



First Nations Labour Market Information Initiative

***Transitioning the First Nations
Labour Market Information Pilot
to a Permanent Program***

Business Case



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Executive Summary

The First Nations Labour Market Information (LMI) Pilot, launched in 2017 under the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) Program, has proven to be a critical tool for strengthening employment strategies and advancing economic development in First Nations communities. By filling long-standing data gaps, the pilot equips communities with accurate, First Nation specific labour market information to identify workforce needs, design training programs, and create targeted employment strategies that support long-term growth, wellness, and self-sufficiency (ISET First Nation Agreement Holder's National Meeting Minutes, 2025).

Since its launch, the pilot has engaged more than 36,000 participants and demonstrated measurable success in building local capacity and informing real change (SITAG ILMI Annual Report, 2025). Communities have used LMI to design computer and IT training, integrate land-based teachings led by Elders, create wellness programs, and help citizens transition from high-risk lifestyles and provincial assistance into sustainable careers. These successes show that the LMI is not only about identifying needs, but also about demonstrating how First Nations are making economic contributions, reducing reliance on social programs, and strengthening Canada's GDP (CSLS, 2023).

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN), mandated by Chiefs-in-Assembly through Resolution No. 64/2024: *First Nation Labour Market Information*, is advancing this proposal to secure permanent funding and transition the pilot into a fully funded national program under ISET (AFN, 2024). The pilot is set to sunset on March 31, 2026, making it critical that permanent funding be secured before that date to avoid disruption (ISET First Nation Agreement Holder's National Meeting Minutes, 2025). The goal is to establish stable, long-term support that ensures OCAP-compliant data sovereignty, recognizes both on- and off-reserve populations, strengthens the capacity of Agreement Holders, and provides equitable delivery models for all regions, including remote and northern communities (Government of Canada, UNDRIP Act Action Plan, 2023).

The funding request is **\$65.68 million annually, with a 2% escalator** beginning in 2026. Funding will continue to flow through ISET Agreement Holders, as it did during the pilot, but will now expand to cover all 95 Agreement Holders across Canada (ESDC Pilot Allocations Report, 2017–2023). The financial breakdown is provided to support the request. The program will continue to be delivered through ISET Agreement Holders, ensuring flexibility for communities. Oversight will be coordinated through an Implementation Committee composed of AFN, ISET Holders, and ESDC, focused on supporting rollout, sharing best practices, and ensuring regional equity (ISET First Nation Agreement Holder's National Meeting Minutes, 2025). This approach preserves community control, embeds OCAP principles, and avoids imposing new governance structures, while strengthening coordination for sustainable national delivery.

By investing in this transition, the Government of Canada will demonstrate its commitment to reconciliation, advance First Nations data sovereignty, and strengthen the foundation for self-determined, evidence-based strategies in employment, training, and economic development (Government of Canada, Speech from the Throne, 2025). This investment is essential to reconciliation, economic equity, and Canada's long-term growth.



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The Business Need

Problem, Consequence, Opportunity

The Problem

For decades, First Nations have lacked access to reliable, Nation-specific labour market data. Existing sources such as the Census and federal administrative datasets are too aggregated, outdated, or inconsistent to inform local planning (Government of Canada, UNDRIP Act Action Plan, 2023). Without accurate information, First Nations cannot fully identify workforce gaps, anticipate future training needs, or design programs that match emerging economic opportunities. Chiefs and Agreement Holders emphasized during the National ISET meetings that the absence of timely First Nation-level data limits their ability to plan for high-demand sectors such as housing, green energy, and skilled trades, while also failing to capture regional challenges like transportation barriers and credential recognition.

The Consequence

This absence of reliable data has led to misaligned training investments, persistent underemployment, and widening inequities between First Nations and the rest of Canada (CSLS, 2023). Many programs are designed without reflecting the realities of First Nations economies, resulting in missed opportunities for job creation and self-sufficiency. Agreement Holders also emphasized that without First Nation-led data,

(SITAG ILMI Annual Report, 2025)



Identified Challenges Getting Jobs

All respondents were asked if they faced challenges or barriers when trying to get jobs or participate in training. The specific challenges and barriers respondents were asked about on the survey are presented in Table 10 and in Table 11. In addition, the total number of challenges or barriers individuals identified is presented.

While no single challenge or barrier dominated, the most frequently cited were:

- **Not enough work experience – 29%**
- **Getting to and from work – 27%**
- **Not enough or the right type of education – 23%**
- **Looking after people who are dependent– 18%**

Challenge or Barrier (n=6,168)	%
Not Enough Work Experience	29%
Getting to and from work	27%
Not enough or the right type of education	23%
Looking after people who are dependent (e.g., children, parents)	18%
Challenges with physical, emotional or mental health	15%
Lack of Affordable Housing in areas with available jobs	14%
Living in a community that is far away from most jobs	13%
Age Discrimination	12%
Discrimination based on Gender or Ethnicity	8%
Previous Criminal Record	8%
Lack of Soft Skills	7%
Challenges with speaking language at work	5%

Table 10. Identified Barriers to Employment



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communities cannot demonstrate their fiscal contributions and savings to EI/social assistance, which undermines their ability to shift narratives from dependency to contribution (ISET First Nation Agreement Holder's National Meeting Minutes, 2025). Participants at the National ISET meeting shared examples of citizens being trained in sectors with limited job opportunities locally, leading to frustration, outmigration, and dependence on provincial social programs. The lack of control over First Nation data also undermines sovereignty, leaving communities dependent on external sources that do not reflect their priorities or cultural context.

The Opportunity

The LMI pilot directly addresses these gaps. By establishing a permanent, OCAP-compliant labour market system, Agreement Holders are empowered to collect, govern, and apply their own data (AFN, 2024). This ensures that employment strategies are community-driven, culturally relevant, and responsive to local labour market conditions. The pilot has already demonstrated that localized data enables:

- **Better alignment of training with job opportunities** (e.g., redesigning programs to prepare youth for skilled trades).
- **Stronger economic planning** (e.g., linking labour data with housing and infrastructure priorities).
- **Improved employer engagement** (e.g., AES model of connecting 33 Agreement Holders with industry partners).

With sustained investment, the pilot will enable First Nations to align workforce development with real economic opportunities, reduce inequities, and advance reconciliation through data sovereignty and economic self-determination (Government of Canada, Speech from the Throne, 2025).

Concrete LMI Good News Stories and Examples

Prince George ISET: Demonstrated how LMI can measure not just unemployment, but also positive impacts including millions put back into the economy and savings to Employment Insurance and social assistance through sustainable employment (ISET First Nation Agreement Holder's National Meeting Minutes, 2025)

Community-Driven Innovations: One Nation used LMI data to launch IT and digital skills training for youth, preparing them for emerging careers and creating pathways into the technology sector (ISET First Nation Agreement Holder's National Meeting Minutes, 2025).

Stronger Supports for Citizens: Several Agreement Holders linked LMI data to address employment barriers such as driver's license access and readiness for skilled trades. By tailoring solutions directly to local realities, they increased job placements and reduced systemic barriers (LMI Breakout Discussion, 2025).

Integration with Cultural Priorities: Communities connected their LMI work with land-based learning, Elder-led programming, and wellness initiatives, demonstrating that economic participation and community well-being are interconnected (Notes Q&A after LMI presentation, 2025)



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Disability Inclusion: Data revealed high numbers of youth with diagnoses such as ADHD, autism, or other learning disabilities. First Nations identified the need to adapt training and employment pathways for inclusivity (Notes Q&A after LMI presentation, 2025).

Aboriginal Employment Services (AES): Supporting 33 Agreement Holders, AES demonstrated how localized data strengthens workforce planning. Their model shows that First Nations with ownership of their data are better positioned to engage employers, design responsive training programs, and guide infrastructure and economic planning decisions (AES, 2024).

By continuing to invest in LMI, First Nations will be equipped to make informed, data-driven decisions that lead to greater workforce participation, economic independence, and long-term self-sufficiency. The LMI provides the foundational data infrastructure necessary to support First Nation-led economies and advance economic reconciliation.

Drivers for Change

Internal Drivers

Growing Demand for Data: First Nations Chiefs have emphasized that LMI is required not only to design stronger employment strategies but also to demonstrate savings to Employment Insurance (EI) and social assistance. Communities are using this evidence to show how investments in training and employment reduce reliance on transfers and contribute to Canada's economy (ISET First Nation Agreement Holder's National Meeting Minutes, 2025).

Inclusive and Culturally Grounded Planning: First Nations want tools to design training that is inclusive of youth with disabilities, supportive of off-reserve members, and reflective of traditional roles such as land-based employment, cultural healing, and Elder-led teachings (Notes Q&A after LMI presentation, 2025).

Commitment to Reconciliation: The Government of Canada's reconciliation priorities align with the demand for LMI, as it empowers First Nations to manage their own economic futures through OCAP-compliant data sovereignty and Nation-led decision-making (Notes Q&A after LMI presentation, 2025).

External Drivers

Economic Trends: The changing economic landscape particularly major housing and infrastructure projects, resource development, healthcare, skilled trades, and technology requires timely labour market data. First Nations also stressed that Canada's job classification systems should recognize categories such as traditional healers and knowledge keepers (Draft Notes Q&A after LMI presentation, 2025).

Government Commitments: The Government of Canada has made reconciliation and economic self-determination key priorities, as outlined in mandate letters, the 2025 Speech from the Throne, and the UNDRIP Act Action Plan Actions 16 & 38 Government of Canada, Speech from the Throne, 2025).

Fiscal and Social Payoff: Closing employment and income gaps could add \$36.4 billion to Canada's GDP by 2031 (CSLS, 2023) while also reducing costs to EI and social assistance. LMI provides the evidence base to shift the narrative from deficits to contributions.



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Strategic Alignment and Context

The LMI aligns directly with the mandates of the AFN, the Government of Canada's reconciliation commitments, and Canada's broader economic priorities. It fills a critical gap by providing reliable, First Nation-specific labour market data to support evidence-based planning, while also demonstrating the positive contributions of First Nations to the economy. Together, these commitments underscore the urgent need for permanent, stable funding, especially as the pilot sunsets on March 31, 2026.

Alignment with AFN Resolutions and First Nation Priorities

Mandated through Resolution No. 64/2024: *First Nation Labour Market Information*, the AFN has prioritized the transition of the LMI from a pilot to a permanent national program (AFN, 2024). Chiefs-in-Assembly have called for a system that is First Nations-led, OCAP-compliant, and equitable across all regions. The pilot reflects this mandate by ensuring Agreement Holders have the tools, data, and flexibility to design and implement workforce, wellness, and economic strategies tailored to their communities. With expansion to all 95 Agreement Holders, this program will ensure broad and equitable access across Canada.

Alignment with Government of Canada Commitments

The initiative advances multiple federal priorities, including the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) Act Action Plan*:

- **Action 38:** Support distinctions-based Indigenous labour market strategies.
- **Action 16:** Advance Indigenous data sovereignty.

It also supports the *Prime Minister's 2025 Mandate Letter*, which directs ministers to expand careers in housing, infrastructure, and skilled trades, and the *2025 Speech from the Throne*, which emphasized reconciliation and long-term prosperity with Indigenous Peoples. By equipping First Nations with Nation-specific labour market intelligence, the LMI ensures communities can respond to these national priorities with evidence-based strategies.

Additionally, LMI contributes to Canada's economic and social goals by:

- Providing data that helps reduce reliance on EI and social assistance.
- Demonstrating how sustainable First Nations employment contributes directly to GDP growth (estimated at \$36.4 billion by 2031 if gaps are closed).
- Identifying pathways that integrate employment with wellness and cultural revitalization, showing that economic participation and community health are interconnected.
- The LMI initiative is not only a reconciliation priority but also an economic one. According to the National Indigenous Economic Development Board (NIEDB), closing the employment and income gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians would significantly increase national prosperity.



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- The Centre for the Study of Living Standards (CSLS) estimates that closing these gaps could add \$36.4 billion to Canada's GDP by 2031. In addition, LMI data allows First Nations to demonstrate measurable savings to Employment Insurance and social assistance by supporting citizens into sustainable employment.

Permanent funding for the LMI will help drive these outcomes by enabling First Nations to align training and workforce strategies with both local and national economic needs, while showcasing their contributions to Canada's growth.

Strategic Fit

The initiative is a critical component of Canada's reconciliation and economic development framework. It empowers First Nations to access and govern localized labour market data, enabling them to design training, employment, wellness, and economic plans that reflect their realities. Importantly, funding formulas must account for both on- and off-reserve populations. Nationally, more than half of First Nations members live off reserve, and cities are located within traditional territories. Ensuring equity requires funding that reflects all First Nations citizens, regardless of residence, and acknowledges community-defined understandings of territory and membership.

Recommendation

The clear path forward is to transition the LMI pilot to a permanent program with sustained funding of **\$65.68 million annually, with a 2% escalator** beginning in 2026. With the pilot set to sunset on March 31, 2026, this investment is urgently required to secure long-term sustainability, expand coverage to all 95 Agreement Holders, and enable First Nations to lead their own workforce and economic development strategies in line with national reconciliation and economic priorities.



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Business Outcomes

A permanent First Nations LMI initiative is designed to achieve four key outcomes that directly support reconciliation, economic self-determination, and long-term prosperity:

Improved Employment Strategies – First Nations will have access to reliable labour market data to design and implement effective training and employment programs, reducing unemployment and aligning skills with market demand.

(SITAG ILMI Annual Report, 2025)



Learning Traditional Indigenous Skills and Other Training or Skills Upgrading

Training to Learn Traditional Skills (n=6,193)	%
Yes	23.27%
No	67.06%
Prefer not to answer/Don't know/Not Sure	9.67%
Total	100%
Participated in Other Training or Skills Upgrading (n=6,193)	%
Yes	27.53%
No	61.25%
Prefer not to answer/Don't know/Not Sure	11.23%
Total	100%
Attending School, Training to Learn Traditional Skills or Other Training/ Skills Upgrading (n=6,200)	%
Yes	57.29%
No	42.71%
Total	100%

Table 7. Learning Traditional Indigenous Skills and Other Training or Skills Upgrading

Economic Self-Sufficiency – First Nations will gain the tools to reduce reliance on government transfers by building their own economic opportunities through evidence-based planning.

Expanded Workforce Participation – By identifying training needs and high-demand sectors, the initiative will help close employment and income gaps and increase participation in Canada's economy, a priority highlighted by the National Indigenous Economic Development Board (NIEDB). As part of this, the LMI can also support discussions on recognizing roles that are unique to First Nations such as land-based knowledge keepers within national labour systems.

Sustainable Growth and Development – Permanent, predictable funding will ensure the long-term impact of First Nation-led labour market data collection and analysis, supporting stability and resilience in First Nations economies.



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Mission and Goals

The mission is to equip First Nations with accurate labour market data to drive workforce development and economic planning. Its core goals are:

- Empowering First Nations with reliable, OCAP-compliant data for informed decision-making.
- Supporting economic growth and self-sufficiency through evidence-based insights.
- Expanding coverage to all 95 Agreement Holders across Canada.
- Fostering reconciliation by strengthening Nation-led data sovereignty and reducing dependency on temporary or pilot-based funding.

Current Activities and Stakeholders

- **Activities:** Collection, analysis, and distribution of First Nation-specific labour market data; training of community surveyors; development of survey tools; and use of LMI data to design local training and employment strategies.
- **Stakeholders:** First Nations, ISET Agreement Holders, AFN, ESDC, ISC, and regional technical working groups.
- **Clients:** First Nations, policymakers, employers, and economic development organizations.

Organizational Structure

The pilot is coordinated by ESDC, with strategic input from AFN and technical support from Agreement Holders. A technical committee of Agreement Holder representatives and experts guides delivery and ensures regional relevance.

Current Capacity

Financial: \$12M in pilot-phase funding over six years laid the groundwork for data systems and community engagement. Transitioning to a permanent program requires \$65.68M annually with a 2% escalator.

Human Resources: Supported by labour market analysts, data specialists, and community-based staff, with growing emphasis on training to ensure long-term sustainability and First Nations-led capacity.

Program Foundations: Assumptions, Constraints, and Dependencies Delivering a permanent First Nations LMI program requires clear recognition of the assumptions, constraints, and dependencies that underpin success.



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Assumptions

- Timely access to accurate First Nation-level data that reflects both on and off-reserve populations.
- Ongoing engagement of First Nations, AFN, and ESDC through an Implementation Committee.
- Sufficient, sustained funding of \$65.68 million annually with a 2% escalator.
- Strong participation from First Nations in data collection and analysis, supported by training and stable staffing.
- Feasible capacity to scale across all 95 Agreement Holders over a five-year period.

Constraints

- The sunset of the pilot on March 31, 2026 creates urgency; delayed funding would risk disruption.
- Limited or uncertain funding could delay scaling and expansion.
- Geographic and logistical barriers in remote and northern communities.
- Varying readiness and capacity among First Nations.
- Potential shifts in government priorities or policy direction.
- Complexity of integrating diverse community datasets while maintaining OCAP compliance.

Dependencies

- Collaboration and trust with First Nations stakeholders and Agreement Holders.
- Secure and ongoing federal funding commitment.
- Availability of skilled surveyors, full-time data analysts, and regional analysts to support consistent application of data.
- Availability of training supports, including initial in-person onboarding and ongoing refresher training.
- Flexibility to use modular databases, allowing communities to adapt surveys to their priorities (e.g., employment barriers, licensing, local skills).
- Alignment with related economic development and training programs.

Further detail on these assumptions, constraints, and dependencies, including impacts and mitigation considerations, is provided in [Annex G](#).



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Scope and Boundaries

Included in Scope:

- **Permanent Program Transition:** Establish the LMI pilot as a permanent, fully funded program serving all First Nations across Canada.
- **Ongoing Data Collection and Analysis:** Expand and maintain First Nation-led labour market surveys, analysis, and reporting to inform employment and economic strategies.
- **Capacity-Building Efforts:** Provide sustained training and workshops to build community expertise in data collection, analysis, and application.
- **National Expansion:** Scale the initiative from the pilot to all 95 Agreement Holders, ensuring equitable access to labour market tools nationwide.
- **Sustainable Funding:** Secure permanent funding with a built-in escalator to ensure long-term stability, adaptability, and responsiveness to community needs.

Excluded from Scope

- **Direct Program Delivery:** The LMI initiative will not deliver employment or training programs. Its role is to provide the data that informs community-led strategies.
- **Unrelated Funding Streams:** The initiative is limited to labour market information and economic planning. It will not fund programs outside this mandate. However, LMI data may be used by communities to support proposals to other departments or partners.

Equity Considerations

To reflect differences in service delivery, the funding model incorporates a weighted formula that adjusts for both population size and the number of First Nations represented by each Agreement Holder. This ensures fair and equitable coverage across diverse communities, including those with significant off-reserve populations. The program will also use a modular survey approach, allowing Agreement Holders to add optional questions (e.g., on licensing, skills, or local barriers) to reflect community priorities while maintaining national standards.

In addition, the funding model includes remote and northern cost adjustments to account for higher operational, travel, and connectivity expenses faced by some Agreement Holders.



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Implementation Plan

Who Delivers

The program will continue to be delivered through ISET Agreement Holders, following the same process as the pilot. This was strongly affirmed by Agreement Holders during the ISET First Nation Agreement Holder’s National meeting, who emphasized that delivery must remain under ISET to respect existing relationships, flexibility, and accountability structures. No governance changes are proposed.

Agreement Holders will retain the flexibility to run the program in ways that best meet their communities’ needs, while ensuring that labour market data is collected and managed in compliance with OCAP principles (AFN, Resolution 64/2024).

Oversight and coordination will be supported by an Implementation Committee (AFN, ISET Holders, and ESDC), focused on sharing analysis, supporting onboarding, and ensuring regional equity (ISET First Nation Agreement Holder’s National Meeting Minutes, 2025).

In addition, peer-to-peer mentorship from pilot communities will be built into the onboarding process. Experienced Agreement Holders will support new entrants by sharing tools, best practices, and lessons learned, helping to ensure smoother transitions and consistent quality across regions (LMI Breakout Discussion, 2025).

Phased Onboarding Timeline (2026-2030)

The permanent program will be phased in over five years, building on the 28 Agreement Holders already funded under the pilot. This approach supports capacity-building, minimizes delivery risk, and ensures sustainable growth.

Year / Phase	Key Actions	Support Mechanisms	Oversight
Year 1 (2026)	Onboard 13 new Agreement Holders; establish Implementation Committee; deploy national IT/data platform.	Startup funds for staffing/IT; training hub resources; pilot community mentorship.	Implementation Committee (AFN, ESDC, Agreement Holders).
Years 2–4 (2027–2029)	Onboard 13–15 Agreement Holders per year; expand regional hubs; rolling training and evaluation.	Regional training hubs; tailored mentorship; peer-to-peer exchanges; ongoing technical help desk.	Implementation Committee monitors progress and ensures equity across regions.
Year 5 (2030)	Onboard final 15 Agreement Holders; conduct strategic review; transition to full national delivery.	Advanced analyst training; final IT/data scaling; national knowledge exchange.	Implementation Committee conducts review and reports to AFN/ESDC leadership.



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Oversight and Implementation

Implementation Committee

Oversight will be coordinated through a Program Steering/Implementation Committee composed of AFN, ESDC, and Agreement Holder representatives. This committee will:

- Oversee onboarding progress and ensure timely delivery.
- Resolve implementation challenges and share best practices.
- Ensure OCAP principles guide all aspects of program design and data use.
- Monitor regional equity, including remote and northern delivery challenges.

Roles and Responsibilities

- **ISET Agreement Holders:** Lead community-level delivery, data collection, and program design.
- **AFN:** Provide national coordination, policy advocacy, and ensure First Nations priorities are communicated.
- **ESDC:** Administer funding and federal accountability, while enabling First Nations-led delivery.

This governance model ensures the program remains community-driven and ISET-led, while strengthening national coordination and mentorship to support sustainable scale-up (ISET First Nation Agreement Holder’s National Meeting Minutes, 2025).

Stakeholder	Role	Contribution
Assembly of First Nations (AFN)	Strategic Leadership	Leads the program renewal Business Case request (with Sàgasige Co Consulting), advocates for First Nations priorities, and coordinates communication between leaders, communities, and stakeholders.
Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)	Program Administration	Oversees administration of the ISET Program, manages funding and compliance, evaluates program performance, and ensures alignment with national priorities.
First Nations ISET Agreement Holders	Implementation & Local Coordination	Deliver community-level programs, collect labour market data, provide feedback, and ensure training strategies reflect local needs. Play a critical role in building capacity and leading Nation-specific data sovereignty.
Regional Analysts	Technical Support	Provide training, data interpretation, and analysis to support Agreement Holders, ensuring consistent application across diverse territories while respecting local context.



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Stakeholder	Role	Contribution
Indigenous Employment Networks & Employers	Partnerships	Collaborate on job placements, internships, and mentorship opportunities, supporting the transition from training to employment.
Provincial & Territorial Governments	Regional Insight	Provide region-specific labour market intelligence and partner with federal and First Nations organizations to deliver localized solutions.

This implementation and stakeholder model ensures the LMI remains First Nation-driven while aligned with federal priorities. By leveraging AFN leadership, ESDC oversight, Agreement Holder delivery, and strong partnerships with employers and governments, the program is positioned for long-term success in closing employment gaps, advancing reconciliation, and strengthening economic self-sufficiency.

Options Analysis

Several options for transitioning the LMI initiative were reviewed against criteria such as strategic fit, scalability, sustainability, affordability, and impact on economic development. The analysis confirmed that the only viable and strategic path forward is to establish a fully funded, permanent program.

This model:

- Ensures long-term stability and avoids disruption when the pilot sunsets on March 31, 2026.
- Scales to all 95 Agreement Holders, ensuring equitable access to First Nation-specific labour market tools across Canada.
- Responds to the direction of AFN Resolution 64/2024 and aligns with federal commitments under the UNDA Action Plan and the Prime Minister’s 2025 Mandate Letter.
- Embeds OCAP principles to protect First Nations data sovereignty while enabling community-driven planning.
- Provides a sustainable framework for onboarding, training, and regional analyst supports that were highlighted as essential during national engagement sessions.

Other options were considered such as continuing as a pilot, providing partial or time-limited funding, or limiting the scope to fewer Agreement Holders were rejected. These approaches fail to provide stability, leave large gaps in coverage, and undermine the reconciliation objectives of Resolution 64/2024. They would also perpetuate the cycle of temporary programming, increase delivery risk, and prevent communities from building long-term data capacity.

Full details of the evaluation framework and criteria are provided in [Annex B](#).



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The Financial Plan

Since 2017, the LMI pilot has been supported through one-time and annual allocations, providing 28 Agreement Holders with resources to test and refine First Nation-led labour market data collection. Over this period, the pilot has delivered measurable results: expanding First Nations' access to labour market data, supporting tailored training and employment strategies, and informing community-led economic development (ESDC Pilot Allocations Report, 2017–2023).

Between 2017 and 2023, the pilot received a total federal allocation of \$12 million. Of this, \$10.16 million was distributed to Agreement Holders, with the balance retained for federal administration (ESDC Pilot Allocations Report, 2017–2023). While this pilot investment provided valuable proof of concept, it was not sufficient to support comprehensive or sustained national coverage. With the pilot set to sunset on March 31, 2026, permanent funding must be secured to avoid disruption and maintain momentum (ISET First Nation Agreement Holder's National Meeting Minutes, 2025).

Permanent Program Funding Requirement

Scaling to a permanent, national program requires **\$65.68 million annually**, with a **2% annual escalator beginning in Year 2** to account for inflation, population growth, and the higher delivery costs in remote and northern regions. This investment will provide:

- Ongoing community-led data collection and analysis;
- Stable, full-time staffing and training across all 95 Agreement Holders (~165 FTEs);
- Regional analysts to support communities with training, onboarding, and data interpretation;
- Secure digital infrastructure and IT systems;
- OCAP-aligned oversight and compliance supports.

Base and Population-Weighted Model

The permanent program includes a base allocation for each Agreement Holder, ensuring that all 95 have the minimum viable capacity to operate regardless of size or geography. In addition, the model incorporates a population-weighted adjustment to reflect the reality that Agreement Holders represent both on and off reserve members. Nationally, more than half of First Nations citizens live off reserve, with some Nations representing significantly higher proportions. The weighting principle ensures resources scale with the total population served, providing fairness and equity across all regions. The model also incorporates remote and northern cost adjustments to account for the higher operational, travel, and connectivity expenses faced by some communities.



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Scalability and Validation

The model is designed to be scalable, equitable, and sustainable, ensuring nationwide coverage through phased implementation. It builds on the costing structures validated by AES and the SITAG, both of which demonstrated that community-driven LMI systems can scale efficiently while respecting local governance. AES expanded from 4 to 33 communities without increases in per-unit costs, confirming that the approach is both cost-effective and operationally sound (AES, Internal LMI Pilot Expansion Report, 2024).

Similarly, SITAG's 2025 Annual Report highlighted how regional collaboration and database development supported multi-community scalability and efficiency, reinforcing the feasibility of a national rollout (SITAG, ILMI Annual Report, March 25, 2025).

At the same time, ISET First Nation Agreement Holder's National LMI Meeting confirmed that long-term success depends on transitioning to full-time staffing models (salaried surveyors and analysts) rather than per-survey contracts, paired with consistent training and technical support (ISET First Nation Agreement Holder's National Meeting Minutes, 2025).

Pilot History

Between 2017 and 2023, a total of \$10.16 million was allocated to 28 First Nations Agreement Holders, averaging \$362,336 per Agreement Holder annually (ESDC, Pilot Allocations Report, 2017–2023). This figure provides the baseline for the permanent funding request, ensuring equity in resourcing across all 95 Agreement Holders. However, communities emphasized during the National ISET Meeting that annual, uncertain funding created instability and discouraged staff retention. A permanent funding base is needed to sustain local capacity and maintain momentum (ISET First Nation Agreement Holder's National Meeting Minutes, 2025).



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Permanent Funding Request

Scaling the pilot to a national model requires a **base amount for the agreement holders is \$34.42 million annually**, supplemented by targeted investments in:

Proposed Funding Breakdown (Starting in 2026)

Investment Type	Annual Amount	Notes
Base Agreement Holder Funding	\$34.42M	\$362,336 × 95 Agreement Holders (scales pilot-level funding nationally).
Staffing (LMI Coordinators & Analysts)	\$15.63M	Supports ~165 FTEs across 95 Agreement Holders; avg. \$95,000 per staff including benefits/overhead.
Technology Systems & Digital Infrastructure	\$4.38M	Community IT platforms, dashboards, secure cloud storage, upgrades.
Data Collection & Analysis	\$3.13M	Regional surveys, interviews, community-driven analysis.
Travel & Regional Meetings	\$2.50M	Fly-ins, site visits, and cross-regional coordination.
Onboarding & Training	\$0.63M	\$5,000 per Agreement Holder annually.
Population Growth Adjustment	\$1.88M	Accounts for rising First Nations population.
Remote/Northern Adjustment	\$1.88M	Higher costs in remote and northern regions.
OCAP Governance & Consent	\$0.63M	Legal reviews, consent processes, data sovereignty supports.
Centralized Oversight & Contingency	\$0.63M	National program management, quality control, reserve funds.

Total Annual Investment (2026): \$65.68 million

This total **\$65.68 million annually**, with a **2% escalator** to account for inflation, population growth, and higher delivery costs in remote and northern communities. See [Annex C](#) for more details.



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Cost-Benefit Analysis

Transitioning the First Nations LMI to a permanent program represents a total investment of \$341.8 million over five years (2026–2030), including a 2% annual escalator.

The long-term benefits substantially outweigh this investment:

- **Nationwide Coverage:** Expansion from 28 pilot communities to all 95 Agreement Holders, ensuring equity of access to Nation-specific labour market tools.
- **Improved Employment Outcomes:** Better program design informed by First Nation-level data, reducing unemployment and aligning training with real opportunities.
- **Capacity Building:** Strengthened community skills in survey administration, data analysis, and application, supporting long-term self-sufficiency.
- **Economic Participation:** Increased readiness for high-demand sectors such as trades, housing, green energy, and infrastructure. The Centre for the Study of Living Standards (CSLS) estimates that closing Indigenous–non-Indigenous employment and income gaps could add \$36.4 billion to Canada’s GDP by 2031.
- **Cost Avoidance:** Reduced reliance on Employment Insurance, social assistance, and crisis-response funding by moving citizens into sustainable careers. Communities have already demonstrated savings through proactive planning informed by LMI data.

The cost-benefit analysis demonstrates that investments in a permanent LMI system will generate significant societal, economic, and reconciliation benefits, directly supporting self-determination and sustainable growth.

Cost-Benefit Analysis (2026–2030)

The permanent program builds directly on the existing pilot. In 2025, the 28 Agreement Holders already funded will continue operating under existing pilot resources, ensuring no gap in delivery (ISET First Nation Agreement Holder’s National Meeting Minutes, 2025). With the pilot set to sunset on March 31, 2026, permanent funding must begin in fiscal year 2026–27 to maintain momentum.

Permanent funding will allow the program to scale in a phased and standardized way, onboarding approximately 13–15 new Agreement Holders per year until full national coverage is achieved by 2030 (LMI Breakout Discussion, 2025). The total investment for the first five years of permanent implementation (2026–2030) is \$341.8 million, including a 2% annual escalator beginning in Year 2. This investment will deliver nationwide coverage, stronger employment outcomes, enhanced community capacity, and measurable contributions to reconciliation and Canada’s long-term economic growth (CSLS, 2023).



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Implementation Schedule (2026–2030)

A phased rollout will ensure readiness, minimize disruption, and enable sustainable growth:

Work Stream	Timeline	Key Milestones
Program Approval & Funding Confirmation	Q1–Q2 2026	Budget approval; agreements with ESDC; Implementation Committee
Foundational Infrastructure & Staffing	Q2–Q4 2026	Onboard national/regional staff; establish central data platform; create onboarding kits
Phase I Rollout (13 Holders)	2026	Community training; IT and dashboards deployed; data collection launched
Phased Expansion (13 Holders/year)	2027–2029	Annual onboarding; scaling of regional data hubs; continuous training & quality assurance
Final Expansion & Review	2030	Final 15 holders onboarded; full national delivery; strategic review & sustainability planning

The cost-benefit analysis confirms that permanent funding of the LMI initiative is fiscally responsible and strategically necessary. The phased rollout ensures equitable expansion to all 95 Agreement Holders, builds community capacity, and delivers sustainable benefits by 2030.

Cross-Reference to Annex D – Financial Details Option Analysis

The costing model and funding request presented in this section are supported by a detailed options analysis and full costing methodology. For further information on evaluation criteria, rationale for the recommended option, risk considerations, and cost methodology in line with the Treasury Board Secretariat Guide to Costing, see [Annex D](#).

Scalability and Efficiency

The financial model proposed in this business case builds on proven approaches validated during the pilot and through AES, one of the ILMI delivery partners. AES successfully scaled from 4 to 33 Agreement Holders, representing more than 272,000 First Nations individuals, without significant increases in per-unit costs. Their use of a per-capita and activity-based costing model confirms that national scale-up is financially viable and operationally sound (AES, 2024).

At the same time, national engagement confirmed that the long-term model must include full-time salaried staff positions and regional analyst supports, rather than reliance on per-survey payments. This ensures stability, improves retention, and builds lasting First Nations-led capacity. Combined with a



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population-weighted formula and remote/northern cost adjustments, the model ensures scalability, fairness, and efficiency as the program expands to all 95 Agreement Holders (ISET First Nation Agreement Holder's National Meeting Minutes, 2025)

Alignment with AES Model

This financial model builds on the structures successfully demonstrated by First Nations data delivery partners, including the SITAG and AES. Together, these partners have shown that scalable and cost-efficient approaches are possible while respecting community governance.

For example, AES currently supports 33 communities and a working-age population of more than 272,000 First Nations individuals, using a per-capita and activity-based costing model (\$5.50–\$11 per person for enumeration and \$100 per completed survey). This approach expanded from 4 to 33 Agreement Holders without significant increases in per-unit costs, validating the feasibility of national expansion (AES, 2024).

At the same time, national engagement confirmed that long-term sustainability requires stable, full-time staffing at the community level, supported by regional analysts. Reliance on per-survey contracts created instability during the pilot and made it difficult to retain experienced staff.

The permanent program therefore builds on AES's scalable model while incorporating lessons from the pilot: ensuring flexibility, choice, and respect for data sovereignty, so that some First Nations may continue to work with regional delivery partners while others act as their own delivery leads. This blended approach balances efficiency with First Nation-led control.

Pilot Impacts

The pilot phase has already shown measurable outcomes, further details are located in [Annex H](#):

- **Employment Strategies:** Data collected has helped First Nations tailor training and employment programs to meet local labour market needs (e.g., computer training, trades, and IT).
- **Economic Self-Sufficiency:** Communities have used LMI data to drive local initiatives, moving citizens into sustainable careers and demonstrating savings to Employment Insurance and social assistance.
- **Wellness and Inclusion:** Surveys revealed barriers such as driver's license access and the need for supports for those with disabilities. Communities designed programs to respond directly to these findings.
- **Proof of Scalability:** The pilot confirmed that with continued funding, the LMI initiative can scale to meet the growing demand for First Nation-specific labour data, supporting equitable participation across all 95 Agreement Holders.



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Permanent Funding Ensures

- Community-led collection and analysis of labour market data.
- Stable full-time staffing and secure digital infrastructure across all Agreement Holders.
- Comprehensive training, onboarding, and regional analyst support.
- Adaptations for remote and northern delivery.
- OCAP-compliant data sovereignty and centralized technical supports.

Risk

A comprehensive risk management process is essential to the success of transitioning the First Nations LMI pilot into a permanent, government-funded program. This process includes identifying, assessing, and mitigating risks that could affect implementation, operations, and long-term sustainability. The risk assessment follows the Treasury Board Secretariat's Project Complexity and Risk Assessment (PCRA) methodology and draws on recognized project management best practices. This structured approach ensures accountability, strategic alignment, and continuous monitoring throughout the program lifecycle.

Risk Summary – Permanent Program Transition

- **Funding Risk:** The pilot sunsets on March 31, 2026; without secured funding, capacity will be lost. Mitigation: Secure announcement in the Budget 2026 approval; phased rollout begins FY 2026–27.
- **Capacity Risk:** Varying readiness among communities. Mitigation: Provide regional analysts, phased onboarding, and annual training refreshers.
- **Geographic Risk:** Remote and northern communities face higher costs and logistical challenges. Mitigation: Apply targeted remote/northern cost adjustments.
- **Data Risk:** Ensuring OCAP compliance and data security. Mitigation: Centralized IT platform, training, and consent protocols.
- **Policy Risk:** Shifts in government priorities. Mitigation: Ground program in Resolution 64/2024 and UNDA Action Plan commitments to reconciliation and data sovereignty.



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Risk Statement	Probability	Impact	Mitigation Strategy	Outcome	Tolerance	Risk Rating
Insufficient technical capacity at the community level	Medium	High	Phased onboarding, regional training hubs, flexible delivery models	Capacity is strengthened gradually	Moderate	Medium
Delays in federal funding approval or disbursement	Medium	Medium	Early engagement with ESDC and fiscal alignment with Treasury Board timelines	Onboarding timelines adjusted	Low	Medium
Inadequate data protection and governance systems	Low	High	OCAP-compliant frameworks, legal reviews, secure cloud infrastructure	Privacy and trust maintained	Low	Low
Recruitment and retention of skilled data professionals	High	Medium	Consultant support, incentives for remote placements, long-term training investments	Roles filled through hybrid staffing strategies	Moderate	Medium
Inconsistent engagement across First Nations	Medium	High	Nation-led governance model, regular communication tailored engagement plans	High participation and trust	Moderate	Medium

A permanent and predictable investment is essential to ensure all First Nations have equitable access to labour market tools and data sovereignty. This positions communities to lead workforce development, strengthen economic self-determination, and close employment gaps across Canada.

Risk and Mitigation

Transitioning from a pilot to a permanent program carries some risks. Most are manageable with proactive mitigation and governance. A detailed Risk Register will be included in [Annex A](#), while the table below summarizes the key risks.

High-impact risks (capacity, engagement, recruitment) are mitigated through phased rollout, strong governance, and investment in training. Systemic risks (funding delays, IT/data governance) are mitigated through early alignment with ESDC/TBS and compliance with OCAP and privacy legislation. By embedding a robust oversight structure, these risks are considered manageable and acceptable for a permanent transition.



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Capacity & Implementation Oversight

The permanent LMI program will continue under the existing ISET governance structure, with no changes to delivery or accountability. ISET Agreement Holders will remain responsible for community-level implementation, ensuring labour market data collection and use are community-driven, culturally relevant, and responsive to local priorities.

The AFN will maintain its advocacy role, supporting national coordination and ensuring that government commitments to reconciliation and First Nations data sovereignty remain central to program implementation. ESDC will continue as the federal administrator, overseeing funding distribution, ensuring compliance with federal accountability standards, and working with Agreement Holders to monitor outcomes. Its role will remain administrative and enabling, preserving First Nations leadership in delivery. Oversight and coordination will be supported by an Implementation Committee composed of AFN, ISET Holders, and ESDC. This body will provide technical support, share best practices, and ensure regional equity while respecting Nation-level decision-making. Scaling from 28 to 95 Agreement Holders will be supported through a phased onboarding approach from 2026–2030. This strategy provides time to expand technical capacity, hire full-time surveyors and regional analysts, and establish regional data hubs. With the pilot set to sunset on March 31, 2026, timely transition is essential to sustain momentum and avoid disruption. Further detail on capacity benchmarking, policy considerations, and comparative analysis is provided in [Annex F](#).

Outcomes & Impact

The permanent transition of the First Nations LMI will generate measurable benefits for communities and Canada as a whole.

Employment Outcomes

Agreement Holders will use Nation-specific data to design training and employment strategies that directly reflect local labour market demand.

Outcomes include:

Increased job placements, reduced unemployment, and stronger long-term workforce participation.

Tailored training cohorts in high-demand sectors such as construction and carpentry, where LMI identified skilled trades shortages.

Improved readiness for employment through programs targeting barriers such as driver's license access, which communities have demonstrated is directly tied to job outcomes.

Building local capacity through trained surveyors, data analysts, and coordinators, creating sustainable employment within communities.



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(SITAG ILMI Annual Report, 2025)



Job Status Including Traditional and Occasional Jobs

Job Status (n=6,200)	%
Yes	56.40%
No	43.60%
Total	100%

Table 5. Job Status Including Traditional and Occasional Jobs

Economic Growth

Closing the employment and income gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians could add \$36.4 billion to Canada's GDP by 2031 (CSLS, 2023).

LMI data demonstrates not only where challenges exist, but also where investments produce savings to EI and social assistance. Prince George ISET reported millions put back into the economy as citizens moved from provincial support into sustained employment.

A fully funded, permanent LMI equips First Nations to align workforce development with high-growth sectors such as housing, infrastructure, green energy, resource development, healthcare, and technology.

By scaling nationally, the program ensures First Nations are positioned as key contributors to Canada's labour force, innovation, and competitiveness.

Data Sovereignty and Reconciliation

- Embedding OCAP principles guarantees First Nations ownership, control, access, and possession of their data.
- Communities stressed that LMI is not only about identifying needs, but also about demonstrating strengths and contributions including citizens transitioning out of high-risk lifestyles, reductions in social program reliance, and integration of cultural knowledge keepers into employment strategies.
- This initiative advances reconciliation by shifting from dependency on federal data systems (e.g., Census, Statistics Canada, ISC) to Nation-led approaches rooted in community priorities.
- It supports federal commitments under the UNDRIP Act Action Plan, including distinctions-based labour market strategies (Action 38) and Indigenous data sovereignty (Action 16).



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Highlight Stories – Real Impacts of LMI

Nation-specific labour market information (LMI) has already produced measurable successes. These examples highlight the value of permanent funding:

Case Examples

Community-driven innovations: One community launched IT and digital skills training for youth after LMI surveys revealed local demand, immediately improving employability (ISET First Nation Agreement Holder's National Meeting Minutes, 2025).

Stronger supports for citizens: Agreement Holders addressed driver's license barriers and readiness for skilled trades by designing supports directly from survey results (LMI Breakout Discussion, 2025).

Integration with cultural priorities: Several communities connected LMI work with land-based learning, Elder-led programming, and wellness initiatives, showing how economic participation and community well-being are interdependent (Q&A after LMI presentation, 2025).

Disability inclusion: LMI surveys revealed high numbers of youth with ADHD, autism, or other learning disabilities, prompting new approaches to inclusive training and employment pathways (Q&A after LMI presentation, 2025).

Aboriginal Employment Services (AES): Expanded from 4 to 33 communities while maintaining stable per-unit costs, demonstrating the model is scalable and efficient (AES, Internal LMI Pilot Expansion Report, 2024).

Employer Partnerships (Saskatchewan): Over 300 employer partnerships created through SITAG led to 226 direct employment outcomes, proving LMI can drive real workforce connections (SITAG ILMI Annual Report, 2025).

Youth Digital Training: One agreement holder launched IT and computer programs after surveys showed local demand, immediately improving employability for youth (ISET First Nation Agreement Holder's National Meeting Minutes, 2025).

Wellness & Cultural Healing: LMI was used to justify hiring Elders for land-based teachings and cultural revitalization, proving that economic and wellness outcomes are interconnected (Q&A after LMI presentation, 2025).

SITAG: Developed regional databases to support multiple communities, providing a tested model for scaling technical infrastructure and data-sharing

(SITAG, ILMI Annual Report, March 25, 2025).



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Outcomes, Impact, and Call to Action

The LMI initiative is more than a data project it is a foundation for reconciliation, sovereignty, and sustainable growth. Permanent funding ensures that every First Nation has equitable access to high-quality labour market tools that close employment gaps, drive community-led planning, and strengthen Canada's long-term prosperity. With the pilot set to sunset on March 31, 2026, the time is now to transition the LMI from a pilot to a permanent, fully funded program.

Funding Request: \$65.68 million annually with a 2% escalator, ensuring stability, scalability, and equitable delivery across all 95 Agreement Holders. Over five years (2026–2030), this represents a total investment of \$341.8 million.

Reconciliation & Data Sovereignty: Permanent funding advances reconciliation and embeds OCAP principles, giving First Nations control over their workforce and economic planning.

Economic Payoff: Closing employment and income gaps could contribute up to \$36.4 billion to Canada's GDP by 2031, benefiting all Canadians through stronger growth and reduced reliance on EI and social assistance.

The long-term societal and economic benefits particularly in workforce readiness, economic development, and proactive planning substantially outweigh program costs.

Policy and Standard Considerations

The transition of the First Nations LMI initiative to a permanent program will comply with existing policies and standards within ESDC and across the Government of Canada. Ensuring alignment guarantees program integrity, efficiency, and adherence to reconciliation commitments.

Reallocation of Existing Federal Resources

Federal resources currently dedicated to First Nation-specific data collection through agencies such as Statistics Canada, ISC, and the Census should be reallocated to First Nations organizations already conducting this work.

This will:

- Eliminate duplication and improve efficiency by investing directly in community-driven systems.
- Advance fairness by ensuring First Nations control the collection and use of their own labour market information.
- Uphold OCAP principles of First Nations data sovereignty by grounding stewardship at the community level.



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Alignment with Federal Commitments

The permanent LMI program remains aligned with key Government of Canada priorities:

- UNDRIP Act Action Plan: Action 16 (Advance Indigenous data sovereignty) and Action 38 (Support distinctions-based Indigenous labour market strategies).
- Prime Minister's 2025 Mandate Letter: Expanding Indigenous participation in housing, infrastructure, and skilled trades, supported by LMI data.
- 2025 Speech from the Throne: Reaffirmed reconciliation and prosperity with Indigenous Peoples, including investments in data sovereignty and workforce participation.
- AFN Resolution 64/2024: Mandates AFN to secure long-term sustainable funding for First Nation-led LMI and ensure the program is distinctions-based, OCAP-compliant, and nationally equitable.

Policy Impact

Embedding these commitments into program design ensures that the permanent LMI initiative will:

- Recognize First Nations sovereignty in data ownership, analysis, and use.
- Comply fully with privacy, accountability, and economic development policies.
- Strengthen federal–First Nation partnerships grounded in rights recognition and reconciliation.

Advantages and Disadvantages

The transition of the LMI initiative to a permanent program presents both significant advantages and certain challenges. These were validated during the Fall 2025 National meetings.

Advantages

- **Long-Term Sustainability:** Provides predictable annual funding of \$65.68M with a 2% escalator, ending reliance on short-term or pilot renewals.
- **National Coverage:** Expands equitable access to all 95 Agreement Holders, ensuring every First Nation benefit from timely, Nation-specific labour data.
- **Reconciliation and Sovereignty:** Advances UNDRIP commitments and OCAP principles by placing control of labour market information directly in First Nations' hands.
- **Economic Payoff:** Contributes to closing the employment and income gaps between First Nations and non-Indigenous Canadians estimated to add \$36.4B to GDP by 2031 (CSLS, 2023).
- **Social Savings:** Demonstrates reductions in reliance on EI and provincial social assistance, proving the fiscal value of First Nation-specific labour strategies.
- **Policy Alignment:** Directly supports AFN Resolution 64/2024, the UNDRIP Act Action Plan, and the Prime Minister's 2025 Mandate Letter on Indigenous prosperity and workforce participation.
- **Proven Scalability:** Builds on the AES model, which scaled from 4 to 33 communities without cost escalation, demonstrating efficiency and feasibility at scale.



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Disadvantages

- **Higher Initial Investment:** Requires a permanent appropriation of \$65.68M annually, a significant increase compared to pilot-phase funding.
- **Implementation Complexity:** Scaling from 28 to 95 Agreement Holders involves phased onboarding, IT infrastructure upgrades, training, and coordination, adding logistical challenges.
- **Variable Readiness:** Not all communities are equally prepared for immediate implementation, requiring additional capacity-building and technical support.
- **Sunset Risk (March 31, 2026):** If Budget 2026 does not secure permanent funding, the pilot will lapse, risking loss of trained staff, disruption to delivery, and erosion of trust.
- **Dependence on Federal Commitment:** Long-term success depends on securing permanent federal reference levels and ensuring future budgets uphold the investment.

Despite the higher upfront investment and implementation complexity, the advantages clearly outweigh the disadvantages. The permanent LMI program offers a sustainable, equitable, and rights-based solution that advances reconciliation, fulfills federal mandates, and delivers measurable economic and social benefits for First Nations and for Canada as a whole.

Impact Assessment

Transitioning the First Nations LMI to a permanent, government-funded program will deliver measurable benefits at multiple levels. The impact assessment demonstrates that the shift to a permanent model will generate both immediate and enduring value for First Nations and the broader Canadian economy.

Internal Impacts

- **AFN and ESDC Capacity:** Both organizations will need to strengthen their operational capacity to coordinate, monitor, and support national program delivery. This includes technical support, regional oversight, and policy integration.
- **Financial Management & Reporting:** A permanent funding model will necessitate strong financial governance frameworks, including annual audits, consistent reporting protocols, and enhanced capacity for Agreement Holders to manage funds transparently.
- **Risk Management & Adaptability:** The phased rollout design allows for real-time course correction, ensuring program resilience and sustainability.

External Impacts

- **First Nations Empowerment:** First Nations will gain access to robust, real-time labour market data, enabling self-determined decision-making on employment, education, and training.
- **Employers and Labour Market Partners:** Employers highlighted during the Sept 18 session that localized LMI is essential for recruitment, workforce planning, and creating targeted apprenticeships. Over 300 employer partnerships in Saskatchewan have already produced 226 employment outcomes, demonstrating tangible employer benefits (SITAG, ILMI Annual Report, March 25, 2025).



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- **Capacity Building:** Ongoing investments in survey administration, digital infrastructure, and data literacy will build local expertise, reducing reliance on external consultants and strengthening long-term sustainability.
- **Federal & Provincial Governments:** Nation-led data directly supports reconciliation priorities, inclusive growth strategies, and evidence-based policymaking.

Societal Impacts

- **Economic Growth & Stability:** Increased First Nations participation in the labour force will lead to higher incomes, reduced unemployment, and stronger regional economies. Closing employment and income gaps could add \$36.4 billion to Canada's GDP by 2031.
- **Social Savings:** Prince George ISET have shown that moving citizens from social assistance into sustained employment both stimulates the economy and reduces government program costs (ISET First Nation Agreement Holder's National Meeting Minutes, 2025).
- **Cultural Revitalization:** Several Agreement Holders linked LMI to the hiring of Elders, land-based programs, and cultural healing. These efforts show that wellness and economic outcomes are interconnected, reinforcing that reconciliation requires culturally grounded approaches (SITAG ILMI Annual Report, 2025).
- **Long-Term Benefits:** Empowering First Nations to control and apply their own data fosters economic self-sufficiency, reduces reliance on federal programming, and builds stronger, community-driven economies for future generations.

Justification and Recommendation

The preferred option is to transition the First Nations LMI pilot into a permanent program. This option provides long-term sustainability, the ability to scale nationally, and ensures that First Nations have access to the data needed to improve economic development and employment opportunities. With the pilot set to sunset on March 31, 2026, securing Budget 2026 funding is essential to avoid disruption.

Deciding Factors

- **Long-Term Stability:** A permanent appropriation of \$65.68M annually, with a 2% escalator, secures predictable funding and ends reliance on short-term or pilot renewals (ESDC Pilot Allocations Report, 2017–2023).
- **Scalability:** Phased onboarding will expand the program from 28 pilot Agreement Holders to all 95 nationally, ensuring equitable access.
- **Economic and Social Payoff:** LMI demonstrates measurable returns, including contributions to GDP growth, reductions in reliance on EI and social assistance, and improved workforce participation (CSLS, 2023).
- **Reconciliation:** The program directly advances federal reconciliation commitments under the UNDRIP Act Action Plan and AFN Resolution 64/2024.



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- **Community Demand:** Chiefs-in-Assembly and Agreement Holders reaffirmed that permanent funding is essential, delivery must remain under ISET, and oversight should be coordinated through a joint Implementation Committee (ISET First Nation Agreement Holder's National Meeting Minutes, 2025).

Costs

The Permanent Program will require \$65.68 million annually, with a 2% escalator per year, to cover:

- Nation-led data collection and analysis.
- IT and digital infrastructure.
- Staffing and training (including full-time, salaried surveyors and regional analysts).
- Regional coordination, mentorship, and onboarding support.

Risks

The main risks associated with the Permanent Program include:

- **Sunset Risk:** The pilot sunsets on March 31, 2026. Without permanent funding confirmed in Budget 2026, there is a risk of program lapse, staff loss, and disruption to delivery.
- **IT Scalability:** Mitigated by phased infrastructure upgrades and regional hubs.
- **Community Readiness:** Addressed through mentorship by pilot Holders, regional hubs, and tailored onboarding supports.
- **Engagement Fatigue:** Mitigated through Nation-led survey design and reduced duplication with federal surveys.

Implementation Plan

The program will scale nationally through a phased onboarding approach between 2026 and 2030, ensuring readiness and equitable deployment across all 95 Agreement Holders. Detailed timelines, milestones, and training strategies are outlined in [Annex E](#).

Based on strategic alignment, financial feasibility, and demonstrated community demand, the Assembly of First Nations recommends that the Government of Canada:

- Transition the LMI pilot to a permanent program with a permanent appropriation of \$65.68 million annually with a 2% escalator.
- Confirm funding in Budget 2026 to prevent disruption after March 31, 2026.
- Maintain delivery through ISET Agreement Holders, with oversight coordinated through an Implementation Committee of AFN, ESDC, and Agreement Holder representatives.



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Governance and Oversight

The transition of the LMI pilot to a permanent program will require an adaptive governance framework that reflects both First Nation data sovereignty and federal accountability.

- **ISET Delivery:** Agreement Holders at the Fall 2025 National ISET Meeting confirmed that delivery must remain under ISET, preserving flexibility and existing accountability relationships.
- **Implementation Committee:** Oversight will be provided through a Program Steering/Implementation Committee made up of AFN, ESDC, and Agreement Holder representatives. This model was broadly supported as it strengthens coordination without imposing new governance structures.
- **OCAP Principles:** All data collection and management will continue to follow OCAP, ensuring First Nations retain control over their information and how it is applied.

Governance & Delivery Structure for Onboarding

The permanent program will use a phased onboarding approach to scale sustainably while building local capacity.

- **Cohorts:** Approximately 13–15 Agreement Holders will join each year, reaching full national coverage by 2030.
- **Mentorship:** Pilot communities will act as mentors for new Agreement Holders, sharing tools, templates, and lessons learned.
- **Startup Supports:** New cohorts should receive startup funding for infrastructure and staffing, training in survey design and data management, and access to a centralized help desk.

Examples of Onboarding Models:

- **SITAG (Saskatchewan):** Demonstrated the value of developing community-level databases; their approach will be leveraged as a regional best practice.
- **Quebec Commission:** Showed how onboarding can be standardized across multiple Nations; this model provides transferable training practices.



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Training Delivery and Capacity

Capacity development will be a central pillar of implementation.

- **Full-Time Employment:** All Agreement Holders will have the ability to hire full-time, salaried surveyors and analysts, ending the reliance on per-survey payments from the pilot phase.
- **Regional Analysts:** A network of regional analysts will provide specialized technical support, ensuring consistent interpretation and application of LMI data across regions.
- **Blended Training:** A combination of in-person workshops, regional sessions, and virtual refreshers will be delivered to maintain accessibility and continuous improvement.
- **Equity Adjustments:** Remote and northern cost adjustments will be applied to ensure equitable delivery and participation across all geographies.

Oversight and Evaluation

- **Annual Reviews:** Program progress will be reviewed annually to evaluate training effectiveness, data quality, and community satisfaction.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Findings will be used to adapt and improve delivery as new cohorts are onboarded.
- **Independent Evaluation:** A First Nations–led evaluation body will assess program outcomes to maintain credibility and ensure accountability to communities.

Project Management Strategy

Execution: Core execution will remain consistent, with ESDC managing funding distribution and compliance, while Agreement Holders deliver community-led data collection. Oversight will be coordinated through the Implementation Committee (AFN, ISET Holders, ESDC).

Monitoring: Regular performance reviews, quarterly Implementation Committee meetings, and milestone-based assessments will ensure objectives are achieved and lessons shared.

Reporting: A consistent reporting framework will keep all stakeholders (First Nations, AFN, ESDC) updated on progress, including standardized data dashboards.

Project Review Strategy

- **Progress Tracking:** Quarterly and annual reviews will monitor data collection, IT readiness, training completions, and engagement levels.
- **Communication:** Monthly project updates and quarterly milestone reviews will ensure alignment across AFN, ESDC, and Agreement Holders.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Findings from annual reviews will be used to adjust training, IT tools, and onboarding supports.



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Outcome Management Strategy

- **Outcome Targets:** Key metrics will track employment outcomes, training completions, job placements, and evidence of LMI being applied in program design.
- **Ongoing Reporting:** Annual reports to ESDC and AFN will highlight outcomes, adjustments, and future goals, with community feedback loops and regional analyst input.
- **Evaluation:** An independent, Indigenous-led evaluation body will conduct periodic reviews to ensure credibility and community trust.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- Timeliness and quality of data collection.
- Number of trained local data professionals and regional analysts.
- Integration of LMI into community program and policy design.
- Improvements in employment outcomes and workforce participation.
- Evidence of LMI being applied in Nation-led economic planning.
- Demonstrated economic contributions (e.g., GDP growth, reduced EI and social assistance reliance).

Risk Management Strategy

Identification and Assessment: A Risk Register will document risks such as funding uncertainty, IT limitations, community readiness, and engagement challenges.

Monitoring: Regular risk assessments by the Implementation Committee will allow proactive responses.

Mitigation: OCAP-compliant frameworks, phased rollout, regional analysts, and targeted training will reduce risk impact.

Sunset Risk: With the pilot ending March 31, 2026, delayed funding would disrupt delivery.

Mitigation: Secure Budget 2026 approval and ensure immediate transition to permanent funding.

Change Management Strategy

The transition from pilot to permanent program requires active change management:

- **Internal Communication:** Regular meetings across AFN, ESDC, and Agreement Holders will ensure readiness.
- **External Engagement:** First Nations will remain central in shaping design and implementation. AFN will ensure the program reflects First Nations priorities.

The Assembly of First Nations urges the Government of Canada transition the First Nations LMI pilot from a time-limited pilot to a fully funded, permanent program.



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Since its inception, the LMI pilot has equipped First Nations with culturally relevant, community-specific labour market data enabling informed planning, targeted training, and meaningful employment opportunities. With more than 36,000 First Nations individuals engaged to date, the pilot has laid a strong foundation. It is time to build on that success.

Permanent funding, as detailed in this business case, represents more than an administrative transition. It is a tangible commitment to reconciliation, data sovereignty, and economic equity.

The proposed \$65.68 million annual investment, with a 2% escalator, will:

- Support all 95 Agreement Holders through a phased rollout.
- Ensure regional equity, including adjustments for northern and remote communities.
- Enable scaling of this essential program with stable staffing, IT systems, and training supports.

This investment aligns with:

- **AFN Resolution 64/2024** (mandating sustainable LMI funding).
- **UNDRIP Act Action Plan** (Action 16: Indigenous data sovereignty; Action 38: distinctions-based labour market strategies).
- **Prime Minister's 2025 Mandate Letter** (skilled trades, housing, infrastructure).
- **2025 Speech from the Throne** (reconciliation and prosperity with Indigenous Peoples).

Urgency: With the pilot set to **sunset on March 31, 2026**, inclusion of this initiative in **Budget 2026** is essential to avoid disruption, loss of capacity, and stalled momentum.

Call to Action: *The Assembly of First Nations calls on the Government of Canada to include this initiative as a line item or directly in the Budget 2026. Doing so will enable First Nations to lead with evidence, build with purpose, and grow with sovereignty delivering lasting benefits for communities and for Canada's shared prosperity.*



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Annex A – Risk Register Details

A comprehensive risk management process is essential to the success of transitioning the First Nations LMI pilot into a permanent, government-funded program. The approach follows the Treasury Board Secretariat’s Project Complexity and Risk Assessment (PCRA) methodology and recognized project management best practices. This ensures accountability, alignment with federal requirements, and continuous monitoring throughout the program lifecycle.

Risk	Probability	Impact	Mitigation Strategy
Data Collection Participation	Medium	High	Expand outreach; train surveyors; offer incentives; establish community feedback loops.
Funding Uncertainty	Medium	Medium	Secure multi-year funding in Budget 2026; align with Treasury Board timelines; regular financial reviews.
IT Infrastructure Scalability	Low	High	Upgrade storage/analytics platforms; enforce security protocols; capacity-test ahead of onboarding.
Compliance with Data Privacy Laws	Low	High	Engage legal experts; adopt secure data management; conduct regular audits.
Engagement and Buy-In	Medium	High	Conduct early consultations; maintain regional presence; implement cultural safety training.
Sunset Risk (March 31, 2026)	High	High	Secure permanent funding in Budget 2026; maintain bridge funding; communicate timelines clearly.
Variable Readiness Across Communities	Medium	High	Phase onboarding (2026–2030); mentorship from pilot communities; regional training hubs; startup IT/staffing funds.
Engagement Fatigue	Medium	Medium	Nation-led survey design; reduce duplication with federal surveys; establish feedback loops.

The summary risk ratings presented in Section Risk and Mitigation are expanded here with detailed context and monitoring considerations.

Detailed Risk Narratives

Data Collection Participation

- Condition: High reliance on First Nations participation in data collection may limit completeness if engagement is insufficient.
- Consequence: Poor data quality undermines program effectiveness and planning.
- Mitigation: Expand outreach, provide training, offer participation incentives, and establish feedback loops.



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- Outcome: More accurate data and stronger buy-in, enabling better-targeted interventions.
- Tolerance: Acceptable with proactive outreach and incentives.
- *(Probability: Medium; Impact: High)*

Funding Uncertainty

- Condition: Difficulty in securing long-term federal funding after the pilot phase.
- Consequence: Inability to scale or maintain operations; diminished long-term impact.
- Mitigation: Secure multi-year funding via ESDC; align budget cycles with Treasury Board timelines; conduct regular financial reviews.
- Outcome: Financial stability and sustainability.
- Tolerance: Unacceptable without secure long-term funding.
- *(Probability: Medium; Impact: Medium)*

IT Infrastructure Scalability

- Condition: Current systems may not handle increased data volume and analytics demand as the program scales.
- Consequence: Bottlenecks, outages, and reporting delays.
- Mitigation: Upgrade storage and analytics platforms; enforce security protocols; capacity-test ahead of onboarding waves.
- Outcome: Smooth data processing and national-scale readiness.
- Tolerance: Acceptable if upgrades are timely.
- *Probability: Low; Impact: High)*

Compliance with Data Privacy Laws

- Condition: Evolving privacy requirements increase compliance complexity.
- Consequence: Legal/financial exposure and erosion of trust.
- Mitigation: Engage legal experts; adopt secure data management practices; conduct regular audits.
- Outcome: Full compliance and program integrity.
- Tolerance: Acceptable with rigorous adherence to standards.
- *(Probability: Low; Impact: High)*

Engagement and Buy-In

- Condition: Limited community involvement if processes aren't tailored to local realities.
- Consequence: Misaligned policies and weak participation.
- Mitigation: Early consultations; regional presence; cultural safety training.
- Outcome: Higher engagement and more effective outcomes.
- Tolerance: Acceptable with proactive, inclusive engagement.
- *(Probability: Medium; Impact: High)*



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Sunset Risk (March 31, 2026)

- Condition: The LMI pilot sunsets on March 31, 2026. Without permanent funding secured, there will be a program lapse.
- Consequence: Loss of trained staff, disruption of delivery, and erosion of trust in federal commitments.
- Mitigation: Secure permanent reference levels in Budget 2026; maintain bridge funding until full rollout; provide early communication of timelines to Agreement Holders.
- Outcome: Continuity of operations and retention of trained staff.
- Tolerance: Unacceptable without confirmed permanent funding.
- *(Probability: High; Impact: High)*

Variable Readiness Across Communities

- Condition: Some Agreement Holders have strong systems from the pilot, while others lack technical staff or infrastructure.
- Consequence: Uneven program uptake, lower-quality data, and slower national integration.
- Mitigation: Phase onboarding over five years (2026–2030); pair new Holders with pilot mentors; deliver training through regional hubs; provide startup funds for IT and staffing.
- Outcome: More consistent national capacity and improved data quality.
- Tolerance: Acceptable with phased rollout and tailored supports.
- *(Probability: Medium; Impact: High)*

Engagement Fatigue

- Condition: Communities risk being overburdened by repetitive or duplicative data requests if surveys are not tailored to local contexts.
- Consequence: Reduced participation, lower-quality data, and declining trust in the program.
- Mitigation: Ensure Nation-led survey design; avoid duplication with other federal surveys; establish clear feedback loops to show how data is used.
- Outcome: Stronger participation, higher-quality data, and maintained trust.
- Tolerance: Acceptable with continuous adaptation to local realities.
- *(Probability: Medium; Impact: Medium)*



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Governance and Monitoring – Risk Register

To support proactive risk management, a dedicated Risk Register will be developed and maintained as part of program administration and oversight. While existing risk documentation from the pilot phase may provide useful insights, a comprehensive and updated register will be required to reflect the expanded scope and complexity of the permanent program.

The Risk Register will document and monitor both project delivery risks (funding, staffing, infrastructure, compliance) and program outcome risks (engagement, data quality, participation). This structured tool will help anticipate and mitigate challenges early, ensuring successful implementation and long-term sustainability.

Key Components

Risk Identification: Cataloging known and emerging risks to program success.

Risk Probability & Impact: Assessing how likely risks are to occur and their potential consequences.

Mitigation Measures: Documenting strategies to prevent, minimize, or manage risks.

Monitoring: Establishing a regular review cycle and escalation process for critical risks.

Oversight and Governance

The Risk Register will be integrated into Implementation Committee operations, reviewed quarterly, and updated annually. AFN, Agreement Holders, and other partners will provide input to ensure that mitigation strategies reflect on-the-ground realities. ESDC, as funder and administrator, will retain primary accountability for risk management, while ensuring risk oversight respects OCAP principles and First Nations leadership in delivery. First Nations Agreement Holders will hold sovereignty and autonomy over the data that will be collected to help ensure economic growth within communities. To avoid disruption with the March 31, 2026 sunset, the permanent Risk Register must be operational by Q1 2026–27.

Outcome

By adopting a structured and transparent approach to risk management, the permanent LMI program will ensure consistent delivery, responsive adaptation, and long-term sustainability. The Risk Register will build confidence among communities, AFN, and federal partners by identifying and addressing risks early and effectively.



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Annex B – Options Analysis and Recommended Option

This annex provides a detailed analysis of the evaluation criteria and the recommended option for transitioning the First Nations LMI pilot to a permanent program.

Evaluation Criteria

Options for the future of the LMI initiative were assessed against the following evaluation criteria. These criteria ensured that any recommendation aligned with business needs and objectives while being feasible and sustainable.

Core Criteria

- **Strategic Fit** – Alignment with long-term objectives of self-determination, economic reconciliation, and data sovereignty.
- **Sustainability of Funding** – Stable, predictable annual funding with an escalator to account for inflation and growth.
- **Scalability** – Ability to serve all 95 First Nations Agreement Holders across Canada.
- **Compliance and Accountability** – Alignment with government regulations, monitoring, and reporting frameworks.

Essential Evaluation Criteria (Minimum Requirements)

- **Affordability** – Financial feasibility within federal fiscal frameworks.
- **Impact on Economic Development** – Measurable contribution to workforce participation, closing employment gaps, and GDP growth.
- **Capacity to Implement** – Practicality of phased rollout, available expertise, and organizational readiness.
- **Sunset Risk**: Urgency to act before March 31, 2026, when the pilot ends

Desirable Criteria

- **Engagement** – Ensures active participation of First Nations in data collection, analysis, and decision-making.
- **Cost Efficiency** – Demonstrates value for money and efficiency at scale.

Options Considered

Alternative approaches were reviewed as part of the analysis:

- **Status Quo (Pilot Only)**: Maintain the 28 existing Agreement Holders at pilot-level funding. *Discounted* — *fails to meet scalability, sustainability, and equity criteria. Would result in the program sunseting in 2026, loss of trained staff, and erosion of community trust.*
- **Partial/Reduced Program**: Expand modestly or fund only some components (e.g., staffing but not IT or training). *Discounted* — *resources would be spread too thin, perpetuating inequities and undermining outcomes which creates a two-tiered system of access.*



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- **Permanent, Fully Funded Program (Preferred Option):** Transition to a fully funded national program with \$65.68M annually and a 2% escalator. *Strengths: Meets all evaluation criteria, addresses the March 2026 sunset, ensures equitable national coverage, and directly supports reconciliation and Canada's economic growth.*

Comparison Against Criteria

Option	Strategic Fit	Sustainability	Scalability	Outcome
Status Quo (Pilot only)	❌	❌	❌	Limited reach, inequitable
Partial/Reduced Program	⚠️	❌	⚠️	Diluted impact, inequities remain
Permanent, Fully Funded (Recommended)	✅	✅	✅	Equitable, sustainable national coverage

Risks Associated with the Viable Option

Although the permanent program is the only viable option, several risks were assessed to ensure they are manageable:

Risk	Assessment
Data Inconsistencies	Low risk: Centralized coordination ensures consistent data collection and reporting.
Funding Instability	Low risk: Permanent funding secures long-term sustainability.
Lack of First Nation Control	Low risk: High engagement and involvement of First Nations throughout the process.
Implementation Delays	Moderate risk: Scaling the program to serve all First Nations may involve logistical challenges.
Community Capacity Variation	Moderate risk: Annual training refreshers, phased onboarding, regional data hubs.



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Recommended Option

Option Description

The recommended option is to transition the LMI pilot into a fully funded, permanent program. This model ensures long-term sustainability, scalability across all regions, and responsiveness to the needs of all 95 Agreement Holders.

- **Structure:** A government-funded program administered through ESDC and deployed nationally across all Agreement Holders.
- **Funding:** Annual investment of \$65.68 million, with a 2% escalator to account for inflation and population growth.
- **Delivery:** Program delivered through ISET Agreement Holders, ensuring flexibility and community-driven implementation while adhering to OCAP principles of Indigenous data sovereignty.

Evaluation Against Criteria

- **Strategic Fit:** Fully aligned with First Nations and AFN strategic priorities, as well as federal reconciliation and economic goals.
- **Sustainability of Funding:** Provides a clear and predictable long-term funding pathway.
- **Scalability:** Expands from 28 pilot participants to all 95 Agreement Holders through a phased rollout (2026–2030).
- **Compliance and Accountability:** Delivered through established ESDC mechanisms with oversight and reporting.
- **Affordability:** Fiscally responsible, consistent with AES per-capita costing models.
- **Impact on Economic Development:** Enables community-led workforce strategies, closes employment gaps, and supports economic growth.
- **Capacity to Implement:** Phased rollout supports gradual onboarding and capacity-building.
- **Engagement:** Oversight model ensures active participation of First Nations through the Implementation Committee and Agreement Holder leadership.
- **Cost Efficiency:** Proven efficiency through AES expansion from 4 to 33 Agreement Holders without increases in per-unit costs.



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Conclusion

Based on strategic alignment, financial feasibility, risk management, and long-term outcomes, transitioning the LMI pilot to a permanent, government-funded program is the preferred and recommended option. This option will:

- Equip First Nations with the tools, data, and infrastructure required to support economic self-sufficiency, community-led planning, and workforce development.
- Ensure long-term sustainability through permanent annual funding of \$65.68 million, with a 2% escalator to address inflation, population growth, and higher delivery costs in remote and northern regions.
- Provide a scalable model that allows for the onboarding of all 95 Agreement Holders, tailored to diverse capacity levels and community needs.
- Align with AFN Resolution 64/2024 and directly support federal priorities on reconciliation, data sovereignty, and distinctions-based labour market strategies (UNDRIP Act Action Plan, 2025 Speech from the Throne).
- Empower First Nations to lead their own economic planning and close persistent employment gaps, delivering measurable long-term benefits for both communities and the broader Canadian economy.



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Annex C - Financial Assumptions & Tables

Purpose: Provide the detailed costing, assumptions, and breakdowns that underpin the \$65.68M annual request.

Key Assumptions

- **Implementation Strategy:** Program funded through a permanent appropriation to support data collection, analysis, engagement, and capacity-building.
- **Escalator:** 2% annual escalator to address inflation, population growth, and remote delivery costs.
- **Evaluation:** Program subject to standard evaluations to ensure transparency, alignment, and refinement.

Cost Category Breakdown (5-Year Horizon)

Year	ISET and Community Data Collection	Services to ISET and Communities	Total Allocation
Year 1 (2026)	\$21,893,333	\$43,786,667	\$65,680,000
Year 2 (2027)	\$22,331,200	\$44,662,400	\$66,993,600
Year 3 (2028)	\$22,777,824	\$45,555,648	\$68,333,472
Year 4 (2029)	\$23,233,381	\$46,466,761	\$69,700,141
Year 5 (2030)	\$23,698,048	\$47,396,096	\$71,094,144
Total (5-Year)	\$113,933,786	\$227,867,572	\$341,801,359

Total Annual Cost: \$65.68M (Year 1), with 2% escalator in subsequent years.



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Program Component Breakdown (Annual Estimate, CAD)

Program Component	Annual Estimate	Description
Staffing & HR	\$15,630,000	Regional/community staff, analysts, coordinators
Regional Analyst	\$2,500,000	Technical specialists supporting data quality, training, and onboarding
Data Collection & Tools	\$3,130,000	Surveys, dashboards, cleaning systems
Training & Capacity	\$630,000	Workshops, mentoring, knowledge exchange
Community Engagement	\$2,500,000	Honoraria, consultations, communications
Coordination & Administration	\$630,000	Central management, reporting, oversight
Digital & IT Infrastructure	\$4,380,000	Hosting, software, cybersecurity, Power BI
Flexible Delivery Funds	\$1,880,000	Travel, interpretation, contingency
Governance	\$630,000	Legal, audit, privacy compliance

Intangible Costs

- **Engagement & Buy-In:** Building trust and participation requires time, relationship-building, and culturally respectful processes.
- **Capacity for Data Sovereignty:** Building local skills in survey design, analysis, and governance fulfills UNDRIP commitments and long-term sustainability.



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Annex D – Detailed Option Analysis

Viable Option: Transition to a Permanent Program

Transitioning the LMI pilot to a permanent, government-funded program is the only viable option. It provides First Nations with the tools and data needed for economic self-sufficiency, ensures sustainable funding, and promotes scalability to all 95 Agreement Holders. This makes it the most effective and sustainable solution for addressing the identified business need.

Alignment

Supports Government of Canada’s Priorities: A fully funded, permanent LMI program directly supports Canada’s reconciliation agenda and economic development priorities. By equipping communities with accurate, timely, and community-driven labour market data, the initiative enhances decision-making, supports targeted training strategies, and strengthens First Nation participation in the economy.

Alignment with AFN Priorities: The program aligns with AFN’s mandate to close the employment gap, advance First Nation data sovereignty, and promote economic self-sufficiency. It operationalizes AFN Resolution 64/2024 and supports Nation-led planning and oversight through an Implementation Committee (AFN, ISET Holders, ESDC).

Contribution to National Economic Goals: A permanent LMI program contributes to Canada’s national goals by advancing economic inclusion, preparing First Nations for major infrastructure and skilled trades projects, and supporting long-term workforce development.

Risks Associated with the Viable Option

Risk	Assessment
Data Inconsistencies	Low – Centralized coordination ensures consistent collection and reporting.
Funding Instability	Low – Permanent funding secures long-term sustainability.
Lack of First Nation Control	Low – Nation-led governance and high engagement ensure ownership.
Implementation Delays	Moderate – Scaling to 95 Agreement Holders may involve logistical challenges, mitigated by phased rollout.



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Conclusion and Preferred Option

Based on strategic alignment, financial feasibility, risk management, and long-term outcomes, transitioning the LMI pilot to a permanent, government-funded program is the preferred and recommended option.

- **Annual Funding:** \$65.68 million, with a 2% escalator for inflation, population growth, and higher delivery costs in northern/remote communities.
- **Scalability:** Phased rollout between 2026 and 2030 ensures all 95 Agreement Holders are onboarded and supported.
- **Alignment:** Meets AFN Resolution 64/2024 and directly supports Canada's reconciliation commitments under the UNDA Action Plan and the 2025 Speech from the Throne.
- **Impact:** Equips First Nations to lead their own planning, close persistent employment gaps, and drive inclusive national economic growth.

This model represents the most effective, equitable, and sustainable path forward, delivering measurable long-term benefits for both First Nations and the broader Canadian economy.

Costs

Costing Methodology

- Based on Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) Guide to Costing.
- Follows generally accepted management accounting principles.
- Informed by AES per-capita costing model, AFN financial analysis, and pilot-phase results.

Scope of Costs

- Ongoing operational costs across the program's lifecycle.
- Community-led data collection and analysis.
- Regional staffing (~165 FTEs) including regional analysts and capacity supports.
- Digital infrastructure, IT systems, and maintenance.
- Travel, onboarding, and training across all regions.
- OCAP-aligned governance, oversight, and program administration.
- Compliance and accountability measures.

Key Considerations

- **Scalability and Equity** – Model ensures equitable nationwide coverage.
- **Phased Implementation** – Supports readiness and avoids delivery gaps.
- **Centralized Systems** – National data platform and regional hubs ensure efficiency and accountability.
- **AES Validation** – Projections align with AES delivery model, which expanded from 4 to 33 Agreement Holders without cost escalation.

Funding Requirement

- **Annual Investment:** \$65.68 million.
- **Escalator:** +2% annually starting in Year 2



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Annex E – Cost-Benefit Analysis & Implementation Detail

This annex provides the expanded cost-benefit analysis (CBA) methodology and the detailed implementation milestones for transitioning the First Nations LMI pilot into a permanent, government-funded program between 2026 and 2030.

Cost-Benefit Analysis

Methodology

The CBA compares the estimated financial investment of \$341.8 million over five years (2026–2030) with the projected benefits to First Nations communities and to the Canadian economy. Benefits are measured in terms of:

- Increased employment and workforce participation.
- Improved program efficiency and alignment.
- Long-term GDP growth through closing employment gaps.
- Avoided Employment Insurance and social assistance costs.
- Avoided opportunity costs of underinvestment.

Key Findings

- **Employment and Participation:** With accurate First Nation-specific labour market data, Agreement Holders will design training and employment strategies that better align with real market demand. This is projected to reduce unemployment and improve labour force participation across First Nations (ISET First Nation Agreement Holder’s National Meeting Minutes, 2025).
- **Program Efficiency:** Better data will prevent misaligned training investments, ensuring federal and community training dollars achieve greater returns.
- **Economic Growth:** Closing the employment and income gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians could add \$36.4B to Canada’s GDP by 2031 (CSLS, 2023). The permanent LMI program is a critical enabler of this outcome by aligning First Nations workforce development with high-demand sectors (Notes Q&A after LMI presentation, 2025).
- **Avoided Costs:** Failure to fund a permanent program would result in indirect costs, including lost productivity, underdeveloped workforce potential, inefficient training investments, increased reliance on EI/social assistance and continued reliance on external federal data sources that are not community-specific (ISET First Nation Agreement Holder’s National Meeting Minutes, 2025).

The benefits of the permanent First Nations LMI program substantially outweigh the costs. A five-year investment of \$341.8 million positions First Nations as full partners in Canada’s labour market while contributing to reconciliation, economic inclusion, and measurable GDP growth.



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Implementation Details

The permanent program will be phased in over five years, supporting continuity for the 28 pilot holders while onboarding new Agreement Holders in manageable cohorts. This phased approach reduces delivery risk, supports capacity building, and ensures equitable access.

Milestones and Phased Rollout (2026–2030)

- **Year 1 (2026):**
 - o Maintain funding for the 28 pilot Agreement Holders.
 - o Onboard 13 new Agreement Holders.
 - o Establish Implementation Committee (AFN, ISET Holders, ESDC).
 - o Deploy national IT platform and initiate regional hub design.
 - o Assign regional analysts and pair new communities with peer mentors.
- **Year 2 (2027):**
 - o Onboard 13–15 additional Agreement Holders.
 - o Expand regional data hubs and provide rolling training.
 - o Conduct mid-year program review and adjust implementation supports.
- **Year 3 (2028):**
 - o Onboard another 13–15 Agreement Holders.
 - o Scale IT and data infrastructure to manage increased volume.
 - o Strengthen community-led capacity through advanced training for analysts and coordinators.
- **Year 4 (2029):**
 - o Onboard 13–15 additional Agreement Holders.
 - o Conduct second mid-implementation review.
 - o Refine governance, reporting, and compliance systems.
- **Year 5 (2030):**
 - o Onboard the final 15 Agreement Holders, achieving national coverage across all 95.
 - o Complete deployment of regional hubs and finalize national data-sharing frameworks.
 - o Conduct strategic review to inform future scaling, sustainability, and integration with broader federal initiatives.

Implementation Governance

It is recommended that the rollout will be overseen by Committee, composed of AFN, ESDC, and Agreement Holder representatives. The committee will monitor performance, resolve operational challenges, and ensure that implementation remains aligned with reconciliation goals, Nation-led priorities, and federal accountability requirements.



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Annex F – Capacity, Policy & Benchmarking

To successfully transition the First Nations LMI pilot into a permanent, fully funded program, it is essential to demonstrate that Agreement Holders and ESDC have the organizational capacity to manage investment, oversee delivery, and ensure long-term sustainability. The AFN will continue its role as an advocate, supporting First Nations priorities and ensuring that federal partners remain aware of the importance of First Nations data sovereignty.

Agreement Holder Capacity

The program will continue to be delivered through ISET Agreement Holders, who retain the flexibility to implement LMI in ways that best meet the needs of their communities. As demonstrated in the pilot, Agreement Holders have the strongest capacity to ensure that labour market data collection and application are community-driven, culturally relevant, and responsive to local priorities. The permanent program will reinforce this capacity by supporting training, regional hubs, and dedicated staffing, ensuring that all 95 Agreement Holders can participate equitably by 2030.

AFN Role

The AFN will maintain an advocacy and coordination role at the national level, ensuring that First Nations voices and priorities are clearly communicated to the federal government. AFN will provide policy advice, share best practices across regions, and advocate for resources and flexibility that reflect diverse First Nations realities. Its function will remain political and advocacy-focused, not administrative.

ESDC Capacity

The federal role will remain focused on funding administration, oversight, and compliance. ESDC will oversee funding distribution (whether through a single master agreement or multiple agreements), ensure compliance with federal accountability standards, and work with Agreement Holders to monitor outcomes. Its role will remain administrative and enabling, preserving First Nations leadership in delivery.

Governance

Oversight and coordination will continue through the existing ISET governance framework, with ESDC and Agreement Holders maintaining accountability for delivery and performance. AFN will continue to play an advocacy role to ensure that government commitments to reconciliation and data sovereignty remain central to program design and implementation.

Capacity Assessment

An Organizational Project Management Capacity Assessment (OPMCA) framework will be applied to benchmark and align governance structures, resources, and performance measurement capabilities across ESDC. This will ensure that the federal administrator has the tools and processes required to manage investment, implementation, and long-term sustainability.



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Expanded detail:

Human Resources: Scaling from 28 to 95 Agreement Holders will require significant increases in technical staff, data analysts, First Nation engagement coordinators, and financial officers. In high-demand areas such as data science, capacity may need to be built through targeted training or supplemented with external expertise.

Materials and Infrastructure: Continued investment in secure data storage systems, cloud-based analytics platforms (e.g., Power BI), and digital infrastructure is required. Shared regional data hubs will serve as a scalable solution to ensure smaller or remote communities have equitable access to technical tools.

Other Requirements: Legal services and compliance staff will support OCAP enforcement and regulatory alignment. External consultants and technical advisors will assist during high-growth phases of implementation and when addressing specialized IT or privacy challenges.

Shortfall Resolution Strategy

Scaling from 28 to 95 Agreement Holders will require additional technical staff, analysts, and infrastructure. To manage this growth, a phased onboarding approach (2026–2030) will be used. By bringing in 13–15 Agreement Holders each year, this strategy provides the time needed to build technical capacity, train staff, and deploy regional data hubs, ensuring the program remains sustainable while responsive to the evolving needs of First Nations.



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Annex G – Assumptions, Constraints, and Dependencies

The successful transition of the First Nations LMI pilot to a permanent program relies on a set of underlying assumptions, constraints, and dependencies. This annex expands on the section by providing detailed descriptions of potential impacts if these factors are not addressed.

Assumptions	Impact if Not Met
Access to accurate data from First Nations	Without timely and reliable data, the initiative cannot effectively inform decision-making, hindering the ability to close employment gaps or design training programs.
Ongoing support from key stakeholders	If stakeholders such as First Nations, ESDC, and the AFN are not consistently engaged, the initiative may face challenges in alignment, implementation, and impact.
Sufficient funding for long-term sustainability	Without sustained funding, the program may lack the resources to expand and update labour market data, impacting its ability to support First Nations economic development effectively. If permanent funding is not secured before the pilot sunset date of March 31, 2026, the program risks a service gap and loss of momentum built during the pilot.
Strong engagement in data collection and analysis	If communities are not actively engaged in the data collection process, the data may not be representative or reflect real economic needs, reducing program effectiveness.
Capacity to scale the program across all First Nations	If expansion to all communities is not feasible, the initiative will only address a fraction of the population, limiting its potential impact.



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Transitioning the First Nations Labour Market Information Pilot to a Permanent Program

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Constraints	Impact
Limited initial funding availability	The program may struggle to scale up as planned without adequate financial resources, delaying the reach to additional First Nations.
Geographical and logistical challenges in remote communities	Data collection and engagement efforts may be limited in remote First Nations due to travel barriers or lack of infrastructure.
Varying First Nation readiness and capacity	Some First Nations may not have the infrastructure or personnel to immediately implement data collection and analysis, slowing overall impact.
Changes in government priorities or policy	Political shifts or changes in priorities could reduce support, impacting the long-term sustainability of the program.
Complexity of data integration across diverse communities	Standardizing and integrating data from diverse First Nations may take longer and require additional expertise and resources.

Dependencies	Impact if Not Addressed
Collaboration with First Nations stakeholders	Without ongoing collaboration, the data collected may not reflect actual employment needs or priorities, leading to less effective solutions.
Continued funding from the Government of Canada	Lack of secure funding may jeopardize the initiative beyond the pilot phase, limiting its long-term sustainability.
Availability of skilled labour market analysts and trainers	If sufficient skilled personnel are not available, the program may struggle to analyze data or train community members effectively.
Alignment with other related programs and services	Misalignment with other First Nations economic development programs could cause duplication or service gaps, reducing effectiveness.



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These assumptions, constraints, and dependencies underline the importance of:

- A long-term, sustainable funding model secured before March 31, 2026 (with a built-in escalator).
- Active and continuous engagement with First Nations and key partners.
- Investments in capacity-building and data systems to address variability across communities.

(SITAG ILMI Annual Report, 2025)



Identified Challenges to Participating in Training

The barriers to training and education selected by respondents are listed below in table 11.

The most frequently cited were:

- **Financial Constraints – 35%**
- **Work Family Responsibilities – 24%**
- **Transportation Challenges – 19%**

Challenge or Barrier (n=6,168)	%
Financial Constraints	35%
Work or Family Responsibilities	24%
Transportation Challenges	19%
Lack of Motivation	16%
Challenges with physical, emotional or mental health	13%
Insufficient guidance and Counseling	13%
Lack of Flexible Learning Options	12%
Limited Access to Educational Institutions	12%
Previous Educational Gaps	6%
Discrimination Based on Gender or Ethnicity	6%
Limited Technology Access	5%

Table 11. Identified Challenges to Participating in Training

Together, these factors ensure that the permanent LMI program can deliver on its promise of improving employment outcomes, advancing economic self-sufficiency, and strengthening reconciliation through data sovereignty.



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Annex H – Good News Stories From the ILMI Pilot

The following examples demonstrate the tangible impact of First Nation specific labour market information. These stories illustrate how First Nations are using LMI to strengthen employment outcomes, reduce reliance on social programs, and build community-driven capacity.

Employment and Economic Contributions

- **Prince George ISET:** Demonstrated that LMI is not only about identifying unemployment but also showing contributions. Their analysis confirmed that sustainable employment placed millions back into the economy while reducing costs to EI and social assistance (Notes Q&A after LMI presentation, 2025).
- **Saskatchewan Employer Partnerships:** Through SITAG, more than 300 employer partnerships were created, leading to 226 direct employment outcomes. This demonstrates the value of LMI in building employer relationships and aligning training with real demand (SITAG ILMI Annual Report, 2025).
- **Trades Readiness:** Several Nations used LMI to establish carpentry and construction cohorts, directly supporting housing and infrastructure projects identified in community surveys (ISET First Nation Agreement Holder's National Meeting Minutes, 2025).

Wellness and Cultural Healing

- **Elder-Led Programs:** Communities used LMI to justify funding for Elders to deliver land-based teachings, healing, and cultural revitalization, recognizing the interconnection between wellness and workforce outcomes (Notes Q&A after LMI presentation, 2025).
- **Recognition of Traditional Healers:** During the September meeting there was a call for the recognition of traditional healers and knowledge keepers as employment categories in Canada's job classification systems (Notes Q&A after LMI presentation, 2025).

Inclusion and Accessibility

- **Disability Inclusion:** Surveys revealed high numbers of youth with ADHD, autism, and other learning disabilities. Agreement Holders responded by adapting training and job placements to be more inclusive (Q&A after LMI presentation, 2025).
- **Driver's License Barriers:** LMI identified access to licenses as a key employment barrier. Several Nations created supports that directly linked license attainment with higher job placement rates.

Youth Employment and Skills Development

- **Digital and IT Skills:** One Nation launched targeted IT and computer training for youth after LMI revealed unmet demand, immediately boosting local employability (ISET First Nation Agreement Holder's National Meeting Minutes, 2025).
- **Youth Engagement:** Youth-specific LMI highlighted gaps in career counselling and readiness, prompting communities to introduce mentorship programs and internships with local employers.



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Community Engagement and Capacity-Building

- **Remote Community Training:** In northern and remote communities, local surveyors and navigators were trained to lead data collection. This improved survey participation and created immediate, short-term employment opportunities for students and unemployed citizens (ILMI Questions-AFN, 2025).
- **Data Sovereignty in Practice:** SITAG confirmed that all data remains the property of the First Nations communities. This reinforced community ownership while still allowing regional-level aggregation for planning and advocacy (ILMI Questions-AFN, 2025).

These stories illustrate the transformative role of First Nation specific LMI. They show that First Nations are not only identifying challenges but also generating solutions that strengthen employment, advance reconciliation, and reduce reliance on social programs. Together, these successes demonstrate why transitioning the LMI pilot into a permanent national program is essential.



First Nations Labour Market Information Initiative

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Annex I - Stakeholder Input

Purpose

This annex summarizes input gathered during the September 17–18, 2025 National Meeting and highlights the organizations and participants engaged in shaping the transition of the LMI pilot into a permanent program. Their contributions strengthen the business case by confirming community priorities, governance considerations, and operational realities.

Key Stakeholders Consulted

- **Assembly of First Nations (AFN)** – Lead advocate for permanent funding; coordinated the September meeting discussions and continues to support First Nations data sovereignty and OCAP compliance.
- **Sagasige Co. Consulting (Faith Decontie & Robin)** – Co-facilitated the national sessions and provided technical and policy support in drafting the business case.
- **Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)** – Federal administrator of ISET and current LMI pilot, responsible for compliance, funding distribution, and policy alignment.
- **Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)** – Contributed perspectives on how LMI data informs broader Indigenous economic development initiatives.
- **First Nations ISET Agreement Holders** – Shared success stories, identified governance needs, and emphasized capacity-building requirements.
- **Aboriginal Employment Services (AES)** – Provided validation of the costing model, citing their expansion from 4 to 33 Agreement Holders while maintaining efficiency.
- **Saskatchewan Indian Training Assessment Group (SITAG)** – Highlighted lessons from developing community-level databases and regional collaboration.
- **Quebec Commission** – Cited as a model for onboarding and training approaches similar to AES.
- **Provincial and Territorial Governments** – Provided input on regional labour market conditions and delivery challenges.
- **Employers & Indigenous Employment Networks** – Emphasized partnerships for job placements, internships, and mentorships.
- **Community Voices** – Pilot communities identified barriers (e.g., driver's license access, trades readiness) that were directly addressed in training redesigns.

Meeting Outcomes

1. Stories for the Business Case

- Agreement Holders presented examples where LMI data improved program delivery, such as tailoring training to address local barriers.
- AES and SITAG models confirmed scalability of cost-efficient delivery.



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2. Governance & Oversight Consensus

- Strong support for keeping delivery with Agreement Holders under ISET, no governance changes.
- Recommendation for a Program Steering Committee (AFN, ESDC, Agreement Holder reps) to guide implementation.
- Agreement on the need for peer-to-peer mentorship during onboarding.

3. Capacity Considerations

- Recognition that communities vary in readiness; phased onboarding (2026–2030) was validated as practical.
- Emphasis on funding formulas that account for both on- and off-reserve populations.



First Nations Labour Market Information Initiative

Transitioning the First Nations Labour Market Information Pilot to a Permanent Program

Business Case

Annex J- Letters of Support



Stó:Lō Aboriginal Skills & Employment Training

Bldg #5A – 7201 Vedder Road, Chilliwack, B.C. Canada V2R 4G5
Tel: (604) 858-3691 or toll-free 1-888-845-4455 Fax: (604) 858-3528
E-mail: info@saset.ca

September 24, 2025

The Honourable Patty Hajdu
Minister of Employment and Social Development Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Subject: Letter of Support to transition the First Nations Labour Market Information (LMI) pilot to a permanent program.

Dear Minister Hajdu,

On behalf of **Sto:lo Aboriginal Skills & Employment Training (SASET)**, I am writing to express our strong support for the permanent funding of the First Nations Labour Market Information (LMI) Program.

Since its inception, the LMI pilot has demonstrated clear and measurable benefits for First Nations communities by:

- Providing culturally relevant, Nation-specific labour market data;
- Enabling evidence-based planning for training, employment, and economic development; and
- Supporting self-determination through First Nations' ownership and stewardship of their own data.

Through our participation in the pilot, we have seen firsthand how access to accurate labour market information strengthens community planning and improves outcomes for our members. This program has allowed us to identify local training gaps, design targeted employment strategies, and advocate effectively with employers and partners.

We fully support the Assembly of First Nations' proposal for the Government of Canada to allocate **\$65.68 million annually (with a 2% escalator) over five years** to transition the LMI pilot into a permanent, fully funded national program that includes all 95 First Nations Agreement Holders. This investment is critical to ensure:

- Equitable access for all First Nations across Canada;
- Long-term sustainability of community-led data collection; and



First Nations Labour Market Information Initiative

Transitioning the First Nations Labour Market Information Pilot to a Permanent Program

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- The advancement of reconciliation through Indigenous data sovereignty.

We urge you and your department to work with the Minister of Finance to include this funding request in **Budget 2026**, and to continue working in partnership with First Nations to ensure its successful implementation.

Thank you for your leadership and continued commitment to advancing First Nation workforce development and economic self-determination.

Sincerely,

Carol Raspberry
SASET Manager
Sto:lo Aboriginal Skills & Employment Training ISET Holder
Email: carol.raspberry@saset.ca
Phone : 604-858-3691



First Nations Labour Market Information Initiative

Transitioning the First Nations Labour Market Information Pilot to a Permanent Program

Business Case



BATCHEWANA FIRST NATION OF OJIBWAYS

RANKIN RESERVE 15 D
GOULAIS BAY RESERVE 15 A
OBADJIWAN RESERVE 15 E
WHITEFISH ISLAND 15

Administration Office: Batchewana First Nation, ON
Rankin Reserve 15D
236 Frontenac Street
Batchewana First Nation, ON P6A 6Z1
Ph: (705) 759-0914 / Fax: (705) 759-9171
www.batchewana.ca

September 29, 2025

The Honourable Patty Hajdu
Minister of Employment and Social Development Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Subject: Letter of Support to transition the First Nations Labour Market Information (LMI) pilot to a permanent program.

Dear Minister Hajdu,

On behalf of **Batchewana First Nation** I am writing to express our strong support for the permanent funding of the First Nations Labour Market Information (LMI) Program. Since its inception, the LMI pilot has demonstrated clear and measurable benefits for First Nations communities by:

- Providing culturally relevant, Nation-specific labour market data;
- Enabling evidence-based planning for training, employment, and economic development; and
- Supporting self-determination through First Nations' ownership and stewardship of their own data.

Through our participation in the pilot, we have seen firsthand how access to accurate labour market information strengthens community planning and improves outcomes for our members. This program has allowed us to identify local training gaps, design targeted employment strategies, and advocate effectively with employers and partners.

We fully support the Assembly of First Nations' proposal for the Government of Canada to allocate **\$65.68 million annually (with a 2% escalator) over five years** to transition the LMI pilot into a permanent, fully funded national program that includes all 95 First Nations Agreement Holders. This investment is critical to ensure:

- Equitable access for all First Nations across Canada;
- Long-term sustainability of community-led data collection; and
- The advancement of reconciliation through Indigenous data sovereignty.



First Nations Labour Market Information Initiative
***Transitioning the First Nations Labour Market
Information Pilot to a Permanent Program***

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We urge you and your department to work with the Minister of Finance to include this funding request in **Budget 2026**, and to continue working in partnership with First Nations to ensure its successful implementation.

Miigwetch for your leadership and continued commitment to advancing First Nation workforce development and economic self-determination.

Sincerely,

Chief Mark McCoy
Chief of Batchewana First Nation
(705) 759-0914
MarkMcCoy@batchewana.ca



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COMMUNITY FUTURES TREATY SEVEN

“Growing One Community at a Time”

Suite 400, 9911 Chula Boulevard
Tsuu T’ina AB T2W 6H6

Tel: (403) 251-9242
Fax: (403) 251-9750

September 30th, 2025

The Honourable Patty Hajdu
Minister of Employment and Social Development Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Subject: Letter of Support to transition the First Nations Labour Market Information (LMI) pilot to a permanent program.

Dear Minister Hajdu,

On behalf of Community Futures Treaty 7, I am writing to express our strong support for the permanent funding of the First Nations Labour Market Information (LMI) Program. Since its inception, the LMI pilot has demonstrated clear and measurable benefits for First Nations communities by:

- Providing culturally relevant, Nation-specific labour market data;
- Enabling evidence-based planning for training, employment, and economic development; and
- Supporting self-determination through First Nations’ ownership and stewardship of their own data.

Through our participation in the pilot, we have seen firsthand how access to accurate labour market information strengthens community planning and improves outcomes for our members.

This program has allowed us to identify local training gaps, design targeted employment strategies, and advocate effectively with employers and partners.

We fully support the Assembly of First Nations’ proposal for the Government of Canada to allocate **\$65.68 million annually (with a 2% escalator) over five years** to transition the LMI pilot into a permanent, fully funded national program that includes all 95 First Nations Agreement Holders. This investment is critical to ensure:

◆ Bears paw ◆ Blood ◆ Chiniki ◆ Peigan ◆ Siksika ◆ Tsuu T’ina ◆ Wesley ◆



First Nations Labour Market Information Initiative

Transitioning the First Nations Labour Market Information Pilot to a Permanent Program

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– 2 –

September 30, 2025

- Equitable access for all First Nations across Canada;
- Long-term sustainability of community-led data collection; and
- The advancement of reconciliation through Indigenous data sovereignty.

We urge you and your department to work with the Minister of Finance to include this funding request in **Budget 2026**, and to continue working in partnership with First Nations to ensure its successful implementation.

Thank you for your leadership and continued commitment to advancing First Nation workforce development and economic self-determination.

Sincerely,

PP

Sandford Big Plume
General Manager
Community Futures Treaty 7

Phone: 403 251-9242



First Nations Labour Market Information Initiative

Transitioning the First Nations Labour Market Information Pilot to a Permanent Program

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“Working Together”

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Atikameksheng
Anishnawbek

•
Sagamok
Anishnawbek

•
Serpent River
First Nation

•
Mississauga
First Nation

•
Thessalon First
Nation

•
Garden River
First Nation

•
Batchewana
First Nation

**The
North
Shore
Tribal
Council**

Head Office:

473A Hwy 17 W
Cutler, On.
POP 1B0

Tel: (705) 844-2340

Fax: (705) 844-2563

Health Program:

Tel: (705) 844-2021

Fax: (705) 844-2844

September 25, 2025

The Honourable Patty Hajdu
Minister of Employment and Social Development Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Subject: Letter of Support to transition the First Nations Labour Market Information (LMI) pilot to a permanent program.

Dear Minister Hajdu,

On behalf of **Mamaweswen**, I am writing to express our strong support for the permanent funding of the First Nations Labour Market Information (LMI) Program.

Since its inception, the LMI pilot has demonstrated clear and measurable benefits for First Nations communities by:

- Providing culturally relevant, Nation-specific labour market data;
- Enabling evidence-based planning for training, employment, and economic development; and
- Supporting self-determination through First Nations’ ownership and stewardship of their own data.

Through our participation in the pilot, we have seen firsthand how access to accurate labour market information strengthens community planning and improves outcomes for our members. This program has allowed us to identify local training gaps, design targeted employment strategies, and advocate effectively with employers and partners.

We fully support the Assembly of First Nations’ proposal for the Government of Canada to allocate **\$65.68 million annually (with a 2% escalator) over five years** to transition the LMI pilot into a permanent, fully funded national program that includes all 95 First Nations Agreement Holders. This investment is critical to ensure:

- Equitable access for all First Nations across Canada;
- Long-term sustainability of community-led data collection; and
- The advancement of reconciliation through Indigenous data sovereignty



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We urge you and your department to work with the Minister of Finance to include this funding request in **Budget 2026**, and to continue working in partnership with First Nations to ensure its successful implementation.

Thank you for your leadership and continued commitment to advancing First Nation workforce development and economic self-determination.

Sincerely,

Allan Moffatt
CEO
Mamaweswen





First Nations Labour Market Information Initiative

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ALEXANDER FIRST NATION | ALEXIS NAKOTA SIOUX NATION | O'CHIESE FIRST NATION | SUNCHILD FIRST NATION

September 30, 2025

The Honourable Patty Hajdu
Minister of Employment and Social Development Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Subject: Letter of Support to transition the First Nations Labour Market Information (LMI) pilot to a permanent program.

Dear Minister Hajdu,

On behalf of the Yellowhead Tribal Development Foundation, I am writing to express our strong support for the permanent funding of the First Nations Labour Market Information (LMI) Program. Since its inception, the LMI pilot has demonstrated clear and measurable benefits for First Nations communities by:

- Providing culturally relevant, Nation-specific labour market data;
- Enabling evidence-based planning for training, employment, and economic development;
- and
- Supporting self-determination through First Nations' ownership and stewardship of their own data.

Through our participation in the pilot, we have seen firsthand how access to accurate labour market information strengthens community planning and improves outcomes for our members. This program has allowed us to identify local training gaps, design targeted employment strategies, and advocate effectively with employers and partners.

We fully support the Assembly of First Nations' proposal for the Government of Canada to allocate **\$65.68 million annually (with a 2% escalator) over five years** to transition the LMI pilot



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into a permanent, fully funded national program that includes all 95 First Nations Agreement Holders. This investment is critical to ensure:

- Equitable access for all First Nations across Canada;
- Long-term sustainability of community-led data collection; and
- The advancement of reconciliation through Indigenous data sovereignty.

We urge you and your department to work with the Minister of Finance to include this funding request in **Budget 2026**, and to continue working in partnership with First Nations to ensure its successful implementation.

Thank you for your leadership and continued commitment to advancing First Nation workforce development and economic self-determination.

Sincerely,

Laverne Arcand
YTC Executive Chief Officer, YTDF Board Member
Yellowhead Tribal Council

Laverne.arcand@ytcadmin.ca

T: 587-524-0180

C: 780-915-5903



First Nations Labour Market Information Initiative

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