A scenic sunset over a body of water with a wooden canoe in the foreground. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm glow over the scene. The canoe is in the foreground, and the water reflects the sunset. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue.

*Strengthening our Nation through  
community success - Mawi'lukutik*

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw  
Nation Economic  
Development Strategy

# P'JILASI

On *Mi'kmaq Treaty Day*, October 1, 2008, the 13 First Nations in Nova Scotia (herein referred to as the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Nation) proclaimed and asserted Mi'kmaq Nationhood, one voice, one people over its traditional lands and waters working towards the betterment of the overall well-being and quality of life for our people. As a Mi'kmaq Nation we are commonly bound together by our *culture, traditions, values, and language*, strengthened and empowered by our commitment towards Nationhood.

In recognition of the importance of this proclamation and in asserting a Nationhood approach to economic development we, as the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia, have developed the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Economic Development Strategy. This Strategy is built on the principles of our Seven Sacred Teachings, a foundation for the Aboriginal and Mi'kmaq way of life<sup>1</sup> rooted and built around the seven natural laws, or sacred teachings. Each teaching honours one of the basic virtues intrinsic to a full and healthy life.<sup>2</sup>



## LOVE

- Good governance practices and law
- Healthy relationships, communities and Nation
- Visionary



## WISDOM

- Understanding the benefits of working as a Nation
- Grow and explore new avenues
- Sustain a healthy Nation through working together as one



## RESPECT

- Caretakers of the Nation
- Build mutually beneficial relationships and partnerships
- Create a successful and sustainable Nation



## HUMILITY

- Equality
- Strength and perseverance
- Respect for the Nation



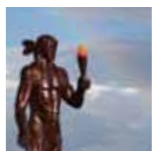
## COURAGE

- Understanding boundaries
- Protectors of the Nation
- Challenge to broach new horizons



## TRUTH

- Promoting change
- Preserving culture and language
- Preserving consistent laws and focus



## HONESTY

- Power and control
- Ownership and responsibility
- Be true to the Mi'kmaq spirit, teachings and values

Through the celebration and support of the successes of our communities, building on our strengths to work together as a Nation we, the Mi'kmaq people of Nova Scotia, are *"Setting a Pathway to Prosperity"* for our communities, our nation, our home.

1 - Dorene Bernard, IRS Legacy Coordinator, Mi'kmawey Debert Cultural Centre Project

2 - The Sharing Circle: [http://www.thesharingcircle.com/sacred\\_teachings.html](http://www.thesharingcircle.com/sacred_teachings.html), accessed July 2013





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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In preparation for the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Nation Economic Development Strategy (herein referred to as the "*Strategy*"), an Economic Base Study was completed to provide background, input and guidance for the Strategy. The Economic Base Study contains extensive best practice and industry research, and incorporates information gathered from a number of engagement sessions. As part of this engagement, a number of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Chiefs, Nova Scotia Aboriginal and Mi'kmaw Organization Executive Directors and key staff members were interviewed to collect thoughts and opinions for the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Nation's (herein referred to as the Nation) Strategy and potential next steps to continue to strengthen and build the Nation.

The Economic Base Study is a background document for the Strategy and its goal is to provide an overview of existing support in the Nation and offer details that communities and organizations can use to create their own strategies to work toward a nation-driven approach to economic development. It is also intended to identify gaps within communities, Aboriginal and Mi'kmaq support organizations and in the Nation, as a whole. In addition, it provides an analysis of what can be completed to continue the success of the Nation.

Moving forward, it is intended that the Economic Base Study be utilized as a resource document to provide additional context for the Strategy, as required, and it will provide additional information for a variety of audiences.

The Strategy is focused on the five-year period, 2014-2019; however, the achievements made during this time will provide continued success beyond that timeframe and will continue to build the strength of the Nation.





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Five priorities were established for this strategy. The purpose of the priorities is to complement the Vision and direct all activities, which are conducted as part of the Strategy.

### **CAPACITY**

Assess and identify the economic readiness and capability of each community and the Nation to develop, implement and manage economic development opportunities. Working with communities to identify what success means to each and to create action plans in order to increase capacity. Establishing strong operational plans and practices, transparency in decisions and direction, accountability and sound financial management will create a path to success.

### **PLANNING**

Develop and implement a plan to generate and build an understanding of the benefit of working as a Nation, develop meaningful and mutually beneficial partnerships, and lay the groundwork to develop the proper partnerships and business development opportunities for long-term benefit.

### **PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

Seize opportunities and create meaningful and beneficial partnerships through new business development and diversification, business agreements, community revenue and development, skills and capacity, meaningful employment and social well-being within the Nation.

### **LANDS AND ASSETS**

Strive to ensure the Nation continues to invest in and preserve the Mi'kmaw culture, language and connection to the land and its resources. Develop the Nation's people to increase skills



**CAPACITY**

**PLANNING**

**PARTNERSHIP  
DEVELOPMENT**

**LANDS AND  
ASSETS**

**NATION DRIVEN -  
COMMUNITY LED**

and employment while developing strong leaders and promoting life-long and cultural learning is essential to reach the Nation's goals. In addition, through the further expansion and development of land and other physical assets, the Nation will be provided with the avenues and additional tools which will be leveraged for economic development opportunities.

### **NATION DRIVEN - COMMUNITY LED**

Owning the future by establishing clarified roles and responsibilities between communities, the Nation and support organizations and by revitalizing a culture of participation through prosperous individuals, communities and the Nation.

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The following are the goals and associated objectives for the Strategy. The objectives provide the Strategy with the “action-able” elements required to achieve each goal and will allow for the progress of the Strategy to be measured on an ongoing basis.

● **GOAL 1: IDENTIFY ECONOMIC READINESS (COMMUNITY AND NATION)**

Identify baseline of readiness, gaps and actions in communities, support organizations and the Nation

● **GOAL 2: PARTNERSHIP, PROMOTION AND NATION BUILDING (PLANNING)**

Develop a plan and message to generate and build an understanding of the benefits of working as a Nation

Evaluate and understand the benefits of partnerships

Communicate and promote the message in order to help build relationships

Create a framework and support structures for developing meaningful partnerships in preparation for partnership development

Create a plan for business development

● **GOAL 3: BUILD STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIPS (IMPLEMENTING)**

Promote messages to generate and build an understanding of the benefits of working as a Nation and communicate the link between community and Nation internally in each community and the Nation and externally to potential partners

Generate new businesses and diversification opportunities

Create relationships and/or partnerships

● **GOAL 4: LINK ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ENDEAVOURS TO TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT**

Create relationships with employers, industry, and training providers

Create a plan to assist with the social aspects of economic transition

Create Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw skills and partnership agreements

Develop mentorship programs and support

Develop meaningful partnerships with other companies, departments and support organizations

● **GOAL 5: ASSET DEVELOPMENT AS A NATION**

Develop people (human resources)

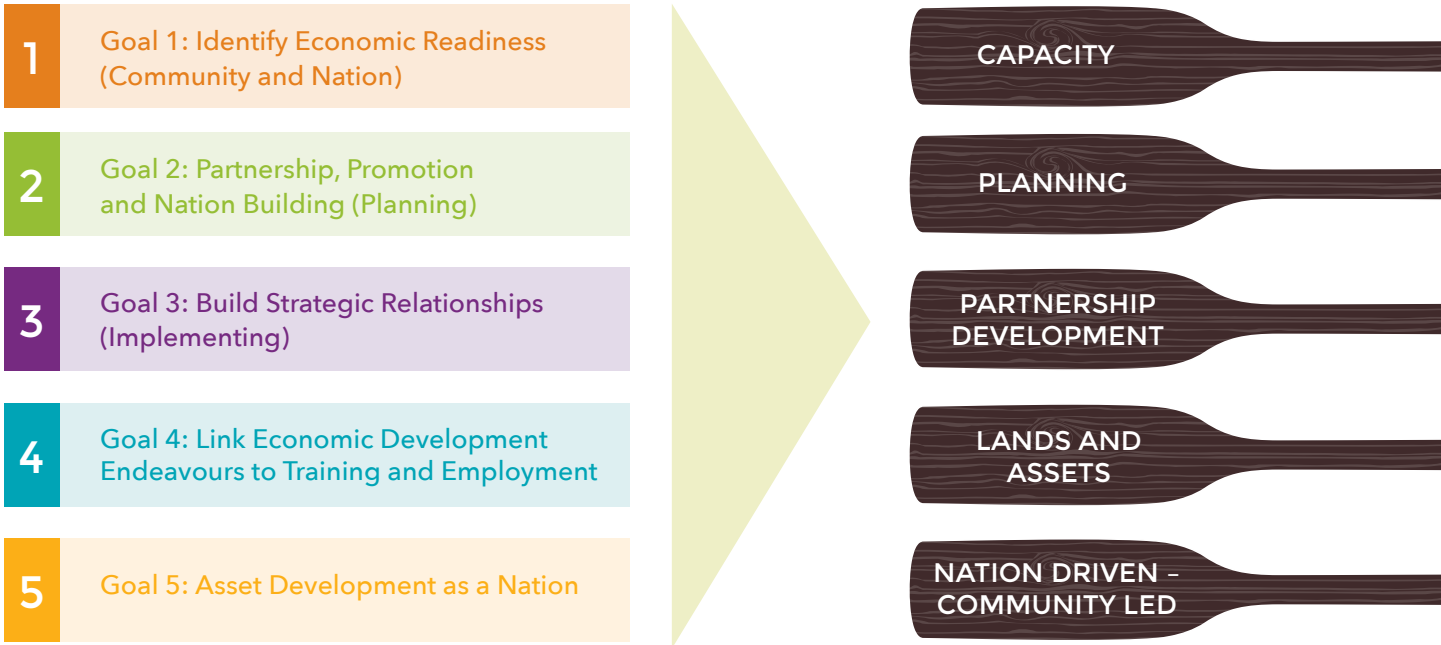
Develop land and physical assets



Interviews and research completed in the Economic Base Study identified six common gaps throughout the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Nation which are potential barriers to economic development.



A gap analysis identified the activities which will be implemented to close the gaps and achieve the priorities and goals throughout the term of the strategy and beyond.



The summary of next steps for implementation, to close the gaps, is outlined in relation to the goals:







Buy-in is needed for the Nation to implement all of the next steps and to achieve its goals. Partnership development is key to that success; however, levels of economic readiness, for both the individual communities and the Nation, must be determined prior to partnership development. The Nation must first establish its capacity in terms of the initial baseline analysis and community economic development capacity as this capacity will influence the Nation's ability to form new partnerships. Planning is necessary when clearly outlining the Nation's needs in terms of partnerships, and communication is essential for representing the "state of the Nation" to potential partners. Planning, communication, business development,

training and employment will ensure that partnerships align and that all of the recommended next steps fulfill the Strategy's priorities, goals and objectives.

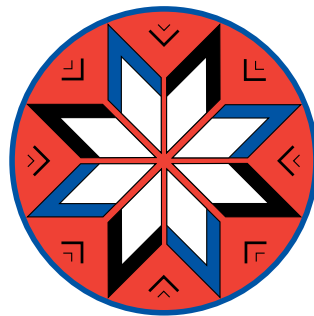
Creating success for the Nation and for Nova Scotia is only possible when all stakeholders work together. Success will come when everyone works toward the same goals and objectives and through collaboration and partnership.

Nationhood and the nation-building approach understands that Nations are challenged not only with improving community life, but with preserving the culture and well-being of communities. Therefore, the building and implementation of a solid plan will allow our Nation to work through the challenges and help to strengthen the foundation for the Nation. To make this Strategic plan a reality, community staff and leaders will be engaged and will be accountable for supporting the execution of the Strategic plan.

Communities that work together as a Nation with a collective voice have increased economic opportunities and capacity. Working together as one unified Nation will help to increase the likelihood of success and will achieve the desired results, which include: improved Nation and community well-being, strength in the Nation's governance and increased negotiation power, have the ability to leverage the strengths of our Nations' people, land, assets and spending dollars to have a Nation which is rich with long-term revenue generation, meaningful employment, increased education and skill levels, while gaining additional support from all current and future stakeholders.

*Together we will make this happen. Together we will succeed.*

The development of the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Economic Development Strategy  
was led by the Tripartite Forum Economic Development Working Committee



Mi'kmaq • Nova Scotia • Canada  
**TRIPARTITE FORUM**