

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS ECONOMIC ORGANIZATIONS SPEARHEAD FIRST NATIONS PROCUREMENT ORGANIZATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Ottawa, Ontario - Five national Indigenous economic organizations have banded together with full support of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to create a first of its kind, First Nations Procurement Organization (FNPO).

The organizations gathered on December 6, 2023, to establish this groundbreaking initiative to help First Nations peoples and businesses overcome systemic barriers in accessing federal procurement opportunities. The FNPO will also help ensure Canada meets its minimum five percent Indigenous procurement target by measuring progress and data.

The federal government spends approximately \$22 billion every year procuring goods and services from businesses across Canada. Currently, less than one percent of that spend goes towards Indigenous businesses.

The FNPO brings together organizations and leadership from within the First Nations economic landscape from coast to coast to coast. With support from AFN, the group includes [AFOA Canada](#), the Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers ([CANDO](#)), First Nations Finance Authority ([FNFA](#)), First Nations Financial Management Board ([FMB](#)), and the National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association ([NACCA](#)).

This historic collaboration of founding members can now begin the journey of design and the ultimate implementation of programming to foster self-sustainability among First Nations communities across Canada. The launch of the organization is fully endorsed and supported by a resolution passed by First Nations elected leaders at the Assembly of First Nations General Assembly in July 2023. The FNPO is championed by a united coalition of First Nation partner organizations, representing an unprecedented alliance aimed at igniting transformative change. With unwavering dedication, the FNPO is poised to become a catalyst for monumental change in the procurement ecosystem and economic growth within First Nation communities.

“This initiative embodies a beacon of hope, symbolizing the collective strength and determination of First Nations representatives united in their resolve to bridge the economic disparities that have long persisted,” says NACCA CEO Shannin Metatawabin. “The FNPO stands as a testament to Indigenous ingenuity and resilience, paving the way towards a future where economic parity and prosperity are realized by First Nations, fostering a landscape of opportunity across Canada.”

First Nations businesses showcase resilience in navigating barriers while striving to engage fully in procurement opportunities. These entrepreneurs encounter systemic biases embedded within the existing procurement ecosystem and to be successful in bidding opportunities, must overcome multi-faceted administrative challenges, and seek enhanced tools empowering them to address intricate government requests.

“Government procurement is designed to be risk-averse, which means that it’s hard for companies to win contracts unless they have historically worked with the government,” said Jean Vincent, chair of the NACCA Board of Directors. We know this excludes many First Nations businesses and we know it makes meeting the five percent procurement target challenging. However, through this organization, and by working together collaboratively for the good of the First Nations economy, we know we will create huge impacts that benefit everyone.

Structure and design are the priority for the FNPO, and the organization will work directly with the federal government to secure funding for the first five years of operation. Once operational, the process of supporting First Nations businesses to participate in procurement opportunities will begin.

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Media Contact:

Joël Lamoureux
Communications Manager
NACCA
jlamoureux@nacca.ca

QUOTES

AFOA CANADA - “Through the establishment of this Indigenous Procurement Organization, we are not just shaping an economic landscape; we are honoring the principles of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.” says Terry Goodtrack, President, and CEO, AFOA Canada. “ We are creating a culturally relevant Indigenous Institution that paves the way for Indigenous peoples to participate in the economic opportunities in Canada”

Terry Goodtrack, President/CEO, AFOA Canada

FNFA – “The creation of the First Nations Procurement Organization is an important step towards gaining traction to meet the five per cent procurement target, set by the federal government, with an achievement date of 2030. As First Nations businesses begin to meaningfully participate in the procurement process, our hope is that First Nation communities across Canada experience monumental growth that improves the quality of lives of Indigenous Peoples.”

Ernie Daniels, President and CEO, First Nations Finance Authority

FMB – “We are pleased to see a new First Nations Procurement Organization take shape. Many Indigenous organizations are collaborating to improve economic opportunities for First Nations across Canada. Increasing and strengthening procurement opportunities is a step on the pathway toward economic reconciliation.”

Harold Calla, Executive Chair, First Nations Financial Management Board

About the FNPO

Innovative Membership Model

The founding members envision an innovative membership model for FNPO where potential purchasers—including government and corporations—pay fees to access essential services and business databases. Certified First Nation businesses will be able to register at no cost. FNPOs revenue streams will include corporate memberships, training, and events.

FNPOs Mission and Vision:

The FNPO will serve as a central hub, offering culturally appropriate wraparound services via a single point of contact for First Nation procurement needs. Its mission is clear: maximize the potential for First Nations' businesses to successfully access and win procurement opportunities through certification, networking, education, and promotion.

This mission will also enable the federal government to reach its minimum five (5) percent Indigenous procurement target.

Membership Structure and Streams of Services:

FNPOs membership structure will prioritize free services for certified First Nations businesses, while government and corporate clients will pay a membership fee. The institute will offer four streams of services:

- **First Nation Business Certification and Directory:** A comprehensive database for the federal government and companies to access all certified First Nations businesses and suppliers.
- **Networking, Collaboration, and Partnerships:** Creating space and opportunity for networking and relationship building, allowing First Nations businesses to foster connections with both government and corporations.
- **Educational Services and Training:** Building capacity and understanding of complex government procurement processes.
- **Promotion of First Nation Procurement:** Advocacy, events, and tools to foster mutually beneficial relationships.