



AFN ISET

First Nations Agreement Holders' National Annual Meeting

*Building on what we've heard, inviting perspectives on supporting
First Nations-led workforce development*

September 1-3 2026

Why Now - Canada's Workforce Landscape

Canada is entering a period of economic transformation. First Nations communities should be partners and beneficiaries. We want to understand what is working, what is not, and what would create meaningful pathways to participation.

Why This Matters Now

- Historic levels of investment are being announced across Canada
- Major projects are creating workforce demand
- Industries need workers, suppliers and partners
- First Nations communities are seeking greater participation and long-term benefits
- There is an opportunity to build pathways before opportunities pass by

Are current approaches enough to ensure First Nations communities benefit?



Major Projects & Investments

Canada's major projects represent a generational opportunity for economic growth



Priority major projects include:

- Transforming Canada's Northern and Arctic region
- Team Canada Strong Apprenticeship Initiative
- Mackenzie Valley Highway
- High-Speed Rail Initiative
- Aquaculture Initiative (British Columbia)

Legend

- Projects referred to the Major Projects Office (MPO)
- Transformative strategies (initiatives aligned with national priorities that contribute to national interests and economic growth)

[Projects and transformative strategies map - Major Projects Office - Canada.ca](#)



Pathways to Participation

Employment

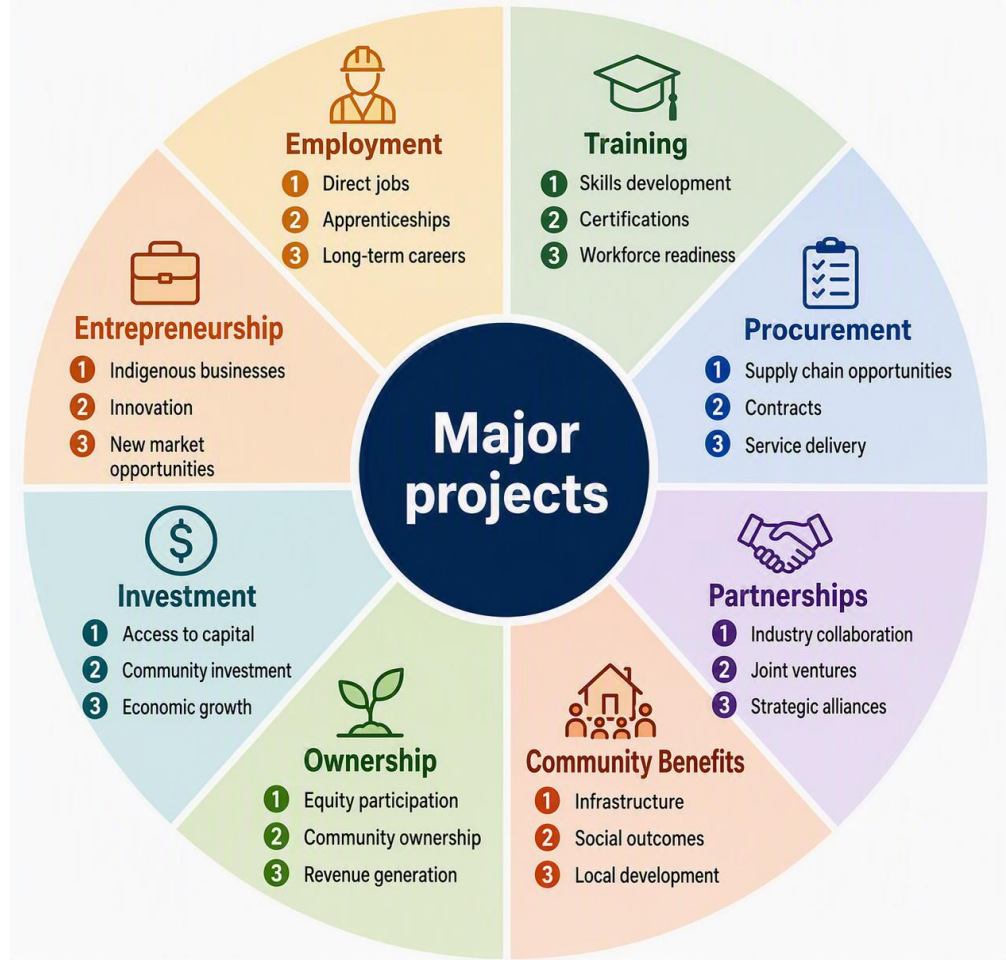
- What prevents First Nations workers from accessing these jobs?
- What supports are needed?

Ownership & Equity

- What capacity supports are needed?
- What successful models should be expanded?

Procurement

- What barriers do First Nations businesses face?
- How can governments and industry improve access?



First Nations Partner Feedback through Program Evaluations

Does This Reflect Your Experience?

Stronger Connections



Need stronger links between:

- First Nations service providers
- Employers
- Local labour market needs

Outcome: Better alignment between training and long-term employment opportunities, particularly in northern and remote communities.

Streamlined Mechanism



Streamlined mechanisms reduce:

- Administrative burden
- Complex reporting requirements
- Capacity pressures

Outcome: Easier program administration, especially for organizations with limited HR resources.

Wraparound Supports



Complementary investments increase access to:

- Holistic supports
- Complementary services
- Skills upgrading opportunities

Outcome: Better progression beyond entry-level positions.

Greater Flexibility



Greater flexibility enable service providers to:

- Tailor programming
- Respond to complex client needs
- Support non-linear employment pathways

Outcome: More responsive and effective service delivery.

What did we miss? Has anything changed? Which issue is most important in your region?



We'd like your thoughts...

What is the single biggest barrier preventing First Nations from benefiting from major projects in your region?

Workforce readiness



Training access



Employer practices



Geographical barriers



Funding limitations



Administrative burden



Are there other barriers?



We'd like your thoughts...

We are seeking advice on:

Area	Barrier	What would fix it?
Access to major-project opportunities		
Partnerships with industry		
Partnerships with Provincial / Territorial Governments		
Aligning training with labour market demand		
Ensuring benefits reach Indigenous communities		
Support communities and service providers		
Others?		



Looking Forward - What We Need From You

Help Us Understand

- What's working
- What's not working
- What opportunities are emerging

Help Us Improve

- Workforce pathways
- Access to investments
- Indigenous business participation
- Major project benefits

Help Us Shape the Future

- What should ESDC prioritize over the next 5 years?

