



**First Nations
Infrastructure Institute**
Institut des infrastructures
des Premières Nations

Briefing Note: First Nations Infrastructure Institute

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Indigenous infrastructure outcomes are very poor under the current approach. The literature, studies and media reports demonstrate that Indigenous infrastructure assets take longer to develop, cost more, and have shorter operational lifecycles than comparable infrastructure developed by other governments. First Nations are facing an infrastructure gap in the hundreds of billions of dollars and the current approach will take far too long to close this gap. The current approach is unsustainable and First Nations and Indigenous organizations expect and deserve better results.

The First Nations Infrastructure Institute (FNII) is an Indigenous-led institution that supports those Nations and Indigenous organizations that choose to work with it to develop their infrastructure projects in a faster, more cost-effective, and sustainable manner. FNII offers a menu of capacity support services, based on national and international best practices, to meet Nations and Indigenous organizations under their current circumstances. Depending on their existing capacities and expertise, interested Nations and Indigenous organizations may utilize FNII tools, skills, and processes to efficiently and effectively plan, develop, procure, implement, operate, maintain, and manage their infrastructure projects.

FNII was established as a fourth institution under the *First Nations Fiscal Management Act* (FMA) in June 2023, joining the First Nations Financial Management Board, the First Nations Tax Commission, and the First Nations Finance Authority. FNII tools and services have been designed to function seamlessly with these existing institutions and complement their existing services.

First Nations participating in the FMA are getting better access to capital, more fiscal powers, and better financial management systems. As a result, participating Nations are growing their economies and improving socio-economic outcomes within their communities. The FMA institutions have made these improvements by helping to implement best practices, standards, templates, and training related to financial management, fiscal powers and financing. FNII takes a similar approach with infrastructure. Interested Nations and Indigenous organizations may choose to use FNII services to implement best practices and standards for infrastructure planning and project identification, business case development, procurement, design and construction, operation and maintenance, and asset management. This will reduce the time to plan and develop infrastructure and extend the expected useful life of that infrastructure.

In addition to a number of areas of interoperability with the FMA institutions, there are also partnerships and working relationships with regional Indigenous organizations currently supporting infrastructure development and operations in different parts of the country.

FNII uses a business case approach and service delivery model through which a number of infrastructure innovations can be implemented, including:

- Project identification and planning processes that respond to the Nation's objectives, priorities and vision or the Indigenous organization's strategies and goals;
- Project definition and optimization processes that support the development of infrastructure projects that serve both community and economic purposes, where appropriate;
- Project development processes that utilize procurement options that are well-suited to the project and community, and that more appropriately distribute risks;
- Project financial planning processes that utilize whole-of-life costing from identification and planning to decommissioning or replacement for all expected capital, operations and maintenance, and asset rehabilitation costs; and
- Project financial planning and modeling processes that identify sufficient funding sources and revenues streams to ensure long-term asset sustainability, allocate costs in an equitable manner to those who benefit from the infrastructure, and utilize financing options where appropriate to ensure optimal timing of revenues and project expenditures.

FNII has a funding model similar to FMB and FNTC, which allows it to offer its services at no cost to participating Nations and Indigenous organizations. Beyond providing capacity support services on specific individual projects, FNII will also perform other functions, including:

- Collect, analyze, and distribute statistical data and information related to infrastructure to facilitate research, improve capacity support services, and support better decision-making;
- Function as a centre of excellence and repository of information on sustainable Indigenous infrastructure development;
- Provide advice to the federal government on the development and implementation of systems to support sustainable infrastructure development;
- Conduct policy research and evaluative services on the development of fiscal frameworks to support sustainable infrastructure development;
- Provide support to develop and assist in the implementation of new approaches to stable, effective, and efficient long-term infrastructure funding and financing;

- Establish and maintain a roster of trusted contractors by area of professional expertise, asset type experience, operating region, and familiarity with FNII processes and standards; and
- Provide public education and training respecting different aspects of infrastructure and sustainable infrastructure development.

FNII works with many Nations and Indigenous organizations by providing capacity support services to ensure their projects are well-planned, supported by sound business cases, and backed by effective risk management strategies; thereby ensuring these Indigenous projects are positioned as well as or better than any other infrastructure project planned by any other government.