



*Guiding Our Path
to a Brighter Future*

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR OUR NATION



Principles • Themes • Goals • Strategies • Actions

An aerial photograph of a Cree Nation settlement, showing a mix of residential buildings, roads, and a large body of water. The image is overlaid with a large, semi-transparent geometric pattern consisting of interconnected lines forming various shapes, including diamonds and triangles. The overall color palette is a warm, monochromatic orange-brown.

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR OUR NATION

Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation Chief and Council

Chief Marcel Moody
Ron D. Spence (Deputy Chief)
Councillor Bonnie Linklater
Councillor Patrick Linklater
Councillor Shirley L. Linklater
Councillor Willie Moore
Councillor Joe Moose

This document has been prepared with the objective of promoting opportunities for the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation by working towards strategies and actions that will assist NCN in becoming a self-sustaining, self-determining self-government. These strategies (although not specifically detailed) also consider and are developed to ensure that federal and provincial governments will continue to have a fiduciary responsibility to provide treaty and agreement funding, compensation and support under existing arrangements and agreements. NCN will work to ensure these agreements are fulfilled, while moving towards self-governance. The following strategies are not meant to replace, mitigate or remove government responsibilities.

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MESSAGE FROM CHIEF AND COUNCIL

Tansi,

This *Strategic Plan* for our Nation embodies Chief and Council's pledge to work alongside our Citizens, partners, organizations and Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation (NCN) entities to lay the visionary foundation for our shared future. A strong relationship between NCN Citizens and their elected representatives is crucial to ensuring a sturdy and effective decision-making process.

This current *Strategic Plan* builds on past accomplishments and is a result of the NCN Government's defining its new direction. It also extends to guide the implementation as we work to ensure a better future, improve lifestyles and enhance programs, services and infrastructure for NCN Citizens.

The process involved intensive Strategic Planning with the support of NCN Citizen consultants Hilda Anderson-Pyrz and Inez Vystrcil-Spence, and an executive team of planners, facilitators and trainers.

A Strong, Tight-knit Nation of Proud People

We not only look to making things better for our Citizens, youth and Elders, both on- and off-reserve, but also try to map out a clear vision and foundation for tomorrow – for our children, our grandchildren, great grandchildren and future generations.

We recognize the actions of our NCN Government must maintain traditions and cultural practices. We have a responsibility to ensure the health and well-being of our Citizens; and to preserve, protect and enhance the heritage defined by our ancestors.

Our children and youth will grow and become our leaders and influence the decisions our NCN Government makes. It is with them in mind that we must consider the long-term growth of our Nation.

The Land Continues to Shape Our Nehetho Nation

We have survived for thousands of years in our territory, on this land, over these waterways, and we took care of each other while the land provided for us. We met each other's needs and we carried our traditions with us. It is the knowledge of where we have been and a positive outlook and proactive approach that will shape and blaze the trail for our First Nation's future.

In the past, we took only what we needed from the land to help us survive and we honoured all that the Creator offered us. Today, our land still provides for us in many ways. We continue to explore opportunities to use and develop our resources while seeking the balance in taking only what we need and offering respect in return. With proper strategies and management of the land and resources, we will continue to share the land and its bounty.

Economic Development is Growing Opportunities

Our economy is important for creating opportunities to prosper as a Nation. Developing our Citizens' skills and training, along with resources and our land, help us to grow a better economy. We continue to explore every opportunity to enter into special arrangements, agreements and partnerships, with governments and corporations to increase funds for the Nation. Strategies to maximize these funds provide new and enhanced programs, services and benefits for our people.

Improving Our Self-sufficient Self-Government

As we move out of the era of dependency on other Governments, our NCN Government and our Nation must change the way we contribute to the decisions our NCN Government makes and the actions it takes. We must shape our Nation as a self-sufficient Nation that makes its own decisions. NCN will exchange current federal policies and programs for new ones

that are in our best interests, as opposed to being in the interests of AANDC (INAC) or Provincial and Federal policies.

NCN is set to grow at a fast pace with respect to population growth, economic activity, and housing. That growth must be carefully managed to ensure environmental sustainability and a quality of life that is protected and enhanced. Self-sufficiency must be balanced with ensuring continued growth in lifestyle.

Instilling Transparency, Accountability, and Effective Communication

Actions and impacts of our NCN Government's decisions must be founded on effective communication and openness with the Nation. Proper communication involves not only consultation, but also includes reporting on results of various initiatives. Where appropriate, informing Citizens will include public meetings or referendums that allow each of our Citizens a direct method to express their opinions. Transparency and communication must be at the core of all decisions.

Committed to Financial Responsibility

NCN Government will ensure that revenues and expenditures are carefully monitored. Financial responsibility must be instituted at all levels of our NCN Government and staff. Accountability for program funding and monitoring the allocation of finances will become a standard practice.

Honouring Citizens with Fairness and Equality

We must ensure that NCN Citizens are treated on the basis of fairness, as we work towards improving our programming and services. This means that we will take all circumstances into account when making decisions. We will ensure the over-riding goal of achieving comparable quality standards and equality for all our Citizens is met. We will continue to listen to the ideas and innovations put forth by our people with fairness when developing strategies and action plans and conducting our business.

Creating a Political Balance within Our Nation

In a community the size of NCN, it is inevitable that relationships, family and community dynamics will complicate decisions at both political and organizational levels. NCN will ensure that planning, actions, laws and regulations are done to the best extent possible. When initiatives are proposed and implemented they must also be done impartially in a manner that is sensitive to the dynamics of our community and a true reflection of our Nation.

We hope the words contained herein hold meaning and hope for all our Citizens. The intent of this *Strategic Plan* is not to be rigid, but to provide vision and direction for our NCN Government and people. It will guide us to where we hope to go and map out the way to get there.

We invite you all to keep an open mind and embrace the concepts, suggestions, reflections and principles captured in this document. It was done in the spirit of prosperity and aspirations to improve the well-being of NCN as a whole. We hope to preserve that spirit as this process unfolds and we all work together to implement the ideas and ultimately celebrate our achievements.

Respectfully yours,

Chief and Council,
Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation

Top row (left to right):
Councillors Joe Moose, Willie Moore, Patrick Linklater and Ron D. Spence
Bottom row (left to right):
Councillor Shirley Linklater, Chief Marcel Moody and Councillor Bonnie M. Linklater





INTRODUCTION

The Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation *Strategic Plan* is designed to reflect the aspirations of the NCN community (both on- and off-reserve) and guide Chief and Council in its decision-making approach towards meeting its goals. This *Plan* is an expression of the NCN Citizens' and NCN Government's views to help guide Chief and Council and inform their priorities and intentions over the next several years.

More specifically, this plan is a tool that will be used to define NCN's purpose and to guide its overall future growth. It establishes values, principles, themes, priorities and goals that will shape law and policy, and guide the allocation of capital and human resources. The NCN *Strategic Plan* also shapes the action/work plans or Detailed Implementation Plans (DIP) for NCN organizations, entities and administration and in turn informs resource allocation under the budget and management processes. Implementation Plans will establish exactly how and when the goals will be set out and how they will be achieved at each NCN department level.

Proposed annual reviews or reports will feed back into the *Strategic Plan*, helping to keep it current, on track and progressing as expected.

Finally, this plan will be used to help Chief and Council measure its success by comparing the goals listed here to actual achievements on an ongoing basis. Progress reports will regularly be communicated at annual strategic planning sessions, Annual General Meetings and periodically in newsletters, online updates or social media.

CONTEXT OF CURRENT STRATEGIC PROCESS

This *Strategic Plan* is informed by many documents and sources, including the revised NCN Kihche'othasowewin (Constitution), *Multi-Year Planning Survey*, *First Nation Infrastructure Investment Plan*, *Community Surveys*, *Wuskwatim PDA*, *PDA Supplement 2*, *Strategic Planning Overview* and community meetings. A Strategic Planning Process with Chief and Council and NCN organization managers and directors were the primary input into this Plan. These documents and workshop meetings set out broad objectives, which this plan translates into priorities and goals for Chief and Council and administration to act upon. The strategies will also be given a realistic timeframe recommendation.

NCN has been working towards a fully self-governing First Nation and has achieved great successes over the past several decades. NCN has become a recognized leader among First Nations in Manitoba and Canada. Actively encouraging economic development, NCN nurtures relationships and partnerships with other businesses and governments, invests heavily in economic development, is responsible for its own infrastructure and works to provide increasingly enhanced services to its Citizens. NCN will continue to build on the past successes and leverage all reasonable opportunities with targeted strategic direction.

The strategic process has identified immediate and long-term challenges, focused on NCN's core strengths and works to enhance opportunities that can be leveraged or created by achievable means. An inventory of resources, to grow these opportunities, has been identified or in some cases, initiatives to create new resources, assets, capital or workforces have been proposed.

NCN'S Strategic Planning Phases

PAST PLANNING AND PRELIMINARY DEVELOPMENT PHASE

- Past Plans (before 2014)
- 1983 Community Plan
- Economic Development Strategic Plan
- 2010 Multi-year Plan
- First Nation Infrastructure Investment Plan
- Wuskwatim PDA and PDA Supplement 2

PHASE ONE: STRATEGIC PLAN

- Strategic Planning Sessions
- Environmental Scan
- Information Gathering
- Managers Dialogue
- NCN General Assembly

Result: Draft Strategic Plan

Past Planning and Preliminary Development Phase

Phase ONE

Phase THREE

Phase TWO

PHASE THREE: IMPLEMENTATION AND ACTION

- Action in Each Theme Area
- Action in Priority Areas
- Updates to Community
- Reporting to Chief and Council
- Evaluation to Measure Results

Result: Report on Progress

PHASE TWO: DETAILED IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (DIP)

- Managers Workshop
- Community Workshop
- Leadership Workshop

Result: Draft Detailed Implementation Plan

BACKGROUND

Our Vision

“Our Vision is to exercise sovereignty that sustains a prosperous socio-economic future for Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation.”

We are exploring many initiatives to ensure that the future of our children is prosperous and fulfilling.

NCN QUICK FACTS:

Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation is based in Nelson House, Manitoba, about 800 kilometres north of Winnipeg and 80 kilometres west of Thompson.

NCN has around 4,812 Citizens living in Nelson House, South Indian Lake, Leaf Rapids, Thompson, Brandon and Winnipeg. NCN’s core reserve lands consist of 5,851.7 hectares as part of Indian Reserve 170, 170A, 170B and 170C.

NCN’s Election Code was adopted in 1998 to ensure fairness, equality and transparency. It sets out in law the governance of our Citizens, protection of our lands, use of our resources and the election of our NCN Government. It established that democratic elections be held every four years to elect a Chief and six Councillors.

In 2006, NCN signed the historic Wuskwatim Project Development Agreement with Manitoba Hydro to build the Wuskwatim hydroelectric generation project. The PDA Supplemental Agreement was renegotiated and the PDA 2 was signed May 16, 2015.

In addition to the Wuskwatim Hydroelectric project, NCN’s economic development focus involves various major areas: creation of the NCN Development Corporation, Economic Development such as the Mystery Lake Hotel, NCN Store, Family Foods, Meetah Building Supplies and development of an Urban Reserve in Thompson. NCN is constantly working to broaden its economic base and has many projects in development. A legacy of the Wuskwatim project was the construction of the Atoskiwin Training and Employment Centre of Excellence, which provided training during Wuskwatim construction and now provides post-secondary programs to meet community and northern-Manitoba education and training demands.

HISTORY TIMELINE

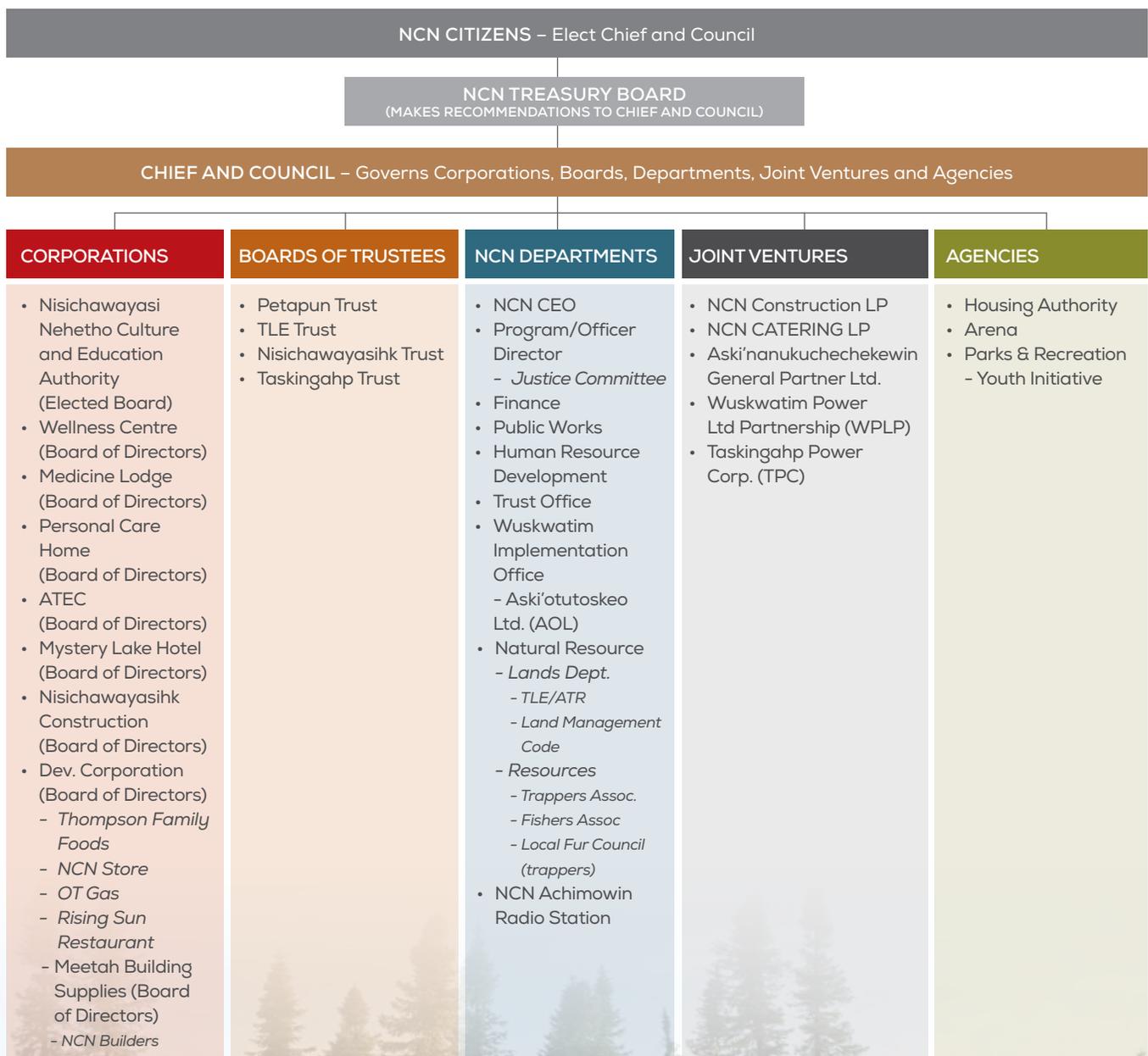
- 10,000 years ago: Early presence of NCN Ancestors
- 7,500 years ago: After ice age ancestors inhabit region near Nelson House
- 6,000 years ago: Archaeological artifacts in NCN area
- Late 1600s: Fur trade Era – Foreign European trade begins around NCN
- 1800s: Hudson Bay Trading Post Established in Nelson House
- Late 1800s: Decline of Fur Trade
- 1875: Treaty 5 was signed
- 1876: Indian Act
- 1908: NCN signs Adhesion to Treaty 5 and Pierre Moose is first elected Chief
- 1930: Natural Resources Transfer Agreement
- Early 1900s: First rail line to the north
- 1920s: Regular air flights come to Nelson House
- 1920-86: Residential School Tragedy
- 1970s: NCN opposes Hydro Projects and flooding
- 1971: NCN gets hydroelectric power
- 1974: First Road Access to Reserve
- 1977: Churchill River Diversion operational, NCN negotiates Northern Flood Agreement
- 1981: Nelson House Education Authority Established
- 1983: Child & Family Services AWASIS
- 1988: NCN gets running water/sewer. Potable Water Claim 138
- 1989: Launch of NCN Economic Development Corporation. Medicine Lodge Treatment Centre opens. NCN mandates NCN CFS Agency
- 1990s: NCN Negotiates the Wuskwatim Project Development Agreement
- 1996: Nisichawayasihk Trust Created. CAP Process started. Comprehensive Implementation Agreement (NFA) Election Code established to Replace Indian Act Regulations
- 1998: NCN purchases Mystery Lake Hotel, NCN Future Development established and TLE Agreement Signed.
- 1999: Northern Flood Committee established
- 2001: NCN Family & Community Wellness Centre Established
- 2002: NCN Personal Care Home opens
- 2002 & 2010: NCN amends Kihche’othasowewin
- 2005: OPCN Separation Agreement. ATEC construction complete.
- 2006: NCN signs the PDA. WIO, AOL Taskinigahp Trust, CIP Process, Tripartite Agreement, RCMP Services commence.
- 2008: First Paved Roads in NCN
- 2012: Wuskwatim comes online. NCN local store open. NCN Opens Family Foods Store in Thompson.
- 2014: Ten-year Debris Management (Hydro)
- 2015: PDA Supplement 2 Negotiated

UNDERSTANDING NCN'S ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Chief and Council Governs NCN Organizations

NCN's seven-member elected Chief and Council governs all NCN organizations, which fall into five categories: NCN corporations, trusts, departments, agencies and joint ventures.

This chart provides only a general overview of the arrangement for NCN Corporations, Trusts, Departments, Agencies and Joint Ventures.



PURPOSE OF A PLAN

Why Do We Need a Strategic Plan?

We all can relate to planning in our daily lives; we plan gatherings and family dinners, we plan weddings, we plan children's events, we plan how we are going to get through the month with our bills, groceries and other basic needs; this is the same thing only on a bigger scale. In an effort to improve our lives and gain full control over our lands and way of life, and how we want to govern ourselves, we NEED a plan.

NCN has had community plans created and implemented in 1983, 1990, and 2010. NCN programs, departments and organizations work on and complete annual plans as part of their day-to-day activity. Many programs and projects in all areas of our First Nation work with and develop plans. Basically, these plans are an organized way to achieve something or reach a goal.

Following the NCN election in August 2014, Chief and Council began the task to layout a strategic plan to better our Nation. Chief and Council took part in intensive planning to layout the plan for the next four years. The process included support, input and expertise from NCN Citizen consultants, facilitators, trainers, organization managers and Citizens. This executive team of planners helped to establish the framework to build a strong governance model via a variety of exercises, workshops and planning sessions.

When we think of our lives and our community, we see things that happen both inside and outside of the community and the way they affect us. Our Nation faces difficult challenges like poverty, arson, violence, bullying, addiction, and some experience poor health or living conditions. Planning is not a new concept to our people. Our ancestors have always used planning in the past, it is a part of our tradition and we look to learn from the past and the guidance of our Elders as we plan the steps for our future. NCN Chief and Council are well aware of the challenges in life, but we also see many good things to build and grow upon and make us proud to be NCN Citizens. Our NCN Government sees opportunity

for development – we have built new houses, new facilities and we have many innovative and supportive programs for our people. We are enhancing opportunities for jobs and businesses, demonstrated by projects like Wuskwatim, Mystery Lake, Family Foods and our urban reserve initiatives.

This plan has been developed to guide the future direction and actions

of Chief and Council and all departments and organizations governed by the First Nation. The cooperation and collaboration of all organizations, managers and staff will be essential to achieving the goals, strategies and objectives outline in this plan. As elected officials, our community leaders will also be guided by the direction and input of Citizens.

We hope that the information in this *Strategic Plan* will help Citizens, partners and stakeholders to understand the activities that will be NCN Chief and Council priorities, the focus of assigned activities, who will be involved and where we hope to end up.

More opportunities for feedback will occur periodically to assure that the *Strategic Plan* remains current and reflects the realities and aspirations of our Citizenship. NCN Chief and Council ask Citizens to keep an open mind, and maintain a positive outlook, when participating in future dialogue. If all participants follow a steady course and stick to fundamental principles, it is assured NCN will overcome obstacles and reach our projected destination.

This plan has been developed to guide the future direction and actions of Chief and Council and all departments and organizations governed by NCN.

We can make a difference!

THE PROCESS

Steps to Developing the Strategic Plan

NCN's Strategic Planning involved several key steps to ensure the recommendations in the plan were properly reviewed, researched and could be budgeted, mapped out in a realistic timeframe and ultimately achieved and monitored through clearly defined actions. The steps for the plan included or will include:

- 1 Identifying strategies and what needs to be done
- 2 Identifying roles and responsibilities
- 3 Identify timeframes, budgets and costs
- 4 Implementing the plan, actions and activities
- 5 Measuring and evaluating the actions and activities (Did we do a good job and can we improve?).

For the week of September 22nd to 26th, 2014, NCN's newly elected Chief and Council took part in intensive Strategic Planning to begin to layout a mandate for their four-year term and the Strategic Plan. With the support and expertise of NCN Citizen consultants, and an executive team of planners, facilitators and trainers, a variety of exercises were carried out to layout a strong framework for governance.

Day one was an opportunity for all to share the visions, expectations and challenges of Chief and Council and 158 statements of future direction emerged. Nine major theme areas were identified in the early stages of the process.

Defining Our Nine NCN Theme Areas

When compiling this plan we have given careful consideration to the nine defined theme areas. These themes helped categorize each of the strategies. They will impact the decision-making process, resources, workforce and the funds that are allocated in the implementation planning. The defined strategic theme areas are:



HUMAN RESOURCES: NCN is continually working to improve our pool of qualified workers and improve job creation from within while ensuring capable employees are retained. Preferential hiring and training directly in the community allow us to train and build a qualified workforce. We must continue to enhance training and

trades for our people, while providing our existing workers with improved job descriptions, detailed assignments, means for follow-up/evaluation, competitive salaries, fair labour laws and staff recognition.



ADMINISTRATION: The process or activity of running the NCN Government and various organizations day-to-day operations requires a broad range of systems working together. NCN Government and organizational staff must ensure optimal information management, meetings, policies and procedures as well as quality ways to report and follow-up. Linkages and cross-communication are also necessary.



PROGRAMS: NCN has established strong and stable programs for our Citizens and continually plans to improve. To have a healthy Nation and to nurture and foster a strong well-being among Citizens, community programs must continually grow and change with our needs. We must provide our expanding population with effective programs for elderly care, childcare, education, training, employment, housing, health/addictions treatment, safety, water treatment, capital, infrastructure, recreation and entertainment. The diverse needs of all our Citizens ranging from youth to Elders must be considered.



FINANCE: A strong Nation requires effective and accountable management of finances, funds and business operations. We must continue to improve our local economy through business and effectively manage Trusts, treaties, land entitlements, natural resources, budgets, audits, meeting/travel costs, revenues, salaries and expenditures.



KIHCHE'OTHASOWEWIN: As a First Nation with our own Kihche'othasowewin (Constitution) and Laws we are responsible for ensuring it is current, relevant and legally responsible. We are working toward self-determination and NCN has been working on our written Kihche'othasowewin since 2002 with plans to ratify it in the near future. We must continue to develop a government framework to define our roles and responsibilities, jurisdiction, powers, authorities, delegation and enforcement under the Kihche'othasowewin. Meaningful input and consultation must continue to be included at annual assemblies and via other avenues.



CULTURE: We are proud of our Nehetho heritage and traditions, and we are focused on growing and revitalizing our culture, language and customary principles. Traditional events and ceremonies are an important part of our way of life. Historically our community is oriented around fishing on the water, hunting, living off the land and celebrating our roots. We hope to maintain and preserve this cultural connection.



ORGANIZATION: NCN takes pride in making sure we are running an effective, smooth operating NCN Government to the best of our ability. To ensure an effective operation, organizational structure, functional systems, streamlined scheduling and clearly identified priorities must be set.



COMMUNICATION: We respect all our Citizens, both living on- and off-reserve. The Nation cares and supports one another and we have a voice to be heard. This contributes to our strong community identity and we must find ways to share our stories and achievements through technology, radio, newsletters, meetings, online and social media. There must be effective forms of communication and reporting to get NCN Government news and updates to Citizens and ensure transparent, open two-way communication.



LINKAGES: To move forward, all organizations, managers, staff and Citizens must form connected relationships and interactions. They'll need to share tasks and functions, promote flow of information, ideas, and integration to achieve shared objectives.

Other Themes Considered In The Strategic Process:

CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILY: Families are the basic building block of the NCN community. Youth development and education have been identified as the top priority in the recent community *Multi-Year Planning Survey*. Our Nation is growing fast, with more than 60 percent of our Citizens between 13 and 30 years of age. We must focus on providing every opportunity to benefit our youth and families.

ELDERS (KEHTIYATISAK): The Kehtiyatisak are a highly valued strength of our First Nation. They are a source of inspiration and guidance. They also carry the stories and are the memory of the Nation – they store much of our remaining

language, culture and heritage. It is with great respect that we honour our Elders and rely on them for lessons from our past and a clear voice for our future.

TRUSTS, TREATIES AND LAND

ENTITLEMENT: Our agreements, treaties and trusts are an integral part of our First Nation. Security over our Resource Management Area, waterways, and the ability to have a strong decision-making and self-governance model provides us with the tools to make important decisions about our future.



Involving Key Interest Groups and Stakeholders In The Process

In order for a strategic plan to be successful, the Nation as a whole, partners and key interest groups must participate, take ownership and responsibility of the process and be accountable by taking part in working to achieve the goals, strategies and action recommendations. Our key influential stakeholders in the process include:



Recognizing Our Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats and Opportunities

Based on feedback to the nine major themes that came out of feedback from day one of the Strategic Planning Process and Platform exercises, a SWOT analysis workshop was done on day two. The exercise identified NCN's strengths, weaknesses, potential threat areas and opportunities that may exist. The analysis workshop was carried out with elected NCN Chief and Councillors. Findings from the SWOT are interwoven in each of the goals, strategies and action areas of the framework.

SWOT ANALYSIS



The SWOT analysis was done in each of the nine theme areas of organization, programs, administration, culture, communication, finance, Kihche'othasowewin, linkages and human resources and dozens of characteristics were defined in each SWOT area to further discussions, pinpoint problems and identify areas of opportunity and improvement. The topics evaluated ranged from: hierarchy of authority, service delivery, resourcing, operations, information management, procedures, customs, beliefs, language, information technologies, Chief and Council, administration, messaging, budgets, revenues, roles/responsibilities, delegation, core principles, staffing, salaries/benefits, staff morale and more.

Defining Key Goals

Days three and four of the planning process focused on Nation building with discussions about the NCN Kihche’othasowewin initiative. Topics discussed were definitions, roles and responsibilities, codes of conduct, principles of governance, delegation, authorities and portfolios.

An environmental scan was done to collect, analyze, and report information that described the current situation (or environment) and to anticipate changes in the future environment. In other words, the process was designed in steps to determine the situation NCN is operating in, and will be operating in the near future. It also evaluated what can be done to build on or mitigate the challenges of situations (depending on the issue or what needs to be addressed). The process then defined ways to design the optimal plan to achieve the pre-defined goal. After this was done, a more detailed process defined the strategies and strategic objectives.

It was on day four, September 2014 that the following four major goals were identified,

agreed upon and became the broad general goals of the NCN Government for the next several years.

The goals outlined below provide the structure and framework for this *Strategic Plan*.

FOUR KEY STRATEGIC GOALS



Note: Numbering of the goals does not imply priorities and is for reference use only.

Developing Targeted Strategic Focus Areas

The four key strategic goals are discussed in more detail later in this document and include 25 identified strategies with several comprehensive strategic objectives in each. These strategies are categorized into several key strategic focus areas (listed to the right) under each of the four goals to: help facilitate in the implementation process/ plan; allow a common structure for reporting and evaluation; and provide specific configuration, terminology and “language” for all NCN organizations and levels of NCN Government to follow while preparing their future plans and reports.

Improving Standard of Living

- Justice and Public Safety
- Health and Wellness
- Education, Training and Jobs
- Recreation
- Public Works, Infrastructure & Housing
- Social Assistance

Creating a Strong Nehetho Government

- Government and Governance
- Culture Language & Tradition
- Kihche’othasowewin, Laws and Policies
- Lands, Resource Management and Environment
- Linkages and Communication

Enhance Economic Development and Local Economy

- Economic Development
- Wuskwatim PDA

Improving Finance and Administration

- Finance
- Administration
- Human Resources
- Capital

Day four and five of the planning process were also opportunities to hear from key NCN organization and department managers in the areas of administration, finance, Trust and Wuskwatim Implementation. Portfolios were assigned to each manager and scheduling was completed for key events. From there a general outline of the *Strategic Plan* was agreed to and documented.

For the month of October 2014, time was spent compiling information and data from various sources. During this time it was decided a

leadership planning session would be done to allow further consultation with stakeholders. This included a draft comprehensive planning framework session with NCN departmental managers and corporate directors on November 7 and 8, 2014. Following the managers session, information materials were presented and shared with NCN Citizens at the November 18, 2014 General Assembly. Feedback from the meetings/assembly was compiled and a draft strategic plan was prepared with the strategies outlined in each of the common strategy categories, goals and theme areas.

Incorporating an Understandable, Culturally Appropriate, Results-based Framework

Phase two of the Strategic Planning Process explored the implementation plan, including human resource assignments and cost identification, budgets and reporting. As part of this phase, a strategic planning consultant recommended using a Strategic Planning Framework developed by the Southern Chiefs Organization (SCO). This culturally appropriate model and collaborative process was originally designed for First Nations and health organizations. The SCO Framework was created to be portable and adaptable for other First Nations and was adapted and applied to NCN's Strategic Planning Process.

The SCO model draws on customary Indigenous Peoples laws and principles and is entirely culturally appropriate and follows ceremonial and traditional protocols. The original model is based on data gathered by First Nations for First Nations. Although the original model design focused on health issues, its process and teachings are transferable in any environment and applied to any issue.

NCN's *Strategic Plan* is "Solution Focused" and "Results Based" and consists of four key parts:

The model draws on customary Indigenous Peoples laws and principles and is entirely culturally appropriate, following ceremonial and traditional protocols.

■ PRINCIPLES

Are the surrounding beliefs or observations that form the reasoning for the strategic process and influence the decision-making

■ GOALS

Are the open-ended statements or objectives for what we want to achieve

■ STRATEGIES

Are comprehensive ideas or master plans stating how to achieve our goals

■ ACTIONS

Are tasks or activities to execute the strategies and determine scope, cost and the details of implementing the Strategy

THE TIPI MODEL

Interweaving Our Culture and Tradition into the Process

Developing a *Strategic Plan* for our Nehetho Nation is a unique process – unlike standard models for businesses or organization – our world views, culture, traditions, beliefs, Elder teachings/storytelling and approaches to government, laws and the connections with the land give us an exclusive perspective. Our expansive history, location, unique agreements, treaties and trusts all mold and make up who we are, and ultimately influence the goals, strategies and actions we shape. For this reason we have selected to use a culturally appropriate model for the framework of this *Strategic Plan*.

The Nisichawayasihk Nehethowuk traditionally live by reference to Kihche’othasowewin (the Great Law of the Creator), which is underpinned by spiritual and philosophical beliefs, values, principles and goals.

The traditional customary principles are the support for our lives and all combine to guide and direct the conduct of individuals, families, our community and nation.



The TIPI serves not only as a shelter from the elements and as residence, but also for food storage/preparation, governance, ceremonies and celebrations. The basic structure of a TIPI is several posts bound together with cord or string, a canvas or skin over top, an opening for a door and an open top for ventilation and airflow. The TIPI is transferable and can be taken apart, moved, and set-up again in nearly any location, climate or season. It is strong, reliable and durable and signifies a place of gathering, sharing, care and warmth. It also is traditionally a symbol of ceremony and spiritual or cultural practice. For the purpose of this plan it is used primarily to represent structure and can be adapted as a teaching tool and reference.

The idea behind the TIPI model is to look at the plan from different perspectives. Work of our NCN Government is multi-dimensional, multi-jurisdictional, with multiple stakeholders inside and outside of the community, it is at times complicated and it requires the use of people and resources that cross multiple boundaries.

The application of the TIPI Framework for the NCN *Strategic Plan* is meant to simplify the parts and processes so that all the parties understand the need for a common model for future planning and implementation. The frame, consisting of the Nehetho customary principles are similar to the posts of the TIPI. They ensure strong, stable, reliable and consistent support for the rest of the structure while at the same time, they are flexible and adaptable to shift with our Nation's ever-changing needs.

From the top of the TIPI model the goals signify what we hope to achieve as we "look up" to our vision of a better tomorrow. Similar to the air flowing through the TIPI the goals should flow throughout the entire structure.

Working from the top to the ground level, the next part of the structure is the strategic objectives and strategies. These objectives and strategies layout a canvas or skin around each goal and are blanketed with knowledge. With clear, strong objectives, each manager or worker can identify and open the doors and take steps towards achieving the strategies. Through actions or activities, which are done by those entering and exiting the doorway at the ground level, we have the ability to expand and implement our actions and accomplish tasks. All activities come from the strategy and work towards accomplishing the goal. In this TIPI model the Nehetho customary principles, goals and strategies are housed in the *Strategic Plan* and the actions are what we carry forth into the community and the world.

For strategies to be implemented effectively, cooperation and shared responsibility will be essential to achieving success.

The strength of the tipi comes from the frame poles. When bound together at the top they create strength. Alone and without unity they provide no support.



When viewed from the top, downward, we see another dimension of the TIPI model.

Whether viewed from the top down, or bottom up, it is all symbiotic, connected and logical. When the structure works effectively, we not only pull strategies from our core goals but also learn from the activities and actions that will then flow input back in through the doorway of the structure. No parts should operate independently from the whole when the linkages of all parties and organizations/departments, and their activities/actions work toward a common goal.

As referenced already, the support beams of the NCN TIPI model are similar to the customary principles. Exercises were undertaken, and data collected to explore/define the way our principles will guide the work of the Nation, its Government, departments, organizations and personnel.

When viewed from the inside outward, we see another dimension of the TIPI model. The principles are meant to assure a strong frame and act in perpetuity as tasks are implemented and future planning takes place. The principles do not change and the intent is to have something to always fall back on when matters are unclear or there is a conflict or breakdown. The traditional ways of the Nehetho are assured in the practice of governance. This is accomplished by incorporating the teachings and principles in all work carried out by the Citizens of NCN as we work towards the common good and for the benefit of future generations.

TIPI MODEL – GOALS, STRATEGIES AND NEHETHO CUSTOMARY PRINCIPLES



Note: This model does not reflect the traditional teachings of the tipi when used in ceremonies. It is used here only as a metaphor to help organizations organize and understand goals and strategic planning.

It is important to note that some of the strategies listed in this document share common initiatives and have overlapping concepts, objectives or actions. For this reason integration and communication between NCN Government and NCN-run organizations, departments and businesses will be important to achieve common goals and work towards specific shared actions. For example, the law-making process and Kihche’othasowewin strategies must be directly aligned with the goals of NCN Justice, government and law enforcement. For strategies to be implemented effectively, cooperation and shared responsibility will be essential to achieving success.



GOAL
1

IMPROVING STANDARD OF LIVING

NCN must use our rights, treaties, forward thinking and advance plans to improve the quality of life for our people and communities through increased responsibility. This effort will strengthen our Citizens and governments and position us to make the decisions that impact our future. It will better ensure fair and equitable education for our youth, build our economy and create safe and secure communities for our people.

Although NCN is better off than some First Nations we must improve living conditions and quality of life for our Citizens. Investing in our Citizens requires a long-term, sustainable plan and with more than half of our population under the age of 30, an investment must be made in our young peoples education, training, income equality and job opportunities. We also need to invest in our social programs, recreation, law enforcement, health and wellness to begin to bring our Nations' quality of life on par with the rest of Canada.

The key strategy areas identified in the diagram below illustrate the interconnected relationships that are shared between all areas and help to Improve Standard of Living for NCN Citizens. Each of these areas in this section of the *Plan* align with several of the key customary principles and the detailed strategies discussed.



We will take steps to evaluate and establish how our standard of living and quality of life compares to other communities and the province to ensure fundamental needs are being met.

Today, the statistics for First Nations peoples are staggering in Canada:

- *One in four children in First Nation communities live in poverty. That's almost double the Canadian average*
- *Suicide rates among First Nation youth are higher than other young non-Aboriginal Canadians*
- *The life expectancy of First Nation Citizens is five to seven years less than other non-Aboriginal Canadians and infant mortality rates are also higher among First Nations*
- *First Nation youth are more likely to end up in jail than to graduate from high school*
- *First Nation children, on average, receive 22% less funding for child welfare services than other Canadian children*
- *Violence and addictions are critically high and there are almost 600 unresolved cases of missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada.*

JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

The NCN integrated essential Justices services include the Community Justice Group, police and fire/emergency and alternative justice services. The coordination of these services will work to achieve better results in public safety, crime prevention and law enforcement in the community.



STRATEGY 1: ENSURING THE SAFETY AND WELL-BEING OF NCN CITIZENS

It is the responsibility of NCN's Justice Committee to assist in interpreting, creating and enforcing laws to protect NCN Citizens and maintain the right to live safely. We strive to promote healthy families and healthy communities through collaborative efforts between all community services. We also provide education and awareness of addictions and family violence issues.

To achieve our strategic objectives we must:

- A) Establish a safety team consisting of NCNFCWC, Education, RCMP, Council, Justice and other agency representatives to develop community approaches to address issues that impact safety in the community
- B) Amend the Membership Code and ensure alternative justice methods are conducive to NCN's customary principles
- C) Enact, amend and enforce laws to improve public safety (e.g., animal control, curfew, sexual offences, gangs, drug trafficking, bootlegging, violent crimes, etc.)
- D) Explore Cree Court program and options for inclusion in our justice system
- E) Explore and implement effective methods or programs that raise awareness and educate the public about safety, fire prevention and arson
- F) Develop a plan to re-integrate and rehabilitate criminal offenders in the community with the use of enhanced support programs/services. Encourage community involvement.
- G) Explore community zero-tolerance policies through public consultation for the protection of children, women, men and elders from emotional and physical violence
- H) Revisit NCN Restorative Justice Strategy and re-institute Justice/Healing Circles.
- I) Explore options for community patrol and mobilization, crime watch and Citizen volunteer programs
- J) Increase RCMP support to the community to reduce crime rates
- K) Develop concepts for harm-reduction, prevention and intervention programs, increase education and public awareness Nation to promote healthy lifestyles
- L) Research and establish alternate methods of regulating drugs and alcohol use/abuse in the community
- M) Provide mandatory orientation and cross-cultural training to new RCMP recruits to help them connect to the community.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Our remote northern Manitoba location and limited access to off-reserve federal health programs or facilities make it critical to have services provided directly in the community. Where services are unavailable directly in the community, programs will be put in place to ensure access or transportation to care off-reserve. Important health and wellness services for our children are needed to ensure CFS, daycare support, dental, medical and essential health services are available and easy access to the best care possible can be obtained. Elder care is also essential, as our population begins to age and demands are put on their personal care. We must find methods to allow them to sustain quality standards of living. It was identified as a priority that our Citizens also need improved access to drug/alcohol addictions treatment, social services, mental care, child welfare, wellness activities and holistic/alternative care when required.

STRATEGY 2: MEETING OR EXCEEDING QUALITY STANDARDS OF CARE FOR NCN CITIZENS

Health and wellness in our community involves many organizations working together. NCN is fortunate to have holistic care services to provide the foundation of care for all ages. Organizations like the Personal Care Home, NCN Family and Community Wellness Centre, Nurses Station, school dental care and NCN Medicine Lodge are required to work jointly to provide a “full-care” system to NCN Citizens.

To achieve our strategic objectives we must:

- A) Enhance programs, facilities and services through greater collaboration with all NCN agencies
- B) Improve the capacity, programs and awareness to reduce the negative effects of drug/alcohol addictions and the related social affects on the community (i.e. bootlegging, gangs, substance abuse, violence, etc.)
- C) Develop and deliver innovative and preventative services to restore health and keep children, youth, elders and families healthy and safe
- D) Improve health status by creating a comprehensive framework with other community services
- E) Improve community controlled primary health care services that can draw on mainstream services and allow access to services expected within the provincial health care context
- F) Improve community decision-making, influence and control over the management and delivery of health services to NCN
- G) Improve capacity and services for individuals to manage their personal and social issues through efforts supported by policies and standards set in each NCN agency, and enforced through by-laws and BCR's, and with strategic investments in such efforts. This would address issues like:
 - Circumstances requiring CFS investigation
 - Circumstances leading to alcohol, drug and prescription drug abuse
 - Gang activity/associations within and outside the community and violence in all forms
- H) Re-examine Social Assistance programs to explore flexible ways to promote self-sufficiency, include supports to the individual and reduce dependency.
- I) Embrace Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations to address historical trauma and create awareness of Residential school trauma (i.e. CFS and Removal of Parent programs)
- J) Explore options for women's, youth or homeless shelters and soup kitchens in NCN
- K) Ensure and implement quality standards of Care for NCN Care facilities, staff and programs (i.e. work towards Accreditation for NCN Caregivers)
- L) Explore options for cultural/traditional programs or approaches to medicinal care for Citizens
- M) Improve options for mental and physical health care and awareness.
- N) Develop disaster management and pandemic plans
- O) Explore the feasibility of medical receiving homes in Winnipeg for NCN Citizens travelling to Winnipeg
- P) Develop ways to enhance medical health services in the community to diagnose and prescribe medications, establish a pharmacy, optometrist and dentist.
- Q) Develop resources to repatriate women, youth children in care
- R) Ensure the protection of the identities, culture, and kinship ties for NCN Citizens
- S) Improve and develop life skills training for Citizens

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Education, literacy and achieving the highest standards possible for NCN Citizens is among the highest priority for our First Nation. Effective schools, vocational programming, expanded learning opportunities and access to post-secondary education are essential to building knowledge and skills capacity and help develop a qualified workforce. Retaining workers, enhancing training and expanding job opportunities for our Citizens is critical to ensuring our people contribute, grow and thrive in our Nation – while sustaining a positive lifestyle and career development in and around Nelson House.

STRATEGY 3: ENHANCE EDUCATIONAL/JOB/TRAINING SYSTEMS, PROGRAMS, FACILITIES AND SERVICES TO IMPROVE OPPORTUNITIES

From preschool and kindergarten to high school, university and job training, the roots of future prosperity for NCN lies in providing seamless, beneficial and effective learning. Whether it is improving knowledge of tradition, training new skilled tradespeople or teaching life skills and traditional culture to youth, education and training are the pillars for a stronger Nation.

To achieve our strategic objectives we must:

- A) Enhance organizational efficiency, effectiveness and accountability by ensuring all programs in areas of education, training, literacy and skills development are working together toward common objectives
- B) Establish facilities maintenance, renovation and expansion plans to enhance and ensure safe environments for students
- C) Ensure Educational standards, accreditation and certification are consistent with provincial standards while recognizing cultural and traditional values
- D) Ensure Funding for education is on par with provincial standards
- E) Increase parental and public involvement in the education system and recreation
- F) Increase K-12, high school, mature student, post-secondary education and trades academic achievement, graduation and participation rates
 - Identify learning barriers – learning, listening, retention, life skills (Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition – PLAR)
- G) Utilize the education system to maintain Cree culture and enhance land-based education programs (i.e. Grannies program)
- H) Explore joint cooperative programs between the school, recreation and youth programming to increase involvement for students, parents and the community
- I) Seek out initiatives that promote linkages between learning and training
 - Explore exchange student programs
 - Develop basic literacy programs
 - Expand programming and develop comprehensive curricula plan
 - Develop a student school retention program, including truancy and absenteeism and address barriers to learning
 - Explore Signs of Safety model that focuses on strengths and skills of children
 - Develop after-school programs

- J) Conduct ongoing policy reviews
 - K) Develop more effective ways to communicate with parents and support all interested post-secondary students (i.e. distance education)
 - Develop effective methods to solicit feedback from the community
 - L) Develop a compulsory Cree language programs for youth and programming for adults
- and explore the feasibility of Cree Immersion for early school age children
 - Find quality Cree language teachers
 - M) Develop a Gang Reduction Plan focused on prevention, support, advocacy and gang exit
 - N) Provide orientations for provincial and federal elections and the how they impact our people.

RECREATION, SPORT AND ENTERTAINMENT

The physical and mental well-being of NCN Citizens is important to maintaining a healthy lifestyle for all ages. Ensuring we have adequate resources available to expand our sporting programs, recreation and entertainment will be an integral part of community planning for the next several years. The inclusion of culturally appropriate activities will also foster the transfer of our traditions, way of life and beliefs to future generations and actions will be required to insure this is an integral part of planning and implementation.

STRATEGY 4: GROWING AND DEVELOPING ADDITIONAL RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES, FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS

A diverse range of sporting, arts and activities are required to broaden the solid foundation of recreational programs in Nelson House. With growing and changing interests of our people and the challenges of increasing facility/program costs, we must carefully manage assets for capacity building.

To achieve our strategic objectives we must:

- A) Build new recreation facilities or obtain recreation office and storage space
- B) Increase children, youth and parent participation in sports activities in the community
- C) Reduce costs to replace lost or stolen equipment.
- D) Conduct feasibility studies to determine costs and benefits of building a new sports complex, as well as golf course, soccer field, sports tracks, baseball diamonds, ski/sliding hills with parks, groomed trails, music studio, high performance facilities including storage, swimming pool, boxing ring

- E) Develop a Comprehensive Community Recreation Participation Plan to communicate, organize, structure programming and enhance involvement. The plan will consider:
 - Recreation trainers, coaches and referees
 - Supports for athletes
 - Involvement of fans, parents, volunteers
 - Access to music, broomball, roller blading and tennis
- Networking with provincial, national and international sporting entities/ organizations
- Recognition of achievements
- Transportation options (i.e. buses, carpooling, team vans)
- Insurance and safety plans
- Liability and risks

PUBLIC WORKS, INFRASTRUCTURE AND HOUSING

Secure funding will allow us to develop a five-year capital plan, improve work productivity and work quality, and move more of our Citizens from welfare to wages by opening opportunities for carpenters, builders, plumbers and other trades during construction and upgrades. Chief and Council, the Housing Authority, our staff and advisors are working to develop detailed plans about how to implement and expand our housing and community infrastructure. Our water treatment, water system, lagoons and core infrastructure are also being evaluated and reviewed to outline necessary improvements and available funds/resources.

STRATEGY 5: TARGETING HOUSING AND WATER SYSTEM CRISIS WITH STEPS TOWARD IMMEDIATE ACTION

For many years, housing has been and continues to be one of the biggest concerns that our Nation faces. Poor housing conditions, overcrowding, vandalism and fire damage have added to the ongoing housing shortage and concern. Allocating funds for this work is critical. A recent housing survey identified many Citizens are concerned with overcrowding, mould, a need for better training for home repairs and expressed a need for a multiplex facility. Many Citizens are also interested in ownership of their own home and beautification of the community with gardens. Improvements to our water treatment system is also among the priorities. A preliminary plan outlined several objectives.

To achieve our strategic objectives we must:

- A) Improve home maintenance – Use PDA Supplement 2 monies and our ability to forward commit under Taskingahp Trust to renovate houses
- B) Ensure paving of the causeway from the store to Forest Industries



- C) Educate members about housing shortage and work jointly with ATEC to encourage Citizens to train to build and maintain houses
- D) Build new water treatment plant and continue to upgrade the existing water treatment plant and lagoon. We will seek cost-sharing partnerships options with other levels of government to address this issue
- E) Enhance marketable housing to generate additional funds to repair/build new housing opportunities and have more Citizens enter ownership agreements for homes
- F) Refine strategies to construct new homes – We want to build new housing units over the next several years using our ability to forward commit under Taskinigaahp Trust. First Nations home ownership funding and other sources of funding such as CMHC housing may be obtained. We will also need to pass and implement our own laws to help achieve this goal
- G) Develop new subdivisions – To build the new homes we need to improve the water treatment plant and build new subdivisions because we have a limited number of serviced lots available in the community and those cannot be added to the water system until the supply issues are addressed
- H) Employ more NCN Citizens – We are developing a preferential employment and training target system to maximize construction jobs and opportunities for our Citizens (i.e. ATEC Integrated Trades Program). We also hope to have home-owner maintenance courses taught at ATEC. This will provide all NCN Citizens the training to help develop home-improvement skills
- I) Review Multiplex Community Centre Concept to house NCN Government operations, an Elders gathering place, community hall, recreation facilities (soccer pitches, skateboard park, splashpad) and administration offices
- J) Replace/update water hydrant system capacity to enhance fire safety and secure funding
- K) Clarify and develop a mandate for public works, NCN construction LP and the Housing Authority
- L) Ensure new houses and renovations of existing houses are completed to national standards/code
- M) Provide reporting to be able to put pressure on INA and other levels of government to improve funding
- N) Address challenges of getting insurance for houses.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Social assistance was developed to offer financial support to First Nation members. However the impacts have created dependencies and other social concerns for our Citizens. Although we will ensure that federal and provincial governments will continue to have a fiduciary responsibility to provide treaty and agreement funding, compensation and support under existing arrangements and agreements – we will also work toward generating opportunities for Citizens to join the workforce.

The following strategies are not meant to replace, mitigate or remove government responsibilities. If we want life to improve in our Nation we must also contribute and work towards prosperity and self-sufficiency via our own means. By developing our own programs to help our social needs, we can become more self-sufficient.

STRATEGY 6: IMPROVE SOCIAL WELL-BEING VIA SUSTAINABLE PROGRAMMING AND SERVICES THAT PROMOTE SELF-SUFFICIENCY

By creating a balance in the social needs/requirements of our Citizens and providing or enhancing the necessary programs and services within the community, we will actively work to help contribute to a healthier workforce along with improved youth and elderly care.

To achieve our strategic objectives we must:

- A) Increase opportunities to transition people off social assistance into the full-time or part-time workforce or apprenticeship participation
- B) Generate additional job opportunities for those wishing to transition off of social assistance
- C) Promote advantages to joining the workforce
- D) Explore options to make it mandatory or to encourage members on social assistance to take life skills education, budget planning or provide voluntary community service hours
- E) Develop a Labour Market Needs Analysis and report on members on Social Assistance and compare to provincial standards (e.g., Median Income of Individuals and Households, Average Household Income, Labor Force Participation, Occupation, Percent of Population Scoring High on Work Stress Scale, Unemployment Rates, Youth Unemployment, High School Completion, Education Level, Housing Affordability, Community Housing, 55+, Number of assisted living beds, Adolescent and Teenage Pregnancy Rates, Percentage of Single Parent Headed Households with Children, etc.)
- F) Review and adapt Social Assistance policies to consider the related impacts and challenges the SA program has on Citizen's values
- G) Educate current SA clients on the benefits of transitioning off social assistance to reduce their dependency and empower them (e.g., ATEC programs or information materials distributed with SA cheques)
- H) Explore the feasibility of moving towards a paperless social assistance distribution of payment. Setup methods and processes (e.g., Electronic banking, pre-paid visas, electronic filing systems)
- I) Explore options to increase school attendance by encouraging participation in classes before welfare benefits are distributed
- J) Explore options to "stagger" distribution of social assistance payments throughout the month to reduce overflow issues and impacts of the influx in the community
- K) Promote the establishment of community linkages to take "active measures" initiatives



By developing our own programs to help our social needs we can become more self-sufficient.



GOAL 2 CREATING A STRONG NEHETHO GOVERNMENT

A strong Nehetho government is based on the strength and leadership provided by the elected Chief and Council. Although the leadership has the primary responsibility in the decision-making process, it is important for management, NCN Citizens and all NCN Interest groups to relay information, recommendations, concerns and feedback to leadership to help them make informed decisions.

Roles between NCN Government, management and staff must be clearly defined. The NCN government must also perform duties with integrity, transparency and fairness, while providing the necessary reporting and communication to update its constituency and partners of their actions.

Similar to a circle of the medicine wheel, the identified key strategy areas in the diagram below illustrate the interconnected relationships that are shared between all areas and help to create an effective Nehetho Government. Each of these areas in this section of the *Plan* align with several of the key customary principles and the detailed strategies discussed.



GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNANCE

Government/governance and leadership are the starting points for a strong First Nation; everything else flows from there. It also starts with the people, who express their concerns, wants and needs to Chief and Council and give leadership the information and capacity to deliver. NCN aspires to establish a strong future, created through connections between key programs and services that are steady and reliable. In a world of systems, linkages are sought between system parts to assure that maximum advantage occurs with all the resources including: leadership, people, technology and economy. In an effort to build a strong workforce, assure opportunities for future generations and meet the complex needs of NCN Citizens, a model of governance must be applied that assures all the entities involved are working together.

STRATEGY 7: ESTABLISH A FOUNDATION OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY IN GOVERNANCE

Any model of Government aspires to deliver maximum results with the investments made into their public service, programs and economies. Multiple levels of responsibility must be defined to deliver programs and services, assure public trust, security and continuity through efficient use of resources. Overall integrity in the application of laws, codes/standards and policies will also be essential.

To achieve our strategic objectives we must:

- A) Strengthen oversight expenditures by working to improve financial accountability accuracy and guidelines for expenditures. Continue disclosure of Chief and Council's and NCN Government staff's expenditures, salaries, office and travel expenses.
- B) Improve audit standards, processes and methods that are objective and transparent for NCN Government departments, organizations and businesses
- C) Improve accountability, organizational structure, coordination, integrity and integration across all NCN Government entities initiatives and programs
- D) Enhance end-to-end management capabilities, including robust requirements development and cost-estimating processes and procedures, improved management practices, and improved coordination and planning cycles
- E) Ensure operations will be conducted in an ethical and accountable manner by reporting and ensuring information will be made available and accessible to NCN Citizens where appropriate
- F) Communicate openly with the media or other interested parties on operations and results to make actions and plans visible in the public arena and enhance accessible formats and communication supports
- G) Refine and improve operating and Capital budget status reports
- H) Define delegation of powers and responsibilities policies
- I) Enhance open-meeting procedures and explore video-conferencing and recording of meetings
- J) Include a process of rising and reporting following closed sessions, indicating either the date a confidential report can be made public or a legal opinion indicating why the report cannot be made public and proactively making confidential reports public upon the reporting date
- K) Follow up public visibility, outcomes and impact through external feedback or Citizen input
- L) Design a system and structure for delegation of responsibilities and roles that facilitate timely, responsive and responsible decision making to meet expectations
- M) Determine and document steps, policies and procedures for sub-delegation of authority during absence of NCN Government officials and managers (for example: stamps for signatures, guidelines for roles and job descriptions with specific designation of authority, accountability and responsibilities in specific circumstances and making Council members accessible during community emergencies). Define "chain of command" structure to clearly identify who has authorization rights for delegated roles.



KIHCHE'OTHASOWEWIN, LAWS AND POLICIES

Most developed nations around the world have a tool at their disposal to help define roles and responsibilities, certainties in governance and mechanisms for development and implementation of essential services. These are defined through a Constitution (Kihche'othasowewin), or Supreme Law of the Land. For example, a constitution lists all the powers and privileges of a government, including the different levels of government. A constitution may also define key principles or values to oversee implementation, roles and responsibilities. Delegation of power or tasks may be necessary to deliver on obligations set out in the Kihche'othasowewin. Subsequent power may also be passed or delegated to enforce the laws.

STRATEGY 8: UPDATE AND IMPROVE OUR KIHCHE'OTHASOWEWIN

NCN Chief and Council are pleased to move to the next stage of the formal review process to develop and finalize the draft Kihche'othasowewin for NCN. This stage consists of the final consultation meeting with NCN Citizens prior to a vote to adopt our Kihche'othasowewin. Several models, including the Westbank First Nation model, were researched in the past to build the NCN Constitution framework. The process has already included conversion of the First Law to a draft of our Kihche'othasowewin, a review by our NCN Governance Committee (i.e. Chief and Council, womens group, mens group, Elders, youth and interest groups). We have had several previous rounds of public consultation with Citizen feedback and provided our Citizens with the opportunity to provide feedback through meetings, workshops and a special website link on [ncncree.com/ncn/constitution review](http://ncncree.com/ncn/constitution-review).

To achieve our strategic objectives we must:

- A) Ensure Treaty and Inherent Rights for NCN Citizens (regardless of residency)
- B) Layout a framework with principles, categories, timeframes for completion of the NCN Kihche'othasowewin that can be put to referendum by NCN Citizenship and upon which the Kihche'othasowewin will be built
- C) Continue to clearly ensure, enact, define and evaluate our core principles and integrity initiatives (i.e., reconciliation, respect, consent, responsibility for the land, wisdom, art of listening, acting cautiously, for every action there is a reaction, sacred/spiritual responsibility, forgiveness, being the Peoples' government and bridging our sacred laws)
- D) Document and define Chief and Council portfolios and clearly communicate the definition of roles and authorities to agencies, organizations, departments, trusts and organizations in a consistent and accountable manner
- E) Enhance end-to-end management capabilities, including development requirements and cost-estimating processes and procedures, improved management practices, and improved coordination and planning cycles
- F) Become fully self-governing in the future as we incrementally reassert our jurisdiction
- G) Ensure consultation on our Kihche'othasowewin is developed to include NCN Citizen views and values and not solely driven by the legal process or advice
- H) Enhance orientation for Chief and Council regarding Canadian Parliamentary structure, Manitoba Legislature, Public Services and not-for-profits.

STRATEGY 9: IMPROVE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF NCN GOVERNMENT, PROGRAMS AND ORGANIZATIONS

NCN's organizational structure defines how activities such as task allocation, coordination and supervision are directed towards the achievement of organizational aims. We require the structure to act like a viewing glass through which individuals both within the organization and from an outside perspective can relate and understand how all the "working parts" of the First Nation relate to, and connect with each other. Understanding the structure also helps to identify where inefficiencies or strengths may be identified.

To achieve our strategic objectives we must:

- A) Establish linkages and joint programs with NCN institutions and organizations to improve the delivery of services and programs
- B) Organize and refine hierarchy so that the powers and privileges are assigned appropriately to individuals, organizations or institutions
- C) Clarify and define mandates for organizations and departments where there is an overlap of roles and responsibilities (e.g., Public Works, NCLP and the Housing Authority)
- D) Develop policies or organizational law to improve the structure and authority of new and existing agencies, trusts, departments or corporations that are consistent with the NCN Government constitutional framework
- E) Ensure Chief and Council oversees and has final authority over NCN entities and works to ensure policies and procedures are followed. We will provide the necessary authority to key institutions in NCN Government to ensure those entities act accordingly when making decisions
- F) Design and streamline a NCN-specific accountability framework that is consistent between departments, organizations and corporations while ensuring progress reports and updates are delivered in a similar and cohesive manner
- G) Add additional services where they are identified to be lacking or insufficient
- H) Develop a Community Plan by researching and networking with other First Nations and implement better coordination of all public services, including:
 - Negotiate access to provincial and federal data bases and information systems to reflect realities and indicators in the community
 - Facilitate long-term program planning to improve standard of living
 - Develop, review and revise community plans annually; Chief and Council will determine specific initiatives, priorities, timeframes, and indicators to measure progress over time for departments, organizations and corporations
- I) Provide Ongoing Strategic Planning and performance management. NCN will release a "Report Card" that indicates progress of objectives and status of indicators
- J) Outline and standardize Chief and Council meeting procedures
- K) Conduct performance reviews and evaluations
- L) Streamline, consolidate and integrate planning processes to improve the coordination, priorities of programs, related plans and services within NCN Contribution Agreements (including federally and provincially funded programs)
- M) Explore models of integration for programs funded by the Government of Canada to determine preferred practices that are effective, accountable, efficient, timely and responsive to Citizens needs (i.e., personal care homes, education, housing, health, water and sanitation, etc.).

STRATEGY 10: DEVELOP AND IMPROVE LAWS AND REFINE LAW ENFORCEMENT PROCEDURES

Laws and law enforcement generally refers to any system by which a governing group act in an organized manner to ensure the laws are created, managed and clear. Those laws are enforced by discovering, deterring, rehabilitating, or disciplining any persons who violate the rules governing that Nation. As a self-governing First Nation, NCN is responsible for managing and adapting our own laws and determining effective ways to enforce them.

To achieve our strategic objectives we must:

- A) Improve our Law enforcement and improve safety for Citizens through programs that directly link to, and are defined by our Kihche’othasowewin, policies and laws
- B) Effectively define roles, powers, authorities and responsibilities of Chief and Council, Citizens, NCN Constables and RCMP to protect Citizens
- C) Define areas where tasks can be delegated to levels of Authority or Citizen Crime watch Groups
- D) Find ways to advance and protect our Land, Treaty and Inherent Rights
- E) Finance and balance revenues and expenditures for our laws and enforcement
- F) and focus on improving outputs and the effectiveness of our systems
- F) Establish a code of ethics and code of conduct to minimize conflicts of interest or confusion, and assure greater accountability and clarity
- G) Work to remove Band Council Resolutions (BCRs) in favour of adapting new applicable laws
- H) Amend Election Laws to clearly define procedures, requirements, protocols and regulations (e.g., acknowledge Deputy Chief at Inauguration, implement requirements for candidates to have high school diplomas).



STRATEGY 11: STRENGTHEN RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN NCN ORGANIZATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND CHIEF AND COUNCIL

To facilitate NCN Citizen participation in planning and management of services with NCN Government, its organizations, corporations and departments, a board of directors should be assigned where appropriate. Essentially it is the role of the board of directors to hire the Director/CEO or general manager of the business and assess the overall direction and strategy of the organization. The Director/CEO or general manager is responsible for hiring all of the other employees and overseeing the day-to-day operation of the business and reporting to the Board.

To achieve our strategic objectives we must:

- A) Identify NCN-run organizations or entities that require Board input or support and establish the necessary supports/personnel
- B) Enhance rules, job descriptions, roles and responsibilities for boards and board interaction with managers and Chief and Council
- C) Ensure effective mechanisms are in place to recruit and assign qualified board members. Provide orientation, education, or training to board members where required
- D) Conduct a board self-assessment or provide guidelines to examine and evaluate the quality of meetings, agenda management, individual participation, aspects of governance, strategies, board makeup, and committee structure and allow manager/CEO feedback
- E) Provide scheduled formal feedback and reports to managers and Chief and Council including memos on Board's and Council's decisions/ meetings
- F) Ensure board's rules, goals, strategies and decision-making processes are aligned with Chief and Council's goals by ensuring a plan or road map is in place annually. Allow boards to question information they receive
- G) Ensure accountability within Boards and consistency in management.



STRATEGY 12: ENSURE INTEGRITY, ETHICS, INCLUSION AND FAIRNESS

To make sure the NCN Government is held accountable, acts with fairness, is unbiased, shows integrity and honesty, and works in an ethical manner; a mechanism for dispute resolution will be established, refined and set in place. This will ensure, on- and off-reserve NCN Citizens, Government officials and employees of NCN-operated entities, are entitled to a fair resolution process for legal matters as well as concerns and conflicts between Citizens and NCN Government. This will be done under the enforcement of NCN policies and laws.

To achieve our strategic objectives we must:

- A) Use external experts to provide independent, unbiased, expert advice, including technical matters or matters of conflict requiring mediation
- B) Improve accountability, coordination, and integration across our NCN Government and organizational structure and include program integrity initiatives
- C) Identify and proactively address internal and external risks to program performance and vigilantly, pursue prosecution and punishment for those who commit fraud, and remedy program vulnerabilities
- D) Enhance/adopt a Code of Conduct for Members of Chief and Council and employees and prevent internal conflicts of interest and corruption by ensuring transparency and legality of all operations.



STRATEGY 13: PRESERVE, DOCUMENT AND RECOGNIZE NCN'S CUSTOMARY LAWS AND PRACTICES

Our NCN Customary Laws govern the conduct and co-existence of the families and peoples over the millennia. These principles and customs are evident in the culture, language, beliefs, protocols, and traditions that have survived through time and continue to exist in modern context. Customary law is recognized, not because it is backed by the power of written or government laws, but because each individual recognizes the benefits of behaving in accordance with other individuals' expectations – given that others also behave as expected.

To achieve our strategic objectives we must:

- A) Find ways to preserve and pass on the knowledge, understanding, wisdom and stories of our Elders
- B) Work to improve two-way communication and understanding with Citizens, historians, elders and governments with respect to our Customary Laws. Ensure recognition that "systems of Aboriginal law existed" and "traditional laws as elements of the practices, customs and traditions of Aboriginal peoples" exist
- C) Record and document our Customary Laws with special consideration on how they influence and shape our Kihche'othasowewin
- D) Evaluate current bereavement policy, grief support and funerals costs and possibly set restrictions, minimums or ways to use more local services.



STRATEGY 14: ENTER INTO SELF-GOVERNMENT NEGOTIATIONS

To promote NCN autonomy and control over our Nehetho lives, tradition and culture through exercising self-determination and self-government initiatives we must work with other levels of government to negotiate and “stand for” our own interests. If we wish to restore and obtain greater authorities over our lands, resources, service areas and programs, we will need to effectively continue to deal with other external governments at the Federal, Provincial and Municipal levels.

To achieve our strategic objectives we must:

- A) Know and understand our treaties, entitlements, rights and privileges effectively flex our rights while seizing optimal opportunities
- B) Retain and continually enhance our legal support, responsibilities and resources regarding these matters to promptly and
- C) Clearly define and improve the understanding of our Rights.



CULTURE, LANGUAGE AND TRADITION

The importance of our history, ancestry, language and traditions are reflected in who we are as a people. Living off the land, having the freedom to express our beliefs in Nehetho legend, cultural practices and ceremonies are fundamental to maintaining our identity and growing pride for our Nation's Citizens. Adversity of the past, such as the Residential School System has made it difficult to maintain our culture and has created gaps in the sharing of our knowledge and passing of traditional stories from generation to generation. We will work towards regaining what was lost, preserving what is important and passing lessons on to our youth, while we prepare for tomorrow – based on teachings from our past.

STRATEGY 15: DECLARE, REDEFINE, PRESERVE AND MAINTAIN OUR NEHETHO LANGUAGE

Our Cree (Nehetho) language and tradition has been a significant part of who we are since time immemorial. NCN Citizens refer to our presence in North America going back 'Mechemach' Ohchi – to a time that does not have a date. The diversity and long history of our culture will continue to form who we are as a First Nations People. Significant actions must be taken to ensure we preserve and celebrate the blessings of the Creator and the teachings passed on by our ancestors.

To achieve our strategic objectives we must:

- A) Assert to protect and preserve our language to maintain an important link with our past and our history
- B) Standardize and document our written Nehetho (Cree) language to ensure consistency of use (e.g., Cree road/street signs)
- C) Protect and recognize our customary laws, embedded in the values, beliefs and teachings communicated through our language
- D) Ensure our language is a key part of the school curriculum, particularly in the young formative years of our students lives
- E) Encourage our language to be spoken in homes and public locations
- F) Develop, research and use tools, applications and resources to assist with translation and distribution of our written and oral language (i.e., Translation services, Cree keyboards, phonetics software, radio programming, etc.)
- G) Encourage the sharing and knowledge-transfer from Elders to Youth through improved programs
- H) Enhance and create history libraries, museums, artifacts and displays for our NCN history as well as document and record findings and data to form a NCN History archive. Ensure NCN artifacts and records in museums outside of Nelson House are properly handled and credited
- I) Enhance traditional survival-based training and access to canoeing, hunting, trapping, fishing, gathering, summer camps, traditional games, dances, pow wows, jigging, square dancing, arts, crafts.



STRATEGY 16: CREATE PROGRAMS, SERVICES AND PRACTICES THAT ARE CULTURALLY SENSITIVE

To respect our traditions and history, we must work to restore practices of accountability and efficiency that are effectively delivered to meet the diverse Cultural needs of NCN Citizens.

To achieve our strategic objectives we must:

- A) Enhance and evolve programs and services to meet the growing demands for Traditional Food, Ceremony, Camp-outs, Powwows and Festivals
- B) Include cultural aspects in more events, including meet and greets, assemblies, educational and recreational events
- C) Honour and respect our NCN medicine people and traditional/spiritual leaders to embrace their important contributions in our Nation, while encouraging the blessing of receiving additional cultural/medicine/spiritual leaders in the future.



COMMUNICATION, COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND LINKAGES

Our on-reserve community is rapidly expanding and Citizens are increasingly spreading out to diverse locations across Manitoba and Canada. Although our core Citizen base is in Nelson House, Thompson, Leaf Rapids, Winnipeg and Brandon it is important to reach out and inform them as well as other partners, interest groups and governments – while providing a meaningful way to allow open dialogue with our leaders. Internally, within our NCN Government and organizations, we need to also find ways to exchange information with managers to keep everyone on a common path, abreast of opportunities/challenges and versed on current affairs.

STRATEGY 17: BOOST COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION

Nelson House is a small community of connected families, and although spread out over a large area it is critical for Citizens to be involved in the affairs of the Nation, support one another and enlist to help achieve the goals of the Nation. The NCN Government and organizations are also accountable to keep Citizens familiar and involved with Chief and Council's activities.

To achieve our strategic objectives we must:

- A) Improve linkages – where common strategies/objectives are identified or overlap, mechanisms for cross-departmental coordination will “kick in” to institute leveraging of resources and collaborative planning in an effort to achieve optimal results
- B) Increase meaningful participation in NCN service planning based on stated issues and priorities
- C) Increase sharing of information and best practices between Chief and Council, departments, organizations and corporations regarding significant events in the community
- D) Develop a communication strategy
- E) Define Federal and Provincial jurisdiction; increase community awareness and understanding of these roles and responsibilities
- F) Improve elections and the election code
- G) Clearly define Citizenship rules
- H) Enhance and form relationships with other governments, private sector business and non-profit organizations
- I) Improve electronic and print distribution of media for all NCN entities (i.e., website, social media, newsletters, updates and reports)
- J) Optimize the use of NCN Achimowin Radio to inform Citizens and explore feasibility of upgrading the radio station to include cable TV broadcasts, and more online presence
- K) Conduct meaningful community surveys to gain access to public concerns, needs and views
- L) Educate and inform Citizens of process, procedures and protocols



- M) Enhance newsletters to disseminate and get out information more consistently and cost effectively
- N) Conduct a review and analysis to seek recommendation, tender out and select contracted services for NCN high-speed, internet/intranet connections, data bases, emails and website services. Ensure feasible system is setup and maintained. Define and evaluate needs assessment of hardware/software, network administration and service costs/resources required
- O) Assess feasibility of hiring/contracting a Social Media Consultant or communication officer/liaison working in NCN, to evaluate effective methods and maximize communication
- P) Define and circulate a schedule and calendar for Regularly Scheduled Bi-Annual General Assemblies and Community meetings
- Q) Consolidate and update NCN Government website and NCN organizations websites
- R) Assess feasibility of establishing an Advisory Council and *Off-Reserve Strategic Plan*
- S) Ensure meeting minutes and notes for NCN entities and organizations are distributed to Chief and Council to inform them of actions and progress. Explore options to make Council meeting notes/minutes available to the NCN public
- T) Provide visual and narrated Cree DVDs of information and reports to the community. Improve methods for feedback.

USKE PUMENEKEWIN

(LANDS, RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT)

The vision for NCN lands and resource is as follows: “As stewards of the land, and based on the lessons learned from our past, traditional practices and our Elders, we work together as a self-sufficient people to ensure respect of the land, of customary principles and of traditional knowledge. Our strong land governance system allows us to balance our material and spiritual needs, understand the interconnectedness of everything, and ensure the sustainability of our land, culture and people.” NCN will work to ensure strong legal and administrative frameworks are in place for both the Resource Management Area and Reserve Land Base to maximize NCN Land & Resource Development opportunities.

STRATEGY 18: MANAGE, PROTECT, PRESERVE AND MONITOR OUR LANDS AND WATERWAYS WHILE ENHANCING AND TEACHING OUR WAY OF LIFE

The Nation has identified the following three overarching priorities in planning for land use:

1. Priority #1: Managing and Monitoring Our Lands and Water
2. Priority #2: Teaching Our Way of Life
3. Priority #3: Protection and Preservation of Our Land

To achieve our strategic objectives we must:

- A) Strengthen Management and Governance of Reserve Lands through development and ratification of a Land Code
- B) Strengthen Governance of Resource Area by development and Implementation of a Comprehensive Land Use Plan & Resource Management Plans mandated under Article 6 of the 1996 Comprehensive Implementation Agreement (NFA)
- C) Leverage responsible Resource development opportunities by establishing and entrenching a NCN consultation process, policies and procedures to facilitate the Crowns Duty to Consult and Accommodate NCN
- D) Increase reserve lands from obligation(s) owed to NCN under TLE-FA and March 1996 Flood Agreement, identify and maximize new land development market opportunities in and around the city of Thompson
- E) Define NCN Lands and Resources Governance Board formerly known as the Resource Management Board to effectively provide community-based governance in the efficient management of lands and resource operations, reporting, and accountabilities to Chief and Council and community
- F) Review the NCN Lands and Natural Resources Department to define roles and responsibilities, and define accountability
- G) Preserve existing and newly identified historic landmarks, cultural sites, burial grounds and cemeteries and ensure ceremonial sites are accessible to Citizens for the purpose of education and spiritual practice
- H) Incorporate Community-driven Perspectives, Values, and Visions into all aspects of Lands Governance and Resource Management
- I) Ensure that critical governance initiatives are community-driven with Citizen input



Nelson House Resource Management Area



- J) Maximize the efforts and resources identified for land use planning. While all community Citizens have expressed general interest and enthusiasm in pursuing a Land Use Plan, there is still great concern about the resource area shrinking
- K) Define and communicate rights and responsibility over the lands and resources to clearly capture and articulate rights within the NCN Kihche’othasowewin, Land Code and Land Use Plans for both the Resource Management Area and the Reserve Land base
- L) Establish a NCN Consultation Unit to develop and implement a consultation process and policies to ensure that government and industry abide by appropriate standards with informed consent to develop in RMA
- M) Develop and implement a NCN consultation process for all industry and government to follow, according to case law internationally and on Section 35 Consultation and Accommodation
- N) Establish a Strategic Framework to consider all benefits of opportunities in the long-term to allow NCN to take advantage of all aspects of renewable and non-renewable resource development, business, and financial management opportunities, and be prepared to meet the long-term education and training needs of community Citizens
- O) Establish a Land Stewardship Program to Research and Monitor Lands and Resources to improve clarity, consistency and efficiency of the regulatory environment in conjunction with current guidelines implemented by the provincial and federal governments and other regulators
- P) Develop and implement the appropriate technology and information systems to facilitate mapping our land use and culturally sensitive areas in the Resource Area
- Q) Explore feasibility of setting up a complete Graphical Information System (GIS) to ensure all information and data compiled to date, plus all future land use, and RMA information, is centralized, safeguarded and owned by NCN
- R) Finalize TLE selection and settlement with OPCN regarding TLE
- S) Finalize Mystery Lake, Urban Reserve, and land conversion through the NFA Process
- T) Fulfill Manitoba Hydro’s monitoring studies and requirements through to 2020
 - CRD Final License Review (ongoing)
 - Community Engagement
 - Zoning
 - Land law
 - Recruiting

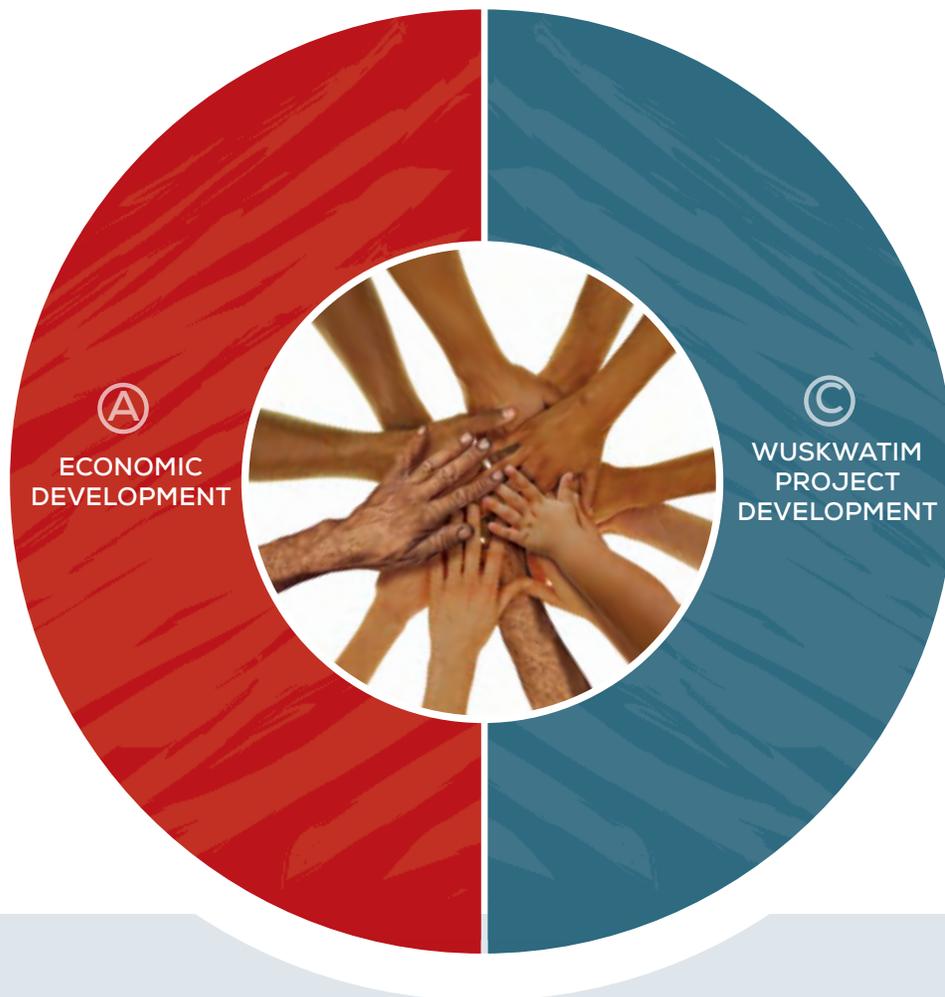


GOAL 3 ENHANCING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Our Northern Manitoba location, reserve status and dependence on natural resources present challenges and opportunities in maintaining and developing a sustainable economy for our people. We have a traditional economy based on fishing, hunting, gathering and trapping that we want to preserve, but it is diminishing in importance. Now our young and growing population seeks new opportunities.

We are working hard to build a sound platform for the future that is good for our land and our people. We will continue to live off the land but in new ways. NCN has made a significant investment in the Wuskwatim Project, as a partner with Manitoba Hydro, but we are also committed to ongoing investment in a diverse range of economic development opportunities including an urban reserve, business, tourism, construction and more.

The key strategy areas identified in the diagram below illustrate the interconnected relationships that are shared between all areas and help to enhance economic development and Wuskwatim Project Development Agreement benefits. Each of these areas in this section of the *Plan* align with the key customary principles and the detailed strategies discussed.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

NCN is committed to generating progress in our economy, through measurable initiatives that will show tangible results. Economic development usually refers to the adoption of new agreement ideas, enhanced technologies, and innovative business developments. We plan to continually transition from traditional modes of revenue to new agreements or business developments that will enhance our economy, while maintaining our principles, vision, values and beliefs. The direct result of an improved economy will be quantified by a general improvement in living standards, opportunities for Citizens and moneys to improve community programs and services.

STRATEGY 19: CREATE A LONG-TERM, STABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND LOCAL ECONOMY TO ENHANCE SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND REDUCE DEPENDENCIES

NCN's economic development will focus on the state of our NCN Governments ability to improve our standard of living by initiating revenue generating, fiscal arrangements and economic opportunities in the public and private sectors. This will include the creation of jobs, the support of innovation and new ideas, the creation of higher wealth, and the creation of an overall improved, sustainable quality of life.

To achieve our strategic objectives we must:

- A) Continue to challenge existing federal and provincial public policies to gain greater NCN control and authorities over Economic Development and Income Assistance funding and programs
- B) Explore revenue/fiscal arrangements in the health sector by community or regional ventures, to help finance a public/private First Nation health care facility that provides services in the following areas: Physician and nursing services for primary, acute and public health care, that maximizes technology and tele-health, full control over Non-insured Health benefits for NCN Citizens including prescription drugs, transportation, optician, and pharmacy
- C) Establish Financial Management Corporations and partner with other First Nation communities to establish revenue-sharing First Nation casinos
- D) Create a NCN Economic Development Fund to leverage dividends and revenues generated from NCN enterprise
- E) Develop natural resources partnership arrangements for resource benefit sharing with the provincial government and/or private sector corporations
- F) Explore partnership arrangements at the ownership level with resource-based companies
- G) Consider alternative energy based development such as Solar, Wind Power, Geothermal, Hydrogen power projects
- H) Form tripartite agreements with other First Nations, the federal and provincial governments to develop increased First Nations access and control over natural resources
- I) Develop a marketing strategy to attract NCN Citizens to shop at NCN businesses through discount of groceries, exemptions for the purchase of fuel and tobacco products and corporate rates at the Mystery Lake Hotel
- J) Diversify NCN's economy and increase revenue to the Nation through:
 - The establishment of a business development fund or a community opportunity growth fund to assist entrepreneurs in obtaining a loan to start their own businesses
 - The development of a casino, golf course expansion in Thompson, gas station on the urban reserve and the establishment of a NCN Investment Group, and
 - A review of more economic development opportunities for future planning
- K) Maximize the use of NCN's existing infrastructure and programs by:
 - Developing marketing plans and strategies for NCN's business ventures. NCN recognizes the potential to be a part of the "Hub of the North"
 - Building on NCN resources, lands, and environmental development
 - Develop land designation of the Mystery Lake property
 - Invest more funds into lands via Treaty Land Entitlement Trust
 - Invest more in Land and Lands Governance
- L) Explore the opportunities and feasibility of balancing the construction of our own houses and workforce with use of ready to move (RTM and ATM) homes to stimulate the NCN economy and use local business/workers.

WUSKWATIM, PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT AND SUPPLEMENT AGREEMENTS

NCN developed the Wuskwatim project in partnership with Manitoba Hydro. Discussions and negotiations leading to the agreement to build Wuskwatim were ongoing for nearly nine years, from 1997 to 2006, and involved consultation with Manitoba Hydro, NCN Citizens, the wider community and other interested parties, as well as government regulators. This development represented the first time in Canada a First Nation entered into an equity partnership with a major public utility. The recent negotiation of the PDA Supplement 1 and 2 in 2015, ensured maximum benefits for NCN given the global economic climates and unforeseen changes since the original PDA was signed.

STRATEGY 20: ENSURING OPTIMAL BENEFITS FOR NCN FROM THE WUSKWATIM PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT AND SUPPLEMENTAL AGREEMENTS

The 10-year process leading to approval of the Wuskwatim Project Development Agreement involved intensive expert negotiations between NCN and Hydro along with comprehensive consultations with NCN Citizens. The negotiation process first produced an Agreement-in-Principle and further negotiations resulted in a Summary of Understanding, which formed the foundation for the final Project Development Agreement. The Agreement provided an equity partnership in the project of up to 33 percent. The project also offers considerable economic benefits to NCN through jobs, training and business opportunities. Through its ownership position, NCN will receive long-term benefits through sustainable income from power sales. Since the finalization of the PDA Supplement and PDA Supplement 2, NCN must continue to ensure maximum returns and benefits for or Citizens moving forward. We will need to continue to monitor the current global and project economic impacts and ensure the Agreement works optimally for both NCN and our partners.

To achieve our strategic objectives we must:

- A) Continue to monitor and evaluate the current agreements to ensure the negotiated benefits for NCN are achieved and tracking as projected
- B) Assess and plan for optimal use of the returns and long-term benefits of the sustainable income from the project
- C) Explore and finalize options for using income/benefits from the project to generate future economic growth, improved programs, services, housing and infrastructure for NCN
- D) Maximize spin-off benefits from the Agreement (i.e. ATEC, jobs and training)
- E) Use skills and training learned to negotiate with other large utilities or resource developers and optimize employment skills for NCN Citizens that are transferable to other complex resource development projects
- F) Maximize the use of compensation payments for adverse-affects from the project in the Taskinigahp Trust and Nisichawayasihk Trust through investment income
- G) Evaluate and monitor NCN's investment in Hydro Bonds for when they mature.
- H) Explore options for changing or amalgamating Trusts



GOAL 4 IMPROVING FINANCE ADMINISTRATION AND CAPITAL

Finance and administration play a unique role within the NCN Government. These departments are responsible for providing leadership across public services on the financial and economic implications of our policy decisions. They also oversee the management and control of finances and ensure appropriate use of public funds by providing centralized shared services to other NCN departments or organizations. Administration manages economic analysis, statistical services, compensation and benefits, internal audit services and payment processing.

NCN will work towards improving financial, fiscal and economic operations for the Nation, and strive to achieve the priorities outlined within this document. Finances will be evaluated annually through an annual performance reporting process and be made available to the public.

The key strategy areas identified in the diagram below illustrate the interconnected relationships that are shared between all areas and help to enhance finance, administration and capital. Each of these areas in this section of the *Plan* align with the key customary principles and the detailed strategies discussed.



FINANCE

NCN Finance authorities and management ensure public funds are prudently managed so that sufficient financial resources are available to provide NCN Citizens with programs and services that meet standards, while at the same time maintaining a healthy financial position and balance within our trusts, business revenues and funding provisions.

STRATEGY 21: PROVIDE SOUND FISCAL AND FINANCIAL PLANNING, ADVICE, ANALYSIS AND COORDINATION IN SUPPORT OF INFORMED POLICY AND DECISION-MAKING

NCN's finances depend on informed decisions and responsible management of our revenues and expenses.

To achieve our strategic objectives we must:

- A) Practice open, accountable and fiscally responsible government and advance strategic corporate initiatives through interdepartmental or inter-organizational cooperation
- B) Develop and administer effective financial management frameworks in which departments and corporations can administer their budgets with appropriate independence and accountability
- C) Standardize annual reporting for each organization, finalize NCN finance bylaw and update finance policies
- D) Attract, develop and engage talented financial services people to continue to provide service to the public
- E) Provide reporting and updates to Citizens in a timely manner annually or semi-annually
- F) Explore systems and technologies to improve administrative tasks
- G) Improve reporting and implement policies that require communication by Chief and Council, departments, organizations and corporations regarding planning, budgeting and expenditures
- H) Ensure timely reporting to governments for AANDC and other finances.
- I) Ensure/enhance training, apprenticeships or work placement programs for financial persons or accountants to address shortage in NCN
- J) Reduce deficits in key areas
- K) Explore processes and systems to automate and transfer social assistance and record keeping to electronic
- L) Centralize and consolidate finances and coordinate consistent methods for audits and financial reporting.



ADMINISTRATION

The administration of our operations will be required to run efficiently and effectively to ensure proper management and reporting of finances are handled accordingly. Technological developments will continue to influence governance, service delivery and public expectations. In an age of global connectivity Citizens increasingly expect government to deliver services online and to enable public engagement. At the same time, Citizens are concerned about the protection of their personal information. The NCN Government is operating in an environment of rapid change from a developing economy, evolving governance and social structures, and social/organizational change. These changes will have significant implications for the activities of NCN.

STRATEGY 22: ENSURE EFFECTIVE AND RESPONSIBLE ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS

Administrative practices and effective admin functions are important to the operations of all NCN run organizations departments and entities to ensure the proper function of day-to day operations and management.

To achieve our strategic objectives we must:

- A) Automate more functions online and invest in technology – Administration costs can be reduced by moving to more online platforms and automating functions can minimize traditionally labor-driven expenses
- B) Explore options for Citizens to use credits or receive discounts if they are SA clients when purchasing local products/services via prepaid Visas and e-transactions
- C) Work to improve efficiencies in staffing and management by exploring ways to delegate responsibilities and maximize productivity through staffing, systems and organizational structure
- D) Improve and enhance feedback mechanisms – Effective feedback build staff and Citizen confidence in the administrative processes and in administrative decision-making. And such confidence on the part of program staff will lead to greater compliance and excellence
- E) Performing ongoing assessment – By evaluating results, and adapting plans and services we will work to improve outcomes
- F) Balance support and control – Administrative functions are often about finding the right balance between support and finding the controls necessary to promote ethical, accurate and prudent behavior by those in the Nation. Finding and maintaining the proper balance requires vigilance and continuous dialogue among the leadership and between administrative, program staff and Citizens.
- G) Ensure “quality control”– Accountability and standards and policies are being adhered to by all organizations and departments is designed with the intention of improving practice. The “quality assurance” process can improve outcomes and ensure plans and reporting functions are being embraced by leadership, staff and management
- H) Develop effective administrative policies and functions – Documenting procedures, job descriptions and policies is an ongoing function to ensure effective administration.
- I) Update and centralize information management systems for reporting and provide database of skilled workforce
- J) Organize, digitize and scan archive of assets, facilities and archived documents
- K) Review overall security, structure and organization of filing system
- L) Explore options for new administration facility to improve operational work flow, access, security and safety
- M) Provide/improve employee orientation, job descriptions and on-job training for all staff.



HUMAN RESOURCES

A skilled and educated workforce or base of qualified-volunteer support is essential to all organizations' day-to-day operations and future growth. NCN Organizations and departments like NCN HR, ATEC and the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation Education Authority continue to work to improve the skills, knowledge and capability of our NCN Citizens. Preferential hiring systems and policies help our Citizens fill positions before searching for supports outside the community. Providing a competent workforce is critical for the progress of our self-sufficient NCN Government. Our recent Multi-year Planning Survey identified education and training as the most important concern for our population.

STRATEGY 23: TRAIN, RECRUIT AND ENLIST COMPETENT WORKFORCE AND VOLUNTEERS

The responsibility for workforce development has typically been placed on the government's and public schools. In the days of our ancestors informal learning took place at home. Today, schools, training and the employer are required to create a responsible, well-trained workforce.

Workforce development often takes a more holistic approach, addressing issues such as matching jobs to skills, connecting Citizens to suitable jobs and ensuring workplaces and benefits are suitable to expectations. Programs to train workers are often part of a network of other human service or community opportunities.

To achieve our strategic objectives we must:

- A) Connect with partners outside of the community such as MFNERC, school divisions, universities, colleges and Council for post-secondary education to develop a campaign to encourage interested elementary and high school students to enter professional careers (i.e., career fairs, roles models, elective courses, technical or vocational training taught in community, apprenticeships or workplace training)
- B) Design culturally respectful education programs that are more supportive of NCN students, their families and community as well as their realities and responsibilities. Supports need to focus on recruitment and retention for post-secondary education, apprenticeships or on-the-job training
- C) Explore options for giving priority to post-secondary education (PSE) support for services needed in the community, and to enter into

contracts with PSE students to return to their home community for a number of years upon graduation and provide these services

- D) Increase the NCN human resource workforce pool to include physicians; legal practitioners; dentists; registered nurses or licensed practical nurses; 'Para-health' professionals (i.e., mental health workers, psychologists, lab/ultrasound/x-ray technicians/dietitians/nutritionists/physiotherapists/occupational health specialists); Information technology and information/record managers; senior managers and chartered accountants
- E) Review the feasibility and effectiveness of standardizing/centralizing the management of hiring, job postings, benefits, pay scale and other HR related roles
- F) Provide and improve safe and supportive work environments, which offer a high standard of professional development with competitive recruitment and retention incentives
- G) Provide supports for apprenticeships/mentorships with traditional healers
- H) Build community capacity in the management and administration of NCN programs and services
- I) Actively recruit volunteers to involve youth and elders
- J) Take full advantage and enhance utilization of ATEC training and employment, connect with industry sectors (e.g., Vale) and enhance mentorships/apprenticeship programs.

STRATEGY 24: ADMINISTERING PROFICIENT, CAPABLE HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

NCN's Human Resource Management (HRM) is designed to maximize employee performance and perform actions outlined in the strategic objectives. HRM is primarily concerned with the management of people within our NCN Government and organizations and focuses on policies and systems.

To achieve our strategic objectives we must:

- A) Develop partnerships between NCN, government and academic institutions to negotiate for NCN seat designation and avoid long admission waiting lists (as outlined in the 10-year Human Resource Strategy)
- B) Create recruitment and retention incentives/initiatives for employed professionals, while planning for future development and growth
- C) Strategize with Federal, Provincial, and institution partners to:
 - Provide safe work environments, as regulated under the Workplace Health & Safety Act (e.g., WHMIS, 24-hour Security)
 - Provide professional development, continuing education and life-long learning
 - Take steps to reduce personal and professional isolation and improve physical, social and emotional health for workers
- Improve wage parity between NCN Government and non-government professionals, para-professionals and support personnel.
- Enhance Local Employee Assistance Program
- D) Provide Human Resource Management support to the Nation (i.e., program and personnel policies and job descriptions)
- E) Identify learning needs of community-based workers, explore training approaches and enhance partnerships with academic institutions to develop effective and efficient training approaches to meet identified needs (e.g., training for health leadership)
- F) Improve HMR by enhancing compensation, policies, job opportunities, implementing performance reviews, recruitment guidelines and offering staff recognition.

CAPITAL

NCN's capital is determined by our wealth in the form of monies or other assets our organizations own. Capital also includes the funds available through our investment decisions. Managing the capital for our First Nation must be done effectively to ensure our wealth is optimized and leveraged, while reducing risk and recognizing potential pitfalls in the economy, markets or other risk factors.

STRATEGY 25: GROW AND ENHANCE THE MANAGEMENT OF CAPITAL ASSETS

NCN's growth in capital has helped achieve improved wealth, however we must continue to improve our capital and develop viable assets for our Nation while growing our returns on investments.

To achieve our strategic objectives we must:

- A)** Continue to build on and record capital assets inventory as part of the auditing process.
- B)** Explore options to have a person/department specifically assigned to centralize capital management and planning (i.e. Deficit manager, maintenance manager, fleet or lease manager)
- C)** Improve tendering processes and management for purchasing equipment and assets
- D)** Maintain a comprehensive list and records of capital assets and requests for capital funds
- E)** Develop a Capital plan that prioritizes the conditions of capital assets
- F)** Establish a Replacement Reserve Fund and operational and building maintenance management model/plan
- G)** Link capital more directly with economic development to leverage opportunities.



NEXT STEPS?

Chief and Council and the Strategic Planning committee will work to engage in meaningful participation and feedback with management, organizations and NCN Citizens. We will continue with developing the work/ action plan(s) as part of the planning process and report periodically on progress and achievements, while continually assessing and adapting our plans to meet the needs of our Nation and Citizens.

The following pages outline how the next steps will be rolled out – moving forward into the next phase of the process.

NEXT STEPS, IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN, MONITORING AND MEASURING OUTCOMES

Chief and Council, management and the Strategic Planning committee have ultimate responsibility for directing the activity outlined in this Plan, ensuring it is well run and delivering the outcomes for which it has been set up.

This *Plan* will be moved forward by:

- Setting the strategic direction and implementation plan to guide and direct the activities for NCN (*A proposed sample of a Detailed Implementation Plan for two strategies is provided at the back of this document and aligns with the appropriate strategies. Additional action and implementation plans may be required for each strategy, as required*)
- Ensuring the effective management of the organization and its activities
- Monitoring the activities to ensure we are in keeping with the founding principles, goals and strategies.

Resourcing and Implementing the Strategic/Action Plan

Chief and Council, management, the Strategic Planning Committee and those involved in the planning process must take into account the resource and funding implications of the plans. They must review what is possible within the Organization's available resources and where or how additional resources could be procured. This will also highlight gaps in resources such as people required, equipment, or facilities, as well as financial limitations.

Agreeing and Consensus and Assigning Work/Operational/DIP Plans

The operational plan outlines the day-to-day program of work based on the aims and

practices of the strategic plan. It is also referred to a "work plan" or "detailed implementation plan." This is reviewed and agreed upon annually or periodically. The details of the operational plan are linked to each objective in the Strategic Plan and will provide information on:

- What will be done next
- Who is responsible
- How it will be done
- What resources will be required:
 - Human – volunteers, staff, users, management
 - Physical – premises, location, equipment
 - Financial – budget estimate of costs
- What success will look like or what targets should be reached and how will it be tracked
- What the estimated timeframe will be.

Ensuring Appropriate Systems and Structures

NCN Government, departments and organization will need to ensure that the necessary structures are in place to facilitate the implementation of its aims and objectives. The structures include the roles within it, the rules, procedures and policies, and management framework. They will define who is accountable, to whom and for what.

NCN may need to plan for changes and developments in its existing structure as a result of its future priorities and aims.

This may involve reviewing:

- How staff, volunteers and management are organized and what their responsibilities are
- Resources such as funds, equipment and facilities
- Training requirements or workshops (if needed).

Tracking, Monitoring and Reporting

In addition to reviewing NCN's *Strategic Plan* each year, NCN Government will track progress through various methods, to adapt and revise the plan as necessary. This will ensure the plan is current, relevant to the current concern areas and provide a way to measure successes, accomplishments and achievements. It will also provide a tool for reporting and communicating to our Citizens. Trackable items may include, but are not limited to reporting on:

- Employee recruitment and retention
- Governance laws and policies
- Ensuring NCN businesses and Corporations are making a profit and are accountable, creating jobs where applicable and providing reports where required
- Heritage, language and traditions are being preserved and maintained
- Housing situation is improving
- Citizens are healthy and fit and enjoying recreational activities
- Government is working toward being fully self-sufficient.



SAMPLE: DETAILED IMPLEMENTATION PLAN WORKSHEET

(Please note: For discussion purposes only. Not actual Detailed Implementation Plan.)

The following DIP Action worksheets are intended only as samples to facilitate understanding and assist with framing up the implementation Plan. Actual actions, costs, timeframes, responsibilities, resource allocations and deliverables, may or may not be required/defined as part of the Phase Two: Detailed Implementation Process. The Implementation Plan is intended to support NCN in defining specific actions required to achieve the defined goals and strategies identified in this *Strategic Plan*.

STRATEGY 2: UPDATE AND IMPROVE OUR KIHCHE'OTHASOWEWIN

DIP

DETAILED IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND ACTIONS

PRIORITY: ★★★★★

RESOURCES REQUIRED: ★★★★★

ESTIMATED COSTS: ★★★★★

ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME: MEDIUM TERM

- ➔ **ACTIVITIES/ACTION:** Examine and evaluate other constitutional models including Constitutions from other First Nations tribes in the United States and different countries
- ➔ **ACTIVITIES/ACTION:** Obtain feedback during this final Round of Consultation
- ➔ **ACTIVITIES/ACTION:** Revise the Kihche'othasowewin as necessary based on the Feedback (e.g., remove section 6.4 Council Reports from Constitution)
- ➔ **ACTIVITIES/ACTION:** Provide copies of the final draft Kihche'othasowewin to NCN Citizens with an explanation of any changes
- ➔ **ACTIVITIES/ACTION:** Arrange for a vote to be held to approve the Kihche'othasowewin
- ➔ **ACTIVITIES/ACTION:** Begin developing NCN Laws

- ➔ **ACTIVITIES/ACTION:** Conduct an environmental scan of NCN Government operations so changes can be made to improve governance in accordance with the Kihche'othasowewin and feedback from NCN Citizens
- ➔ **ACTIVITIES/ACTION:** Discuss and implement the recommendations from the environmental scan
- ➔ **ACTIVITIES/ACTION:** Initiate self-government negotiations with other levels of government.

- Deliverables: To be determined
- Resources: Pending review
- Costs: To be determined
- Responsibilities: To be determined
- Evaluation/Measure – did we meet the objective and how will it be measured: Reporting to be determined.

STRATEGY 14: ENSURING THE SAFETY AND WELL-BEING OF NCN CITIZENS

DIP DETAILED IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND ACTIONS

PRIORITY: ★★★★★
 RESOURCES REQUIRED: ★★★★★
 ESTIMATED COSTS: ★★★★★
 ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME: SHORT TO MEDIUM TERM

Short-term (within 1 year)

- ➔ **ACTIVITY/ACTION:** Establish community-level health committee to ensure that community controlled health and social services work together to deliver a coordinated system towards achieving community objectives.
- ➔ **ACTIVITY/ACTION:** Support and build community capacity to conduct community needs assessments to determine needs and priority areas (population health approach) and appropriate responses.
- ➔ **ACTIVITY/ACTION:** Support and build community capacity to address identified needs/priorities utilizing community development approaches.
- ➔ **ACTIVITY/ACTION:** Explore a Traditional Healer program to ensure access to traditional healers and medicines.

Medium-term (1-5 years)

- ➔ **ACTIVITY/ACTION:** Work with governments to develop comprehensive social and health care systems that include the following elements:
 - Community based primary and public health care including clinical services (management of chronic and communicable disease, acute care and emergency care, illness prevention services, immunization, prenatal care, screening programs and environmental health)
 - A Five Year Plan For Action Health & Wellness Strategy
 - Programs that promote positive health benefits (prenatal care, nutrition, physical activity, emotional security and social belonging)
- Sustainability of personal care home funding and services facilitate work on a licensing body for personal care homes on-reserve
- Ensure NCN has meaningful representation and participation in RHA planning and decision-making.

- Deliverables: To be determined
- Resources: Pending review
- Costs: To be determined
- Responsibilities: To be determined
- Evaluation/Measure – did we meet the objective and how will it be measured: Reporting to be determined.



Guiding Our Path to a Brighter Future



Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation

General Delivery

Nelson House, Manitoba R0B 1A0

Phone: (204) 484-2332

Fax: (204) 484-2392

www.ncncree.com