

Requests to Federal Agencies and Departments for the Regional Assessment in the Ring of Fire Area from the Regional Assessment Working Group – Package 1

Date: September 25, 2025

Guidance

Please submit responses by **October 31, 2025** via email sent to regionalrof-cdfregionale@iaac-aeic.gc.ca. If you need more time to respond, please provide a progress update by the deadline.

Table 1 below lists all general and targeted requests developed by Regional Assessment Working Group (“Working Group”). The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada has identified recipients by relevance to the topic of the requests. In case any were missed, we encourage all federal departments or agencies that are part of the federal review team to read all requests and respond if you have relevant expertise. If you have already provided the requested information in a previous submission, you may simplify your response by including a reference instead of repeating the information.

The Working Group encourages you to respond in **plain language**, and, where appropriate, to presenting information in graphic formats in addition to text.

Context

The federal review team has provided the Working Group with information to support the Regional Assessment process, such as past and ongoing programs, expertise, funding and other references to relevant initiatives. This information was shared via Federal Authority Advice Records (FAARs) received in March and September 2025, presentations provided on June 4 and 5, 2025, and some via response to the Public Call for Information.

In certain instances, the federal review team made references to initiatives (funding, projects, programs) to which they contribute or collaborate in with other parties, such as academia, industry, other jurisdictions (provincial, municipal), and non-governmental organizations. The Working Group would like to obtain more detail to better understand all projects and initiatives currently underway in the Ring of Fire Area and draw upon the available expertise that is relevant to the assessment priorities listed in section 7.5 of the [Terms of Reference](#). The Working Group is developing an inventory of the programs and initiatives relevant its assessment priorities. Understanding these as well as the various roles and responsibilities from all relevant parties will help the Working Group draft the interim and final reports, including to fulfil the requirement of its [Terms of Reference](#) to formulate recommendations to appropriate entities.

References

- Presentations to Regional Assessment Working Group ([CIAR 186](#))
- Federal Authority Advice Records (FAARs) and other submissions:
 - Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) ([CIAR 179](#))
 - Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) ([CIAR 169](#)),
 - Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) ([CIAR 170](#)),
 - Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario (FedNor) ([CIAR 173](#)),
 - Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) ([CIAR 167](#)),
 - Health Canada ([CIAR 180](#)),
 - Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) ([CIAR 177](#)),
 - Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) ([CIAR 178](#)),
 - Transport Canada ([CIAR 176](#)),
 - Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE) ([CIAR 166](#)),
 - Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) ([CIAR 195](#)),
 - Library and Archives Canada (LAC) ([CIAR 197](#)),
 - Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada (HICC) (CIAR pending),
 - Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) (CIAR pending),
 - Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) ([CIAR 196](#)),
 - Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED) (CIAR pending),
 - Statistics Canada (CIAR pending)
- Call for Information and Data ([CIAR 191](#))

Table 1. Overview – List of Requests and Targeted Recipients

Federal agencies and departments are invited to provide responses to all requests for which they have relevant expertise. The Table below identifies who the Working Group believes might have relevant expertise to contribute, without limiting who can respond.

#	Request	AAFC	GIRNAC	CMHC	ECDC	ESDC	FEDNOR	DFO	Health Canada	HICC	ISED	ISC	LAC	NRCAN	Parks Canada	PHAC	Statistics Canada	Transport Canada	WAGE
1	Projects and Initiatives relevant for the Ring of Fire Area	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2	Priority topics identified by the Working Group – Information and Gaps	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
3	Critical Minerals Strategy – Economics				X						X			X					
4	River systems – Scale of studies, existing information and gaps				X			X						X				X	
5	Community wellbeing, Education, Training and Employment					X	X		X			X							X
6	Health Inequity								X							X			
7	Homelands and Reservations, and Housing			X								X							
8	Species at Risk						X					X							
9	Protected Areas				X			X							X				
10	Federal Initiative on Consultation		X																
11	Bird Conservation Strategy				X														
12	Treaty Rights and Wildlife Management		X		X			X				X							
13	Cumulative Effects Assessments				X														
14	Capacity-building						X					X							
15	Education and literacy											X							
16	Food Security and Nutrition	X										X							

Commented [M(1)]: corrected the question intended for FedNor.

#	Request	AAFC	CIRNAC	CMHC	ECCC	ESDC	FEDNOR	DFO	Health Canada	HICC	ISED	ISC	LAC	NRCAN	Parks Canada	PHAC	Statistics Canada	Transport Canada	WAGE
17	Language Revival and Cultural Heritage											X	X						
18	Development Scenarios																	X	
19	Feasibility of development in this area				X						X			X				X	

Table 2. Requests to Federal Agencies and Departments

#	Targeted recipient(s)	Topic	Request																									
1	All	Projects and Initiatives relevant for the Ring of Fire Area	<p>a) Provide a list of the projects and initiatives in which you are involved in that relate to the Ring of Fire Assessment Area. For each item, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Project name, description and timeframe ii. Lead organization iii. Other collaborators iv. Your role v. Geographic location (include maps if available) <p>b) Explain if and how Indigenous Nations and communities in the Ring of Fire Area collaborated in these projects and initiatives. Would you be willing to give a public presentation about any of these initiatives to the working group, and if so which ones?</p>																									
			<p>a) FedNor has invested in many projects in the Ring of Fire region which support community economic development, diversification, job creation. In particular, FedNor has contributed to First Nation led projects that build capacity, improve planning, build assets or infrastructure that help leverage opportunities from key economic sectors, such as mining and forestry, etc. Where FedNor may not be able to provide funding to all projects, it still plays a role in providing support through its role as a pathfinder and a convenor.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Lead organization/Recipient</th> <th>Project name, description and timeframe</th> <th>Geographic location</th> <th>FedNor Funding (approved funding unless otherwise noted)</th> <th>Other Collaborators</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2829602 Ontario Inc.</td> <td>This project seeks to build and/or enhance capacity to Webequie First Nation (WFN) and Marten Falls First Nation (MFFN) to carry out existing planning, economic development and negotiations capacity related to opportunities associated with Ring of Fire. Project duration 2025-04-01-2027-03-31</td> <td>THUNDER BAY</td> <td>500,000</td> <td>Province</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Nokiiwin Tribal Council Inc.</td> <td>Comprehensive Community Planning. To support the development, updating, and implementation of comprehensive community plans for Nokiiwin Tribal Council's member communities. Project duration 2025-01-01- 2027-12-31</td> <td>THUNDER BAY</td> <td>583,854</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Chi Mino Ozhitoowin General Partner Inc</td> <td>Engagement and Business Manager. Support for a business manager to identify and develop economic opportunities in the region including those associated with the Waasigan transmission line project. Project duration 2024-09-01- 2025-08-31</td> <td>THUNDER BAY</td> <td>165,200</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment & Training Services</td> <td>Matawa Communities- Discovery House Training & Strategic implementation to benefit from Ring of Fire. Project duration 2022-09-01- 2024-12-31</td> <td>THUNDER BAY</td> <td>850,320</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Lead organization/Recipient	Project name, description and timeframe	Geographic location	FedNor Funding (approved funding unless otherwise noted)	Other Collaborators	2829602 Ontario Inc.	This project seeks to build and/or enhance capacity to Webequie First Nation (WFN) and Marten Falls First Nation (MFFN) to carry out existing planning, economic development and negotiations capacity related to opportunities associated with Ring of Fire. Project duration 2025-04-01-2027-03-31	THUNDER BAY	500,000	Province	Nokiiwin Tribal Council Inc.	Comprehensive Community Planning. To support the development, updating, and implementation of comprehensive community plans for Nokiiwin Tribal Council's member communities. Project duration 2025-01-01- 2027-12-31	THUNDER BAY	583,854		Chi Mino Ozhitoowin General Partner Inc	Engagement and Business Manager. Support for a business manager to identify and develop economic opportunities in the region including those associated with the Waasigan transmission line project. Project duration 2024-09-01- 2025-08-31	THUNDER BAY	165,200		Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment & Training Services	Matawa Communities- Discovery House Training & Strategic implementation to benefit from Ring of Fire. Project duration 2022-09-01- 2024-12-31	THUNDER BAY	850,320	
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			<p>b) FedNor meets with First Nation communities regularly to discuss current and new projects. Projects are led by the communities or through a collaboration where multiple communities or a tribal council seeks project support on behalf of communities.</p> <p>c) Yes, FedNor would be willing to present on its project supports, in particular, it could present on the Comprehensive Community Planning (CCP) project through Nishnawbe Aski Development Fund (NADF) that was supported from 2018-2025. The NADF project provided technical and capacity development support to remote First Nations in Northern Ontario to successfully undertake and complete their Comprehensive Community Planning process. These complete CCP projects help position these communities to develop and realize full economic benefits from resource development opportunities such as the Ring of Fire.</p>										
2	All	Priority topics identified by the Working Group – Information and Gaps	<p>In the Call for Information and Data, the Working Group identified key priorities for information gathering and gap identification at this time. Table 3 reflects these key priorities.</p> <p>Referring to the priorities and issues listed in Table 3, based on your expertise, provide advice on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> the best sources of existing data, including means to access it, adequate spatial and temporal boundaries to assess impacts, key indicators to describe potential impacts, known data gaps or uncertainties, and <p>suggestions for studies or other ways to fill those gaps.</p>										
			<p>a) Best Sources of Existing Data</p> <p>FedNor collects project-based data to track how its investments and activities help diversify communities, nurture and grow innovative businesses, and support Indigenous economic reconciliation and equity-deserving groups across Northern Ontario.</p> <p>FedNor relies on its access to key external data sources to supports its results reporting. Some of these key external sources include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statistics Canada – <i>Indigenous Business and Community Statistics Portal, Census Profile (2021 & 2016), Labour Force Survey, Business Counts, Supply and Use Tables, Survey on Financing and Growth of Small and Medium Enterprises (SFGSMEs), and Trade Data Online</i> (open.canada.ca). Business Data Lab (Canadian Chamber of Commerce) – National and regional dashboards on SME performance and business confidence. Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) – <i>Job Vacancy and Wage Survey</i> and <i>Labour Market Information</i> datasets (quarterly updates). 										

- Community Data Program (CDP) – CSD-level socio-economic indicators for Northern Ontario communities, including population, income, education, employment, occupation, and housing conditions.
- Natural Resources Canada & Mining Association of Canada – Data on Indigenous employment and procurement in mining.
- National Indigenous Economic Development Board (NIEDB) – *Economic Reconciliation: Growing Canada’s Economy (2024)*.

b) Adequate Spatial and Temporal Boundaries

FedNor’s programming footprint covers all Northern Ontario; however, analysis relevant to a particulate region, such as the Ring of Fire, is best conducted at the Community or Census Subdivision (CSD) level.

c) Key Indicators to Describe Potential Impacts

FedNor’s project-based results may include impacts in areas such as:

- Community Readiness and Capacity
 - Number of Indigenous-led Comprehensive Community Plans completed.
 - Number of communities supported through FedNor-funded Economic Development Officers (CIINO stream).
- Employment and Skills Development
 - Jobs created or maintained through FedNor-funded initiatives.
- Business Development and Investment Leverage
 - Number of businesses created, maintained, expanded or modernized as a direct result of FedNor project activities.
 - Private and public investment leveraged per FedNor dollar.
 - Percentage of FedNor-assisted entities that are majority-owned or majority-led by underrepresented groups

d) Known Data Gaps and Uncertainties

Known data gaps:

- Limited data availability and data suppression in northern and remote regions
- FedNor project and program-level data record project outputs but not disaggregated socio-economic results

e) Suggestions for Studies or Ways to Fill Gaps

Economic and community development data can be used to illustrate how federal investments, Indigenous entrepreneurship, and training initiatives build local readiness and resilience. When integrated with complementary datasets, such as from Statistics Canada, National Indigenous Economic Development Board, and Employment and Social Development Canada, there is opportunity provide the foundation for evidence-based analysis of social and economic conditions in the Ring of Fire region.

Note on Prosperity and Growth Strategy for Northern Ontario (PGSNO) Results Framework

			<p>FedNor is currently finalizing the <i>Prosperity and Growth Strategy for Northern Ontario (PGSNO) 2025–2030 Results Framework</i>. Once finalized, this framework will provide a standardized set of regional and sectoral performance indicators to measure progress toward key outcomes such as economic diversification, Indigenous economic participation, business scale-up, and infrastructure readiness.</p> <p>These indicators are to establish a consistent baseline for tracking community well-being and economic development across Northern Ontario. FedNor would be pleased to share these indicators with the Working Group once approved, to support ongoing data harmonization and performance measurement.</p>
3	ECCC, ISED, and NRCan	Critical Minerals Strategy – Economics and Valuation	<p>The Working Group requires information to better understand how industry and governments estimate potential benefits from critical mineral development.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Describe and explain the choice of methods used in federal reporting to estimate economic benefits related to mining critical minerals in the Ring of Fire Area. b) Share any information you have about how financial revenues from mining in the Ring of Fire might flow to various parties, such as who would benefit at local, regional, national, and international scales. In addition, or if this information is not available, please recommend: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. existing case studies that could be used as examples, and ii. sources of expertise within or outside government that could be approached by the Working Group to provide this information. <p>Explain if and how the federal government has conducted studies to value potentially impacted ecosystem goods and services in comparison to projected revenues from critical minerals mining.</p>
4	DFO, ECCC, Transport Canada, and NRCan	River systems – Scale of studies, existing information and gaps	<p>The Working Group is interested in baseline studies and analyses of potential impacts at a river-system scale related to geochemistry, hydrogeology, hydrology, water quality and quantify, fish and aquatic wildlife, and navigability.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Identify existing studies at the spatial scale of the major river systems in the Ring of Fire Assessment Area, i.e.: Abitibi River, Attawapiskat River, Ekwana River, Kenogami River, Mattagami River, Missinabi River, Moose River, the Lower and Upper Albany Rivers, and the Winisk River. b) If this information does not exist, advise on how it would be possible to obtain portraits of these river systems, including if there are plans underway to conduct these studies. c) Based on your experience in project-level impact assessments, advise whether there are standard mitigation measures that may be applicable to protect the water systems in the Ring of Fire assessment area from potential impacts for development activities in general. <p>Include a discussion of the key sources of uncertainty unique to this assessment area related to the effectiveness of these measures, and what your role might be in reducing these uncertainties.</p>
5	Health Canada, ISC, ISC-FNIHB, ESDC, FedNor, WAGE	Community wellbeing, Education, Training and Employment	<p>The Working Group is interested to know federal programs and initiatives related to community wellbeing, education, training, and employment are specifically helpful to meet the needs of communities in the assessment area.</p> <p>The Working Group also identified that groups that have the greatest potential to benefit from potential employment opportunities are often those facing challenges that are barriers to access employment opportunities (e.g. mental health, inter-generational trauma, drugs, and long-term healing programs).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Identify whether and how your programs and initiatives related to community wellbeing, education, training, and employment are focused on addressing needs of communities in the assessment area. Include lessons learned and best practices from your agency’s or department’s experience in implementing such programs and initiatives. b) Specifically address how programs can work towards improving level of literacy and bring specialized skills training to remote communities. c) Explain how your programs and initiatives offer support specifically for vulnerable populations to access benefits of potential development. Provide examples relevant to the assessment area. <p>If applicable, explain and illustrate the various collaborations and partnership required to carry out these programs and initiatives.</p>

			<p>a) FedNor is the Government of Canada’s economic development organization for Northern Ontario. Through its programs and services, and through its financial support of projects that lead to job creation and economic growth, FedNor works with businesses and community partners to build a stronger Northern Ontario. This mandate is not directly tied to community wellbeing, education and training, but through its focus on job creation and economic growth, there is an understanding of how there is impact when considered through a holistic view of community development. FedNor funding is complementary and not duplicative of other federal funding, therefore projects that are focused on direct education or training are not considered. However, some projects have a training component related to implementing an economic opportunity or related to improving entrepreneurial or business skills, and could result in impacts that lead to employment-related training outcomes.</p> <p>b) FedNor programming does not improve levels of literacy. However, FedNor programming supports the capacity building of businesses and communities through investments in projects that include specialized skill development essential to the successful implementation and sustainability of indigenous led projects. For example, where FedNor may fund a new piece of equipment, training on that equipment is potentially eligible. Where FedNor may fund the establishment of new community infrastructure, training to operate and maintain the asset is potentially eligible.</p> <p>c) Recognizing the unique challenges facing Northern Ontario communities, many of which are small, rural and remote, FedNor will target its support to help them create the conditions necessary for economic growth and development. For example, FedNor has supported a number of projects to develop community capacity and strategic or business planning to ensure rural and remote communities are positioned to be able to identify and prioritize emerging economic opportunities.</p> <p>As noted, FedNor’s mandate is focused on support of projects that lead to job creation and economic growth, but with its role as a convenor and pathfinder, FedNor can be part of discussions on community well-being, education, training and employment. Where appropriate, FedNor can work collaboratively with federal, provincial and other partners to support projects that can contribute more broadly to communities.</p>
6	Health Canada, PHAC	Health Inequity	<p>a) Provide key findings specific to the partnered First Nations of the Working Group of health inequality data and information produced by the Pan-Canadian Health Inequalities Reporting Initiative for First Nations in Canada.</p> <p>Describe existing or planned programs or initiatives to address health inequality in these communities, including sources of uncertainty for health reporting and recommendations on how to reduce this uncertainty.</p>
7	ISC, CMHC, HICC	Homelands and Reservations, and Housing	<p>a) Share what you know about housing and infrastructure trends in the assessment area, such as rates of overcrowding, waitlists for adequate housing, housing in need of repair, and housing deficits.</p> <p>b) Describe the federal initiatives that support housing for community members in the assessment area, and elaborate on the future of these initiatives.</p> <p>c) Identify all mechanisms available to communities in the assessment area to expand their reserves to address growing populations and infrastructure demands related to potential development (not limited to the Addition to Reserve process).</p> <p>Based on your experience, share lessons learned and best practices on how Indigenous communities can enhance use of their homelands to build local capacity while also enhancing local economic activities (including traditional activities).</p>
8	DFO and ECCC	Species at Risk	<p>a) Provide summaries of knowledge on species at risk and their habitat in the assessment area, including but not limited to threats, mitigation options, and knowledge gaps.</p> <p>b) Comment on how Indigenous knowledge is braided in this knowledge.</p> <p>Identify any plans for conservation and protection measures focused on the species at risk in the assessment area.</p>
9	DFO, ECCC and Parks Canada	Protected Areas	<p>a) Provide an overview of the various conservation and protection measures and that could contribute to protection of sensitive areas in the assessment area. Include a description of their purpose, how they complement each other, the lead organisations, and current and future priorities related to the assessment area.</p>

			For each measure, identify how federal agencies and departments achieve conservation and protections goals in partnership with other organizations, including First Nations and environmental groups.
10	CIRNAC	Federal Initiative on Consultation	a) Describe the Federal Initiative on Consultation, focusing on how it may be relevant for potential studies related to potential development in the assessment area. Provide an update on the program's current funding status and plans to renew funding.
11	ECCC	Bird Conservation Strategy	a) Please summarize the key findings from the Bird Conservation Strategies that overlap with the assessment area as they related to recommended conservation and protection measures. Describe how various parties have a role in the implementations of the conservation strategies, with a focus on the assessment area.
12	ISC, ISC-FNIHB, CIRNA, ECCC, DFO	Treaty Rights and Wildlife Management	a) Explain whether and how you obtain information about non-Indigenous land users on traditional territories for hunting, fishing, and harvesting purposes without consent. b) Explain whether and how this information factors into federal responsibilities related to: i. protection of wildlife and their habitat; and documenting and any action relate to protection of Aboriginal and Treaty Rights.
13	ECCC and NRCan	Cumulative Effects Assessments	a) Identify programs and initiatives related to describing or quantifying cumulative effects within the assessment area. For each, summarize the focus of the assessment, the approach used to assess cumulative effects, key assumptions and limitations, and any key findings to date as well as future plans to continue or conduct new studies.
14	FedNor	Capacity-building	a) Describe the Prosperity and Growth Strategy for Northern Ontario, the Regional Economic Growth through Innovation program, the Northern Ontario Development Program, the Community Futures Program, and the Economic Development Initiative and how your can facilitate participation by communities in the assessment areas. Identify known barriers for participation in these initiatives by Indigenous communities in the assessment area, and potential solutions to address them.
			<p>a)</p> <p><u>PROSPERITY AND GROWTH STRATEGY FOR NORTHERN ONTARIO 2025-2030</u></p> <p>BACKGROUND</p> <p>The Prosperity and Growth Strategy for Northern Ontario (PGSNO) is led by the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario (FedNor) and reflects a whole-of-government approach to catalyze strong economic development in the region. Launched in 2018, the PGSNO recognizes the importance of place-based solutions to address the specific needs and challenges faced by residents, communities, and businesses in Northern Ontario. In 2024-2025, FedNor initiated a refresh of the strategy to reflect a changing economic landscape.</p> <p>In early 2024, FedNor released a progress report that detailed progress, identified ongoing challenges and areas needing further attention and public engagement. From July to October 2024, FedNor hosted public engagement sessions and produced a What We Heard Report detailing stakeholder feedback The PGSNO refresh is based on these consultations.</p> <p>INTENDED OUTCOMES</p> <p>The PGSNO encourages greater regional collaboration, working closely with the province, municipalities and Indigenous Peoples. It supports projects that address the needs of Northern Ontario, enabling regional stakeholders to leverage the abundance of economic opportunities and create new partnerships on a national and global scale. Overall, the strategy aims to create high-paying jobs for generations to come by facilitating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stronger, more diverse communities better equipped to seize opportunities. • Increased employment and labour market participation. • Increased trade, exports and expanded access to new markets. • Enhanced business growth and greater access to capital.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater innovation across the region to accelerate business growth. • More businesses developing and adopting technologies.
			<p>Each of the following economic development programs offer support to Northern Ontario communities to grow their economies and create jobs. Through outreach and promotion of programming, communities and business can work with FedNor Initiatives Officers to navigate eligibility and application processes.</p> <p>In addition to its efforts through its funding vehicles, FedNor is strongly focused on outreach and collaboration efforts that engage community leaders and stakeholders to better meet the current and future needs of Northern Ontario. FedNor does this by identifying and actively leading/participating in important files including the Ring of Fire mining development – considered a multi-generational mining opportunity that could re-shape Northern Ontario's economy – as well as by collaborating with our federal partners to ensure Northerners have full access to the wide slate of programs and services offered by the Government of Canada.</p>
			<p><u>NORTHERN ONTARIO DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (NODP)</u></p> <p>Through its Northern Ontario Development Program, FedNor invests in projects led by municipalities, First Nations, and other organizations and institutions that support community economic development, diversification, job creation and self-reliant communities in Northern Ontario.</p> <p>The following funding streams are currently available:</p> <p><u>Community Economic Development in Northern Ontario</u></p> <p>Recognizing the unique challenges facing Northern Ontario communities, many of which are small, rural and remote, FedNor targets its support to help them create the conditions necessary for economic growth and development. This includes investments in projects such as strategic community and business planning, strengthening of communities' industrial and business assets, implementation of priority initiatives, as well as support for youth internships.</p> <p><u>Business Growth and Competitiveness in Northern Ontario</u></p> <p>Fostering economic growth and increased competitiveness of Northern Ontario's businesses by working with community and industry stakeholders to invest in projects that improve productivity, reach new markets, facilitate access to capital, foster investment, encourage entrepreneurship and cultivate industry collaboration.</p> <p><u>Community Investment Initiative for Northern Ontario (CIINO)</u></p> <p>Funding is available for small communities or First Nations to hire a qualified individual to help develop the local economy. This economic development professional will work to foster opportunities and partnerships in your region, and help implement strategies that seek to strengthen your community and create jobs.</p>
			<p><u>REGIONAL ECONOMIC GROWTH THROUGH INNOVATION (REGI)</u></p> <p>Entrepreneurs can access REGI to help invest in innovative projects to scale up a business in Northern Ontario. REGI has core funding streams and can include temporary funding priorities. The following funding streams are currently available.</p> <p>CORE</p> <p><u>Business Scale-up and Productivity in Northern Ontario</u></p> <p>Funding offered under this program stream helps businesses at various stages of development, including high-growth firms, to accelerate growth and adopt innovative technologies that support scale-up, commercialization, productivity and market expansion to become more competitive globally.</p> <p><u>Regional innovation ecosystems</u></p> <p>Funding under this program stream helps create, grow and develop strong and inclusive regional networks that support business growth and innovation. This will foster the entrepreneurial environment necessary for more innovative regional economies and increase the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (SME). In part, this stream will seek to further enhance business support networks for under-represented groups—including women, Indigenous (First Nation/Métis/Inuit) Peoples and young entrepreneurs—promoting their entrepreneurial talent.</p>

		<p><u>Targeted Manufacturing Initiative for Northern Ontario – Operational Assessments and Productivity Improvements</u> Northern Ontario manufacturers looking to boost their productivity, increase sales and exports, and create jobs can find the support they need through FedNor's Targeted Manufacturing Initiative for Northern Ontario.</p> <p>TEMPORARY</p> <p><u>Regional Homebuilding Innovation Initiative for Northern Ontario</u> Funding under this program is supporting new approaches for building houses, including designing and upscaling modular homes, the use of 3D printing, mass timber construction, panelized construction, as well as implementing net-zero and climate resilient homebuilding practices. This initiative is available from April 12, 2024 to March 31, 2026.</p> <p><u>Regional Artificial Intelligence Initiative (RAII) for Northern Ontario</u> Funding under this program is to bring new technologies to market and help accelerate AI adoption in critical sectors, such as agriculture, health sciences, manufacturing, mining and forestry in Northern Ontario. This initiative is available from April 16, 2024 to March 31, 2029.</p> <p><u>Regional Tariff Response Initiative</u> The Regional Tariff Response Initiative aims to support tariff impacted small and medium-sized enterprises and sectors to boost productivity, catalyze growth, and diversify markets, through projects that can be executed successfully within the timeframe of this initiative (between March 21, 2025 and March 31, 2028).</p>
		<p><u>COMMUNITY FUTURES PROGRAM</u></p> <p>Through its Community Futures Program (CFP), FedNor supports 24 Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs) located in Northern Ontario. Of these, 3 are Indigenous-led organizations who provide targeting services and programming.</p> <p><u>Wakenagun CFDC</u> <u>Waubetek Business DC</u> <u>Nishnawbe Aski Development Fund</u></p>
		<p><u>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE (EDI) IN NORTHERN ONTARIO</u></p> <p>In Northern Ontario, the Economic Development Initiative provides funding for projects that encourage economic growth in the region's Francophone communities and that capitalize on economic opportunities made possible through the use of both official languages. The initiative is intended to enhance the economic vitality of Northern Ontario's official language minority communities– the Francophone community - and enhance the region's competitiveness.</p>
		<p>b) FedNor understands that some general barriers may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community capacity challenges in areas such as general project development/management/coordination, financial management, community engagement, and technical expertise - Administrative burden from the requirements of the project administration life cycle (e.g. application, proposal development, claims and reporting) - Growing costs of projects and gaps in the available funding envelopes - Existing infrastructure gaps in Northern and remote regions, such as access to reliable energy sources and broadband. <p>Where appropriate, the FedNor Programs may provide support to assist with these barriers, such as through project funding toward hiring additional human resources or supporting the cost of professional or technical expertise.</p>

			<p>As the federal economic development lead for Northern Ontario, FedNor will promote the approach outlined in the Prosperity and Growth Strategy for Northern Ontario, stating that solutions should be Indigenous-led, adequately resourced, and include partnerships between Indigenous communities, governments, and the private sector. Sustained commitment to reconciliation and systemic change is essential for lasting impact. The following efforts are highlighted as commitments in the strategy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ensure Indigenous-led economic development is a central component of all FedNor initiatives. ii. Greater regional collaboration, working closely with the province, municipalities and Indigenous Peoples. iii. Financial support will be provided to develop community plans, hire economic development officers, project managers, and technical experts. Efforts will also include advocacy, pathfinding and advancing partnerships to connect communities to regional opportunities iv. Through FedNor's Northern Ontario Development Program, the Government of Canada will fund projects led by municipalities, First Nations, and other organizations and institutions that support community economic development, diversification, job creation and self-reliant communities in Northern Ontario. By investing in building the economic development capacity of municipalities and First Nations, communities will be better positioned to attract new business investment, create jobs and stimulate local economic growth. v. Work with regional stakeholders across Northern Ontario build economic capacity and catalyse projects of regional and national significance, ensuring that communities, including First Nations and small, rural and remote communities, have the planning and expertise needed to seize economic opportunities and diversify the local economy. vi. Efforts made to better connect local First Nation communities in the region to opportunities offered by Indigenous-led national organizations. This includes financing, expertise, and networking opportunities provided by the First Nations Major Project Coalition, the First Nations Financial Authority, the First Nations Financial Management Board, the First Nations Tax Commission, and the First Nation Economic Developers Officers Association.
15	ISC	Education and literacy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Describe federal roles and responsibilities related to education and literacy in the assessment area. b) Advise on how education and literacy programs can be used or designed to ensure that Indigenous communities have access to education required to benefit from potential development in a manner that is equitable with populations that are non-Indigenous and less remote.
16	AAFC, Health Canada, ISC and ISC-FNIHB	Food Security and Nutrition	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Share what you know about food security conditions in the assessment area. b) Describe federal programs related to food security and nutrition that are available in the assessment area. Explain whether and how these programs are targeted to address food insecurity and barriers to traditional food access in First Nation communities, which can be associated with negative effects to social, mental, and physical well-being. c) Explain how development has been observed to positively or adversely impact health in Indigenous communities, such as through changes in access to land, changes in cost of living, etc.
17	ISC and LAC	Language Revival and Cultural Heritage	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Describe programs or initiatives for learning and preservation of traditional language use, including details on how success is measured for languages in the assessment area. b) Provide information and data about traditional language retention in First Nations communities in the assessment area, and describe any plans or suggestions to enhance learning and preservation of traditional languages. c) Offer suggestions and ideas on how existing federal programs could be focused to the assessment area for language revival and learning about cultural identity. Include example of how other Indigenous communities in Canada have used archives and other historical records to reclaim and revive their cultural heritage.
18	Transport Canada	Development Scenarios	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Provide a description of the existing or planned development activities under Transport Canada's jurisdiction in the assessment area. b) Advise on the development activities you anticipate may occur in the assessment area for different development sectors and intensities, this should include scenarios related to railways, roads, seaports and marine terminals, airports, etc.
19	ECCC, ISED, NRCan,	Feasibility of development in this area	<p>Based on the sensitivity of peatlands in the assessment area and their role in global carbon sequestration, as well as the challenges related to building infrastructure on peatlands, the Working Group requests that you:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Provide a summary of the state of knowledge regarding the sustainability of building on peatlands.

	and Transport Canada		b) Advise on the worst-case scenarios that have been explored for impacts of future development on the ecosystems of the Hudson Bay Lowlands, including but not limited to impacts on carbon storage. c) Explain how sensitive the ecosystems in the assessment area are to climate change and explain whether there has been research done on the interactions between climate change and potential development for this area. Describe all innovative approaches being explored and invested in by Canada to enable development in the assessment area, across all possible sectors, beyond mining.
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Table 3. Key priorities – Existing information and gaps (see request #2)

Theme	Priority	Issues
To be well together (Community wellbeing)	Community safety (especially for Indigenous women, men and youth)	Policing of roads; Drug trafficking; Safety supports/ programs; Safety issues around mining/ work camps (ex: substance use, violence, MMIWG2S); Human trafficking; Environmental hazards & areas of concern; Evacuation plans
	Family, youth and children	Poverty and Homelessness; Elder care; Impacts on the family unit; Services and supports for children and families
	Housing and Infrastructure	Overall housing picture; Infrastructure development and maintenance; Community infrastructure deficit; Land base expansion; Transportation infrastructure; Waste management and recycling
	Education	Special needs within communities; Distance education opportunities; Education levels within communities
	Food Security	Food shipping and storage; Potential for growing food locally; Food insecurity, costs and subsidies
	Economic development and livelihoods	Cost of living; Power supply ownership opportunities; Renewable energies; Employment and jobs availability; Building community economic development; Potential for members to fill project jobs
	Community health, including exceptional needs, mental, emotional and physical wellbeing	Mental wellness; Health issues (incl. rare and chronic conditions)
Cultural and spiritual wellbeing	Physical and cultural heritage, including burial sites	Sites of archaeological significance; Historical trade routes and ecological corridors; Identification of routes, corridors, and cultural sites linked to routes and corridors
	Cultural vitality and traditional practices, including traditional food and medicine	Loss of cultural practices, ceremonies, etc
	Continued way of life and exercising Aboriginal and Treaty rights	Enacting and protecting rights, way of life; Treaty rights education
	Community-based teachings, including oral history	Oral history vs. Crown info
	Language maintenance and revival	Use of traditional languages
	Traditional community processes for deliberation and decisions	Potential for new governance structures
	Exercise of natural law	
Social and Economic Equity	Intra and intergenerational values	Income distribution within communities.
	Social and economic conditions, including immediate and long-term social and economic benefits	Potential partnerships with developers; Industry investment in communities; Regional collective approaches to Ec. Dev.; Capturing economic benefits of projects; Economic leakage
	Diverse economies and livelihoods	Land-based economy; Workforce participation
	Indigenous Women, girls and two-spirit individuals	Economic barriers and benefits for women; Childcare; Violence and harassment
	Current use of lands and resources for traditional purposes, including access to land and resources	On-the- land activities; Harvesting

	Access to skill development and economic opportunities	Successes and challenges re: education/ employment; Indigenous employment at projects
Healthy Environment Relationships	Water and river systems, including flows	Groundwater effects; Water usage (processing); Changes to flow (dams)
	Wildlife and wildlife habitat, including species at risk, migratory birds, and fish and fish habitat	Effects on harvest species; Impacts on ecological corridors; Effects to spiritual beings; New species making use of road corridors; Higher risk of roadkills; Impacts to breeding and migratory areas
	Peatlands and other unique environments	Effects of disrupting peatlands; Permafrost;
	Forest ecosystems, including plants	ITK, 2- eyed seeing in Forest Management Plans; Impacts due to clear cutting
	Climate change adaptation	Use of fossil fuels for electricity; Change in species
	Biodiversity	Change in biodiversity