Nunavut Economic Forum
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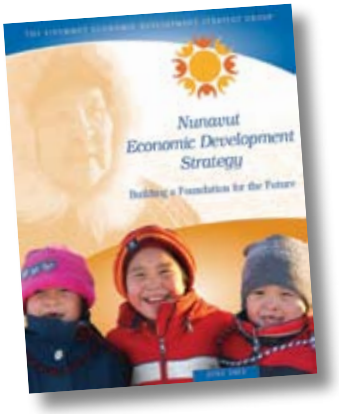
Nunavunmi Pivalliarnirmut Katimaniq
Forum économique du Nunavut



About the Nunavut Economic Forum

The Nunavut Economic Forum (NEF) is a broad group of member organizations created to identify and share information to support strategic planning for Nunavut's economic development. The primary focus is for members to collaborate in the implementation of the Nunavut Economic Development Strategy (the Strategy), each within their own area of activity and expertise.

The Strategy is a comprehensive, modern and open approach to development, and is unique in Canada. Subtitled "Building a Foundation for the Future", it takes a broad view of economic development, identifying issues related to the land, people and communities in addition to more traditional economic concerns. Released in September of 2003, it sets Nunavut's goal as the attainment of a high and sustainable quality of life defined by income and material well being and such things as health status, education levels, cultural identity, civic engagement and political and economic freedoms.

The Strategy has a ten-year timeframe and the recommendations established a new path for organizations throughout Nunavut to follow in addressing the territory's challenges. The recommendations aim to effect change in one of four priority areas: Our Land; Our People; Our Community Economies; and the Territorial Economy.

The role and objectives of the NEF are described in the Strategy and include:

- Sharing information between members
- Supporting research and data collection related to Nunavut's economy
- Coordinating economic planning
- Promoting and integrating program initiatives
- Fostering co-operation between agencies involved in economic developing programs
- Promoting Inuit participation in developing Nunavut's economy
- Increasing participation of Nunavut communities in economic development plans, programs and opportunities
- To monitor and report on our progress in achieving the commitments agreed to in the Strategy
- Work within our own organizations to implement the commitments made in the Strategy
- Share information on spending on economic development, in order to avoid duplication and wherever possible, to enhance the sum of our individual efforts

Strategic investments in Nunavut's economic development

In 2004, the NEF established an advisory role with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada during the initial stages of establishing the Strategic Investments in Northern Economic Development (SINED) program. As part of this advisory role, the NEF produced Qanijijuq (Preparing for the Journey). This document was prepared in response to questions posed by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada regarding Nunavut's economic development challenges and potential. It was formally presented to The Honourable Ethel Blondin-Andrew, Minister of State for Northern Development, and Nancy Karetak-Lindell, MP for Nunavut, in September of 2004. These efforts helped to ensure that funding allocations under SINED would be made in accordance with the development priorities as defined in the Strategy.

In 2005, the NEF contributed to, reviewed and endorsed the Nunavut Investment Plan, which was developed by the Nunavut Regional Office of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, in collaboration with sector representatives, and based on the Strategy. This plan is used as a guide for approving funding proposals submitted under the SINED program, and focuses on key sectors for Nunavut's

economic development: fisheries, mining, cultural industries and tourism; as well as providing investments in community and organizational capacity building and cross-cutting infrastructure such as broadband. The NEF continues to work with the Nunavut Regional Office of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada to review the plan on an annual basis.

The NEF has just completed a discussion paper entitled Qanijijuq II (the Journey Continues). Building on previous work, this paper forms the basis for discussion on the federal SINED program and the need to extend the program beyond its current termination date of March 31, 2009. This document will be released and presented to federal government officials in conjunction with the 2008 Northern Lights Trade Show and Conference in Ottawa.

The Executive Director of the NEF also participates as part of a review committee that evaluates project proposals and makes recommendations to the Minister of Economic Development & Transportation for funding under the Government of Nunavut's Strategic Investments Program. The objective of this participation is to help ensure that funded projects contribute to the implementation of the Strategy.

Measuring progress

In October 2005, the NEF released the 2005 Update to the Nunavut Economic Outlook (Outlook). This document is a companion to previous Outlooks produced by the Conference Board of Canada in 2001 and 2002. During this year, the NEF will produce the 2008 Update to the Nunavut Economic Outlook. This update will be the fourth in the series that has helped inform decision makers on issues related to Nunavut's economic development since 2001. The NEF will contract the firm Impact Economics, whose principal was senior economist with the Conference Board when the original Outlook was developed. Impact Economics also prepared the 2005 Outlook.

The 2008 Outlook will be an excellent analytical tool to help measure our progress in implementing the Strategy and to help us prepare for the Sivummut III Economic Development Conference planned for the fall of 2008. This will be an important milestone event as we come together to assess our progress and evaluate our priorities for Nunavut's economic growth.

In May 2006, the NEF released the 2005 Progress Review of the Nunavut Economic Development Strategy. This was the first comprehensive progress report related to the implementation of the Strategy, and was prepared through the collection and compilation of data related to the specific action items in the Strategy. This was achieved through workshops, submissions from NEF members and other research efforts. The final report includes activity details, recommendations for lead and support roles for implementation and a review of key findings and observations from the review process.

A voice for Nunavummiut

In response to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance for pre-budget consultations on the theme "The Tax System the Country Needs for a Prosperous Future", the NEF has made a submission on the Northern Residents Tax Deduction (NRTD). The submission advocates for an increase to the NRTD based on the cumulative impacts of inflation since it was introduced in 1987. The submission also discusses the need for the Government of Canada to consider the NRTD within the broader context of northern economic development. It includes recommendations for the NRTD to be enhanced in order to provide greater benefits for lower income earners, to address the high cost of living and to provide an equitable tax burden for northerners who receive the enhanced compensation necessary to attract and retain skilled labour. A presentation summarizing the written submission was also made to the Standing Committee on November 29, 2007. The submission has received the support of Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut.

For further information, visit our website at www.nunavuteconomicforum.ca or contact:

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