

**Chiefs of Ontario**

**Fall Chiefs Assembly**

November 21-23, 2023 Toronto, Ontario



**BRIEFING NOTE**

**First Nation Businesses Supply Chain Mapping and Procurement Project**

**To: First Nations Leadership**

**From: Chiefs of Ontario, Economic Development Sector**

**Date: November 21-23, 2023**

**Purpose: Supply Chain Mapping and Procurement Project Update**

**ISSUE**

The purpose of this briefing is to provide a progress update on the First Nation Businesses Supply Chain Mapping and Procurement Enhancement Project and solicit support for data collection and participation in the upcoming engagement sessions on November 29th and December 6th by Leadership, economic development officers, and First Nation business owners.

**BACKGROUND**

At the June 2023 Annual Chiefs Assembly, Grand Chief Joel Abram, Chair of the Chiefs Committee on Economic Development (CCoED), provided an overview of efforts to amplify economic growth among First Nations through the First Nation Businesses Supply Chain and Procurement Initiative, led by the Chiefs of Ontario (COO). This Initiative was catalyzed by the allocation of $800,000 in project-specific funding, a segment of $25 million Indigenous Economic Development funding, announced in October 2022 by Indigenous Affairs Ontario Minister, Greg Rickford. As a result, the COO Economic Development Sector initiated the call for study and secured the services and support of The Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy (IFSD) as the consultant on the project.

This study will undertake a current needs assessment and unfold through engagement sessions and a data collection exercise, resulting in the development of a publicly accessible online map and portal of First Nation Businesses as the final product. Spanning from 2023 to 2025, the project aspires to fortify First Nations businesses by providing another touch point among themselves and with the broader public and private sectors, thereby facilitating the procurement of goods and services from First Nations businesses. The project is overseen by the CCoED.

**ANALYSIS**

**Project Scope and Geographic Mapping:**

The project involves the geographic mapping of First Nation businesses, culminating in an illustrated map linked to a publicly accessible online portal. It's pivotal to note that the scope of the current project phase does not encompass mapping all external First Nation supply chains but focuses on First Nation businesses involved in the study.

**Data Management and Adherence to Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP) Principles:**

To maximize benefits for First Nations, engagement from businesses is crucial along with First Nations Economic Development Officers. In late 2023 and early 2024, COO, supported by IFSD, will approach First Nations, Economic Development Officers, and businesses to participate in engagement sessions. These sessions will gather input on "Problem Definition" and facilitate "Data Collection" by sharing basic business information.

**OCAP principles will guide the entire project; COO has and will continue to ensure IFSD’s adherence to this crucial aspect:**

It is vital to note that while the data right holders are the First Nations, the data focuses on administrative or aggregated data at the level of the First Nation. No personal data will be collected or used. The incumbent responsibility of following OCAP principles will ensure the safekeeping of trusted information.

**Nomination of an Representative:**

Ensuring the involvement of First Nations at every stage and incorporating diverse needs, perspectives, and voices is crucial. COO has initiated the establishment of a working group from the early stages. The nomination of a representative, who will participate in this working group, is vital for the project's success.

**CURRENT STATUS**

As of November 6, 2023, the project is in the “problem definition” or “schema development” stage. The Economic Development Sector has initiated an information campaign designed to raise awareness about the project among stakeholders and the broader community. This campaign will not only educate stakeholders, but also underscore the value of the project through various channels and platforms. By producing and disseminating materials such as posters, presentations, videos, and newsletters, we aim to comprehensively communicate the projects’ objectives and anticipated impact.

As part of the information campaign and the commitment to incorporating invaluable input from First Nations businesses and all stakeholders from the outset, COO’s Economic Development Sector will host two Engagement and Introductory sessions on the November 29, 2023, in Thunder Bay and on December 6, 2023, in Toronto. These sessions will serve as a platform for all rights-holders to share their views and direction with COO and the consulting team, ensuring their perspectives are integral to the early stages of the project.

The Ontario First Nations Economic Development Association (OFNEDA) has been allocated $6.8 million to enhance the education and engagement of Ontario First Nation businesses and Economic Development Officers in procurement. Through initial engagements and discussions, COO’s Economic Development Sector and OFNEDA foresee and propose a collaborative front, creating a synergy between their respective projects. This collaboration aims to ensure maximized efficiency and mitigate engagement fatigue by strategically aligning the efforts of both entities. It is in this light that the two noted engagement sessions will be followed by a series of meetings organized by OFNEDA along with COO to meet First Nations regionally, which also marks the data collection stage in 2024.

**NEXT STEPS**

1. Encourage participation and register Leadership, Economic Development Officers, and First Nation Businesses in the two engagement sessions on November 29th and December 6th to ensure we are incorporating invaluable input from all stakeholders from the outset.
2. The support of all stakeholders during the 2024 data collection stage will be critical to the success of the project to ensure maximum coverage and dissemination of the survey.
3. We encourage Leadership to promote this project and continue to communicate and emphasize the critical role that Economic Development Directors, Managers, and Officers play in this projects’ success and the role it plays in the economic advancement and prosperity of their Nations.

**CONTACT**

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