, water, eco-systems, aesthetics and others.
- **Social** – Housing, health, education, welfare, employment, amenities, recreation, crime prevention and others.

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Expansion – As it relates to economic development, expansion means the increase of building size, employment or production of an existing business.

Infrastructure – Infrastructure is the facilities and services needed to sustain industry, residential, commercial, retail and all other land use activities. It can be divided into two categories:

1. **Traditional Infrastructure** – Includes public works items such as water supply systems, sanitary sewer collection systems, streets and roads, bridges, dams, railroads, drainage and flood control, and other utilities.
2. **Broader Infrastructure** – A broader view of infrastructure also includes such items as telecommunications technology, libraries, research institutes, colleges and universities, technical and vocational institutions, housing availability (including quality and cost), physical and mental health facilities, fire stations, parks and other items.

Marketing – The entire planning and implementation process of communicating the benefits of a product or service (in some cases this is the community itself) to potential prospects (businesses, funders, other communities), and then delivering those benefits. Understanding the needs of the prospects, and fulfilling those needs to the satisfaction of the prospect and of the community, is a critical piece of marketing.

Mission Statement / Vision Statement – This is the overall guiding direction for a community or organization. The mission statement is generally the broadest policy statement of an organization, and then the goals, objectives and strategies are devised and implemented to meet the mission. The mission statement answers important economic development questions like:

1. What “markets” will be served?
2. What are the major outputs or areas of service of the organization or community?
3. What are the major commitments of the organization or community?
4. What defines the organization’s or community’s constraints (economic, social, political)?
5. What function does the organization or community perform?
6. For whom does the organization or community perform these functions?
7. How does the organization or community go about performing these functions?

Official Land Use Plan – This is a plan adopted typically by a larger community that shows the anticipated and desired long-term land use development patterns for all land in the jurisdiction. Typical land use categories include the following:

- **Industrial** – Light and heavy industrial, distribution, warehousing, and manufacturing districts; often subdivided into light industrial or heavy industrial districts.
- **Office** – All office districts, but can be further categorized as local or corporate office.
- **Residential** – Low-, medium- and high-density residential, and can be further subdivided into single family or multi-family residential.
- **Retail** – Levels of retail development, but can be further categorized as regional, community or neighbourhood retail.
“One-Stop” Business Services Centre – This is a relatively new term that describes the facilities where people can go to obtain advice and support to help them establish and expand their business. Sometimes these centres also issue licenses and permits needed by businesses to start up, operate or expand. Also known as “one-stop shops,” these centres improve the local business environment by reducing the number of separate agencies and offices a business may need to approach for advice or to apply for various licenses and permits. They save public and private time, and improve efficiency as a result.

Labour Force Skills Inventory – An inventory that identifies and records the various skills in a community considered important for successful economic development. Examples of skills that usually appear in a labour force skills inventory include the following:

- **Basic Skills** – Reading, writing, verbal communication and mathematics.
- **Community Organization Skills** – The ability to adopt regional approaches to community and economic development, forge partnerships among stakeholders in the public and private sectors, develop cooperation among diverse economic development entities, achieve consensus among political, environmental, minority and other citizen groups.
- **Computer Skills** – Use of computers to prepare proposals, perform research and analyze statements, access relevant databases to target studies, economic impact analyses and GIS opportunities.
- **People Skills** – Includes a wide range of communication skills, leadership, coaching, organizing and motivation skills, and negotiation, mediation and conflict resolution skills.

Labour Force / Human Resources Development – These are efforts to support and enhance the skills, capabilities and availability of qualified labour in a community. This is achieved through activities such as pre-employment screening, customized training programs, job training funds and on-the-job training. It involves establishing partnerships among business, education and government stakeholders to build the skills of the local workforce.

Stakeholder – A stakeholder is an individual, business or organization with a long-term interest or stake in the economic future of a community, or who may be impacted by changes in the community. Stakeholders normally represent their own interests.

Start-Up – A start-up is a new business with no prior history.

SMEs – This is the acronym for “small and medium-sized enterprises.” In Ontario, a “small and medium-sized enterprise” would be defined as employing fewer than 500 employees.

Strategic Planning Process – This is the process by which an organization or community envisions its future and develops the necessary procedures and operations to achieve that future. Proper strategic planning can help solve local economic problems through...
community engagement. A strategic plan should present a clear vision for the future activity of an organization or community, a set of goals to attain that vision, a set of strategies to achieve each goal, and finally a system for evaluating the results. Completing a community readiness assessment is considered to be part of the overall strategic planning process.

**Sustainable Development** – Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

**SWOT Analysis** - is a strategic planning method used to evaluate the **Strengths**, **Weaknesses**, **Opportunities**, and **Threats** involved in a **project** or in a **business** venture. A SWOT analysis must first start with defining a desired end state or objective and is often incorporated into a strategic planning process.

- **Strengths**: are characteristics about your community that place economic development or community planning at an advantage.
- **Weaknesses**: are characteristics about your community that place economic development or community planning at a disadvantage.
- **Opportunities**: *external* supports or conditions that will help your community’s economic development or community planning processes.
- **Threats**: *external* elements that could cause trouble for your community’s economic development or community planning processes.

**Telecommunications** – These are systems that offer the public communications services, directly and indirectly, that provide video, voice, and data information by way of cables, wireless, and satellite facilities.

**Utilities** – These are services-related infrastructure required to effectively operate a business in a community. Examples of common utilities include the following:

- **Cable** – Service delivery of cable television access.
- **Electric** – Distribution system for electric services.
- **Fibre-Optic** – A cabling system utilizing small-diameter filaments for the transfer of light signals that permits a high volume of data transfer.
- **Gas** – Distribution system for gas services.
- **Sanitary Sewer** – A system to collect effluent and connect to treatment facilities.
- **Storm Drainage / Storm Sewer** – A system of improvements intended to facilitate the management of storm drainage runoff.
- **Water** – A system distributing potable water to all customers within a community or jurisdiction.

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First Nations Economic Development Readiness Questionnaire