

Indigenous Engagement on Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy





Background

In November 2022, Global Affairs Canada (GAC) announced Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy: a whole-of-society effort that guides Canada's actions and ensures that Canadians in the Indo-Pacific region benefit from increased engagement. It calls for a generational shift in Canada's foreign policy — one that harnesses the significant partnership opportunities that the region represents and responds to the inherent challenges.

As part of these efforts, CCIB collaborated with GAC to develop a pre-event survey and host a one-day engagement session on February 6th, 2025, to understand Indigenous businesses' engagement, experiences and perspectives on the Indo-Pacific market. Another objective of the initiative was to better understand the challenges for Indigenous Peoples in Canada in making linkages and conducting these exchanges with Indigenous Peoples from other Indo-Pacific countries, as well as to identify opportunities for other exchanges / partnerships, and to find areas for capacity- building and greater coordination with GAC.

The pre-event survey included 13 questions intended to develop a baseline understanding of Indigenous businesses engagement in international trade, particularly the Indo-Pacific market, to inform the development of discussion questions and the engagement session. In total, 18 Indigenous businesses participated in the survey, however, the number of responses for each question ranged from 7 to 16. Questions gauged participants engagement in international trade, goods and services traded, top destination and intended markets, as well as views on challenges, opportunities, partnerships, awareness of ongoing initiatives to support Indigenous trade, and areas of collaboration and coordination.

The roundtable was held in Vancouver on February 6th, 2025, from 11:00 AM to 2:00PM PST at Global Affairs Canada's offices. Three Indigenous businesses attended in-person and five attended virtually. Since all the participants had completed the pre-event survey, the engagement session and discussion questions focused on key themes from the survey and building upon initial findings to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of participants' interest in the Indo-Pacific, challenges, supports, and recommendations.



Key Findings

- Most Indigenous businesses indicated that they are engaged in international trade. Participants were slightly more likely to engage in exporting (7) than both importing and exporting (6), and there was an equal division between those exporting goods and services.
- Canada and the United States were cited as the primary location for eight Indigenous businesses, with most selling to both countries. Four Indigenous businesses cited the Indo-Pacific as the primary location of their clients, with markets including Indonesia, Thailand, and Papua New Guinea. This aligns with previous findings indicating that Indigenous exporters are more likely to focus on expanding in domestic markets over international expansion.¹
- While six Indigenous businesses reported having no engagement in the Indo-Pacific region, those that were currently engaged cited Japan, Indonesia, Australia, China, Pakistan, and Papua New Guinea as their top destination markets. Previously, Indigenous businesses have indicated significant engagement with Australia (16.1%), Japan (4.9%), and China (2.7%). As such, while aligning with previous findings, there is an increased interest in Indonesia, Pakistan, and Papua New Guinea.²
- Australia, New Zealand, and Japan were the top markets of interest for Indigenous businesses, each cited by four respondents. Other markets of interest included China, South Korea, Vietnam, Taiwan, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, India, Bali, Fiji, Philippines, and Thailand. This aligns with previous findings where Indigenous SMEs cited Australia (16.1%), Japan (6.5%), China (3.8%), and New Zealand (1.8%) as some of their top intended markets for export expansion.³
- The top reasons cited by Indigenous businesses for engaging in the Indo-Pacific are diversification and the ability to establish Indigenous-to-Indigenous connections. This aligns with previous research by CCIB and GAC where Indigenous businesses highlighted an increased interest in engaging with markets with Indigenous peoples such as Australia and New Zealand due to the ability to establish Indigenous trade connections.⁴
- Indigenous businesses that had decided to not engage in the region cited factors such as a lack of knowledge and experience, financial and logistical barriers, language and communication barriers, political and social risks, a lack of market readiness and focus on domestic operations, as well as corruption.

¹ Canadian Council for Indigenous Business and Global Affairs Canada (2023), Adàwe: Export experiences of Indigenous Entrepreneurs, https://www.ccab.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/ccab_report_english_FINAL.pdf, pg. 36.

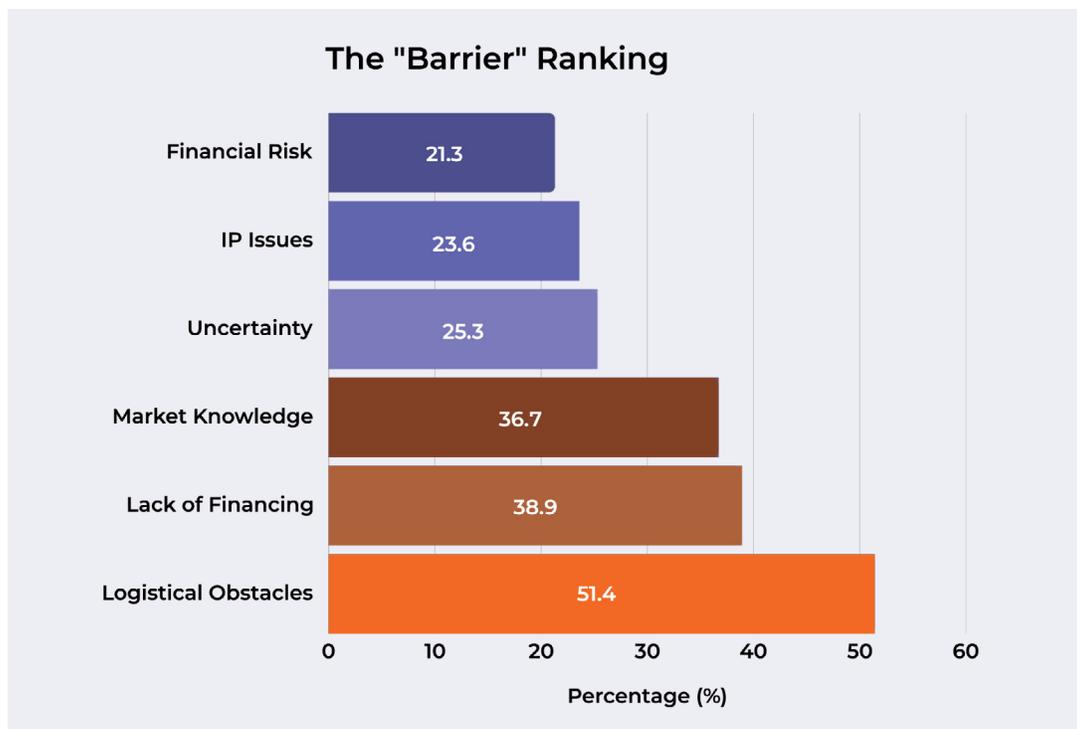
² Ibid, pg. 34-35.

³ Ibid, pg. 37.

⁴ Ibid, pg. 35.



- Increased opportunities for trade missions and events where Indigenous businesses could connect with new business partners and other Indigenous groups and additional cultural exchanges to develop people-to-people ties are the top priorities for Indigenous businesses seeking to engage in the Indo-Pacific. This aligns with previous views of Indigenous businesses which indicated that connections with Indigenous clients or partners worldwide (65.3%), introductions to potential customers (53.2%), and connections with international businesses and partners (47.4%) would be the most helpful supports to assist them to engage in export.⁵
- Most Indigenous businesses had experienced challenges when trying to engage in the Indo-Pacific market. These included a lack of readiness to expand into international markets, cultural shock and understanding how to navigate local cultures and processes, exporting services, a lack of tailored programming for Indigenous businesses, financial thresholds and other requirements for accessing government programming, differing interpretations of who comprises an Indigenous person, language barriers, intellectual property, and logistical barriers. These align with previous findings where Indigenous exporters cited logistical obstacles (51.4%), a lack of financing/cash-flow (38.9%), market knowledge issues (36.7%), uncertainty of how to begin exporting (25.3%), intellectual property issues (23.6%), and financial risk (21.3%) as major obstacles to export.⁶



⁵ Canadian Council for Indigenous Business and Global Affairs Canada (2024), Atāmitowin: Identifying and overcoming challenges facing Indigenous exporters, https://www.ccab.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/ccab_report_english_digital_FINAL.pdf, pg. 43.

⁶ Ibid, pg. 30.



- While most Indigenous businesses were unaware of existing supports to facilitate Indo-Pacific engagement or were unaware of how to access them, the three that had accessed them cited supports through GAC, TCS, and governments and community leaders in the Indo-Pacific. Areas of additional support included financial support, advisory services and mentorship, labor development, market access and expansion, cultural and artistic exchanges, and intellectual property.
- Twelve Indigenous businesses were unaware of the requirements and Indigenous-specific provisions provided for under Canada's trade agreements and arrangements while two had general awareness of them.
- Indigenous businesses identified several opportunities for partnerships and exchanges including joint ventures or the development of value chains in areas such as manufacturing, investment and capacity-building in major projects such as natural resources and infrastructure development, the utilization of remote workers and cheap labor, and business and cultural exchanges. GAC, TCS, CCIB, and academic institutions were cited as key collaborators in these efforts.
- Regarding areas of increased collaboration between GAC, other government agencies and Indigenous organizations, Indigenous businesses highlighted that this would be particularly valuable in areas such as supporting the delivery of supports through Indigenous organizations, enhancing service delivery and tailoring current programming, establishing regular dialogue and feedback mechanisms to understand the needs of Indigenous businesses, supply chain and investment opportunities, as well as the development of authenticity standards and other measures to support the protection of Indigenous products, particularly those informed by Indigenous knowledge.



Recommendations

Trade Missions and Events

- Increase the frequency of trade missions to the Indo-Pacific focusing on markets such as Australia and New Zealand which offer the opportunity for the development of Indigenous trade connections. This could involve virtual exchanges and other opportunities to enable the development of connections without large financial and time investments.
- Collaborate with Indigenous organizations to hold and prepare Indigenous businesses for trade missions.
- Develop opportunities for cultural and youth exchanges to enable the establishment of people-to-people connections.

Training and Support

- Develop tailored programming for Indigenous businesses to address unique considerations and challenges relating to expanding into international markets. This could look like a revised version of current Trade Accelerator Programs.
- Establish one-on-one mentorship opportunities for Indigenous businesses to learn about international trade and best practices for engaging with Indo-Pacific markets through engagement with Indigenous business leaders and other experts.
- Develop specific programming for businesses in services sectors to engage in exporting.
- Collaborate with Indigenous organizations and businesses to utilize feedback and user experiences to improve programming.
- Develop a specific stream of CanExport funding for supporting Indigenous businesses.



Partnerships

- Facilitate the development of investment partnerships between Indigenous businesses/communities and Indo-Pacific investors to enable increased access to capital and Indigenous engagement in major projects relating to natural resource and infrastructure development.
- Support Indigenous businesses to develop partnerships with businesses in the Indo-Pacific to engage in supply chains and develop value chains in areas such as manufacturing.

Coordination and Capacity-building

- Increase coordination of efforts between GAC, TCS, other government agencies and Indigenous organizations to more effectively support the internationalization of Indigenous businesses.
- Collaborate with Indigenous organizations, such as CCIB, to enable the development of in-house services and programming to support Indigenous businesses to engage in international trade.



Summary of Survey and Roundtable Findings

Perspectives and Engagement with the Indo-Pacific

1. Do you currently export? What do you export?

Survey Findings:

- **Engagement in international trade:** Several Indigenous businesses responding to the survey currently engage in international trade. Seven Indigenous businesses reported engaging in exporting, six do both export and import (37.5%), while the three remaining respondents did not engage in international trade (18.7%).
- **Goods and services exported:** Indigenous businesses were equally divided between export of services and the export of goods.
 - **Services:** Six (50%) Indigenous businesses cited exporting services. Three provided engineering and consulting services relating to major projects and infrastructure development (25%), while the remaining three exported technology services (8.3%), casino gaming (8.3%), and invested in mining projects (8.3%), respectively.
 - **Goods:** Six (50%) Indigenous businesses cited exporting goods. Three exported clothing and apparel (25%), while the remaining three sold craft soda (8.3%), beauty products (8.3%), and distilled beverages (8.3%), respectively.





2. Where are your clients primarily located? Are there any in the Indo-Pacific?

Survey Findings:

- Primary Location of Clients (14 respondents): Five Indigenous businesses' clients were primarily located in Canada and the United States (35.7%), followed by Canada (3 - 21.4%), the United States (2 - 14.3%), Indonesia (2 - 14.3%), Thailand (1 - 7.1%), and Papua New Guinea (1 - 7.1%).
- Engagement with Indo-Pacific Markets (14 respondents): Four Indigenous businesses indicated that their clients were primarily located in the Indo-Pacific. These included Indonesia (2), Thailand (1) and Papua New Guinea (1).

3. What are the top countries that you sell to in the Indo-Pacific?

Survey Findings:

- Current Indo-Pacific Markets (14 respondents): Six (42.9%) Indigenous businesses reported having no engagement with Indo-Pacific markets. Of those that were currently engaged, Indigenous businesses cited markets such as Japan (2 - 14.3%), Indonesia (2 - 14.3%), Australia (1 - 7.1%), China (1 - 7.1%), Pakistan (1 - 7.1%), and Papua New Guinea (1 - 7.1%).

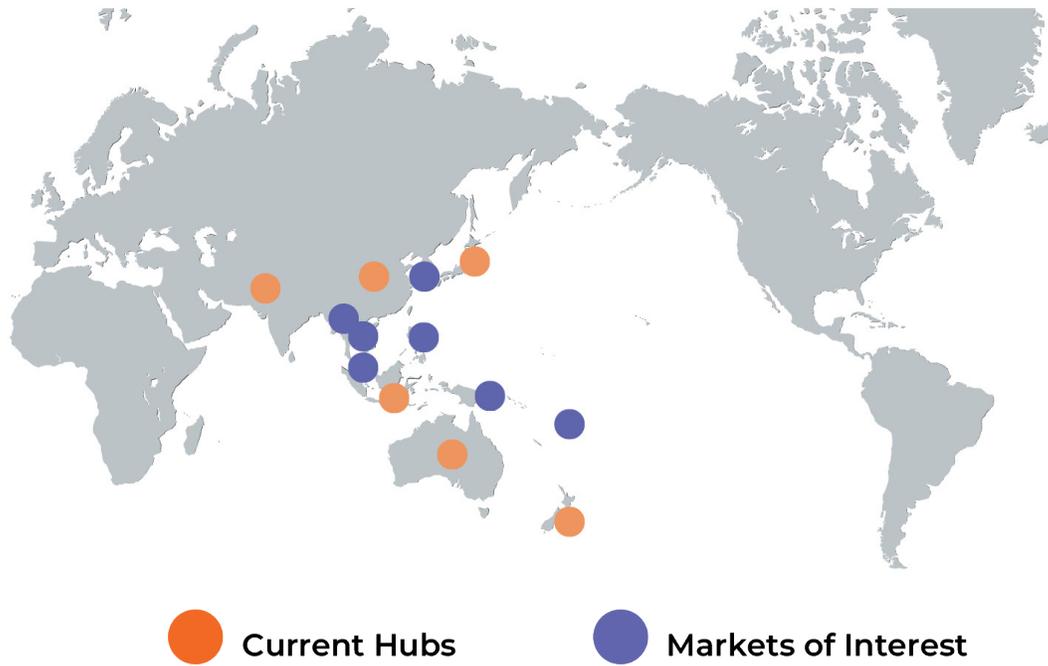
4. Which countries would you like to engage with in the Indo-Pacific? What are your considerations in choosing these countries?

Survey Findings:

- Top Indo-Pacific Markets of Interest (12 respondents): Australia, New Zealand, and Japan were the top markets of interest, each being cited by four respondents. Other markets of interest included China, South Korea, and Vietnam (2), followed by Taiwan, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, India, Bali, Fiji, Philippines, and Thailand (1). Two Indigenous businesses did not know or were unsure.
- Indigenous businesses cited specific interest in areas such as financial investments in natural resources industries, the development of micro-infrastructure for remote communities, clothing and apparel, sustainable and natural products, cultural tourism, and health and wellness.



Geographic Heatmap: Current vs. Intended



Roundtable insights:

Most Indigenous businesses indicated that they had interest in engaging with countries that have other Indigenous peoples, such as Australia and New Zealand, due to historical and cultural similarities. Some business owners highlighted that countries in Southeast Asia, such as Indonesia and the Philippines, are of particular interest due to the remote nature of many of their communities and associated energy challenges which provide great opportunities for companies with relevant experience. One First Nations business owner remarked that countries such as Vietnam and the Philippines were also of interest for accessing remote support and more affordable labor.



5. Why have you decided to engage, or not, with the Indo-Pacific?

Roundtable insights:

Indigenous businesses cited various reasons for their decisions to engage with the Indo-Pacific region. The primary reasons cited by participants were the ability to diversify and access the significant business opportunities in the region, as well as interest in developing international partnerships with other Indigenous businesses and communities. Nearly all Indigenous businesses highlighted the value of engaging with the Indo-Pacific as a means of diversifying connections to reduce reliance on the United States and to engage with economic powerhouses in the region.

“Given the threat of the US, we need to diversify our connections and learn how we can support ourselves and country to do that work.”

“The Indo-Pacific is of interest primarily due to the similar culture and values system, as well as shared legacies of colonialism and its impacts.”

- Other reasons that Indigenous businesses referenced for engaging in the Indo-Pacific generally included opportunities that were specifically relevant to their business such as opportunities to increase access to technology and infrastructure development.
- Indigenous businesses that had decided to not engage in the region cited factors such as a lack of knowledge and experience, financial and logistical barriers, language and communication barriers, political and social risks, as well as a lack of market readiness. Some participants indicated that they were unsure where to start with breaking into the Indo-Pacific market, particularly navigating things such as taxes, laws, and the development of market entry strategies. Indigenous businesses also pointed to the significant barriers caused by a lack of tailored funding for engaging in the region, as well as complexities with navigating logistics. Some Indigenous businesses pointed to communication challenges caused by language barriers and a lack of understanding of local systems and cultures. Others cited concerns relating to political instability, corruption, and a focus on developing their domestic operations before beginning international expansion.

“One of the big deterrents for me is corruption. Corruption is definitely out there in the international market. You can have a business here in Canada and play by the rules – all of a sudden you may have to make payoffs and then not want to do that. ”



6. What are your priorities relating to the Indo-Pacific and what types of exchanges would you like to see between Indigenous peoples there and those in Canada?

Survey Findings:

- Top priorities and types of exchanges (12 respondents): Increased opportunities for trade missions and events where Indigenous businesses could connect with new business partners and other Indigenous groups were the top priority for Indigenous businesses participating in the survey and were cited by four participants. Other priorities and types of exchanges for Indigenous businesses included:
 - Reducing technology costs for custom mobile application development and server hosting.
 - Importing organic coffee, timber, fish, and minerals.
 - Tourism and traditional artisan items.
 - Meeting with remote communities to discuss their infrastructure needs for sustainable healthy living.
 - Market expansion, cultural & artistic exchange, sustainability & ethical production, Indigenous entrepreneurship, and trade & knowledge sharing.
 - Copyright-trademarks protection, vendor registration-recognition.
 - Meeting with suppliers and Indigenous business development groups.
- People-to-People Links (8 respondents): Six Indigenous businesses were unaware or did not know of specific people-to-people connections between Indigenous peoples in Canada and those in the Indo-Pacific. Those that were aware of people-to-people connections cited cultural connections (1 – 12.5%) and trade and investment (1 – 12.5%).



Challenges and Opportunities

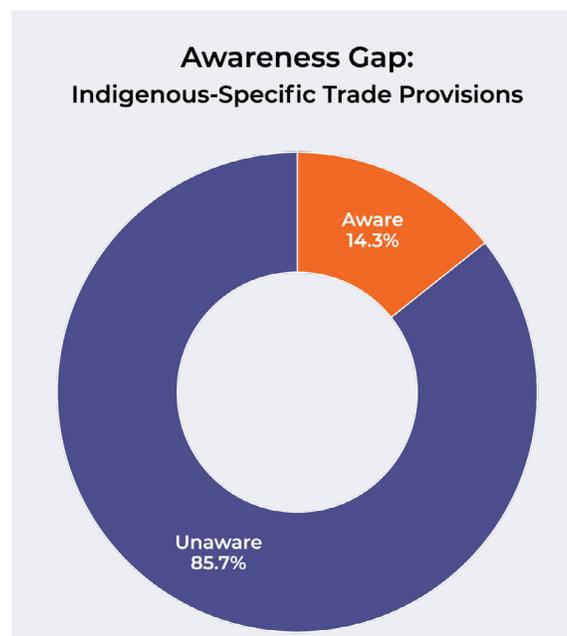
1. Are there any challenges that you have experienced when seeking to sell your products/services in the Indo-Pacific or engaging with Indigenous peoples there?

Survey Findings:

- Challenges (8 respondents): Six (75%) of Indigenous businesses indicated that they had experienced challenges when seeking to engage in the Indo-Pacific while the remaining businesses (2 – 25%) had not experienced challenges or were not aware of any challenges. Challenges cited by Indigenous businesses included uncertainty relating to market entry, taxes and the legal landscape; a lack of sufficient funding support for Indigenous groups to participate in trade and export; language barriers, and; logistical challenges.

Roundtable insights:

- Indigenous businesses identified several challenges that have prevented them from engaging more fully with the Indo-Pacific region. One major issue is the tendency to impose Canadian ways of doing things into the local markets. Participants emphasize the importance of approaching these markets with an open mind, understanding local challenges and issues, and respecting the connection with nature that is prevalent in many communities. While big cities in the region may resemble those in Canada, the dynamics within smaller communities are different and require a nuanced approach.





- Another significant challenge is the need to first learn how to do business within Canada before expanding internationally. Many participants feel that they are still in the process of mastering domestic business practices, which makes the prospect of international expansion daunting, despite its appeal.
- Cultural shock is a common deterrent when pursuing international markets. Participants note that it often takes years of operating within a country, building connections, and learning about the local culture before economic benefits can be realized. This long-term commitment can be intimidating.
- Several Indigenous business owners indicated that while exporting products is relatively straightforward, exporting services presents more challenges. The procurement process related to providing services was also cited as a significant challenge, contributing to reluctance in engaging with the region.
- Financial thresholds for programs like the Team Canada Trade Mission and CanExport program can exclude some businesses, adding to the challenges.
- One Metis business owner indicated that being perceived as a representative or ambassador of Canada can be a double-edged sword—it can scare people off but also demonstrates fiduciary capability.
- While exchange programs were valued, some participants indicated that there could be challenges in developing them due to differing interpretations of which populations are Indigenous peoples. However, there is a strong belief in the concept of a “Nation without borders,” connecting Indigenous communities globally.

2. Have you accessed any supports to assist with engaging in the Indo-Pacific? What were they, how did you access them, and have they been helpful? Are there gaps? Could they be improved; and if so, how?

Survey Findings:

- Supports (10 respondents): Seven (70%) Indigenous businesses indicated that they had not accessed or were unaware of supports to assist with engaging in the Indo-Pacific. The three (30%) Indigenous businesses that had accessed supports to engage in the Indo-Pacific cited services provided by Global Affairs Canada and services provided through government departments and local community leaders in the Indo-Pacific region.



3. Are you aware of the requirements and Indigenous-specific provisions provided for under Canada's trade agreements and arrangements?

Survey Findings:

- Awareness of Indigenous provisions in FTAs (14 respondents): Twelve (85.7%) Indigenous businesses were unaware of the requirements and Indigenous-specific provisions provided for under Canada's trade agreements and arrangements while two (14.3%) were generally aware of them.

4. Are there any supports that you think are missing or would like to see that would help facilitate more of your involvement in the Indo-Pacific?

Roundtable insights:

Indigenous businesses identified several areas where additional supports could be developed or improved to facilitate their engagement with the Indo-Pacific:

- a. Financial and Advisory Support:** Many Indigenous businesses emphasized the need for additional financial support for Indigenous businesses to participate in export trade, secure funding for projects, and reduce technology costs for custom mobile application development and server hosting. There is also a strong demand for one-on-one advisory services to guide businesses through the complexities of exporting, including legal structures, tax implications, and navigating the roles of embassies and consulates.

"I've sat through a lot of workshops sponsored by GAC and EDC, but I think for a lot of us we need our hand-held throughout the process and need a 1-1 advisor to work with us through the process. Our capacity is maxed out. The process is daunting."

- b. Capacity-Building and Training:** Investment in training Indigenous human resources and assisting Indigenous-owned businesses and startups is crucial. This includes providing mentorship, capacity-building, and IP protection resources. Some Indigenous businesses also highlighted the need for specialized trade discussions and workshops focused on services, as marketing services is different from marketing goods.



- c. **Market Access and Expansion:** Opportunities for trade missions, trade events, and meeting trade partners and other Indigenous groups in the Indo-Pacific region were highly valued by Indigenous businesses, particularly those involving Australia, New Zealand, and Japan. Support for thorough market research and understanding import-export regulations was highlighted as being essential to avoid costly mistakes and navigate new markets effectively.
- d. **Cultural and Artistic Exchange:** Some Indigenous businesses indicated that increased funding for Indigenous-led fashion, art, and trade events in key markets can enhance cultural and artistic exchange. Collaborating with Indigenous designers and artists on co-branded collections was also seen as beneficial. Youth exchanges and cultural exposure were cited as being important for fostering understanding and building relationships. One First Nations business owner championed the “Leaders of Tomorrow” program, suggesting that it could be expanded to help Indigenous youth connect with businesses and see the world.

Partnerships and collaboration are essential for such programs to succeed, with matchmaking being a critical component.

- e. **Intellectual Property:** Given the challenges associated with misappropriation and theft of Indigenous knowledge, participants saw significant value in receiving additional resources and support for IP protection. Some indicated that this could involve offering legal advisory services to navigate the complexities of IP protection and ensure compliance with international regulations.

5. What opportunities exist for other exchanges/partnerships? Who should be involved or leading these?

Survey Findings:

- Opportunities for Partnerships (7 respondents): Five (71.4%) Indigenous businesses indicated that there were strong opportunities for partnerships in the Indo-Pacific region, with specific examples including investment opportunities through partnerships and joint ventures with Indigenous communities in the region, as well as collaborating on marketing, manufacturing, and the development of more affordable access to technology. Two respondents (28.5%) did not know or were unaware of opportunities.



- Opportunities for foreign direct investment (FDI) (8 respondents): Five (62.5%) Indigenous businesses pointed to the presence of significant opportunities for acquiring FDI, while three (37.5%) did not know or were unaware of opportunities for FDI. Specific examples of opportunities for FDI cited by Indigenous businesses included investments in natural resources industries such as mining, energy, fisheries, and agriculture; micro-infrastructure; real estate and housing, and; manufacturing.

Roundtable insights:

- Indigenous businesses identified several opportunities for exchanges and partnerships that could enhance their engagement with the Indo-Pacific region, including opportunities to facilitate Indigenous-to-Indigenous trade, artistic and cultural exchange, sustainable and ethical production, market expansion and trade missions, infrastructure development, and various support services.
- Indigenous businesses believed that several key stakeholders should be involved or take the lead in these initiatives including government agencies, Indigenous organizations, academic institutions, the private sector and international organizations or bodies. Specific examples cited by Indigenous businesses included:
 - Global Affairs Canada (GAC): Leading efforts to facilitate trade missions, provide financial support, develop tailored trade programs for Indigenous businesses, and support increased Indigenous trade through FTAs and other regulations.
 - Trade Commissioner Service (TCS): Supporting market research, trade missions, and providing advisory services to businesses looking to enter the Indo-Pacific region.
 - Canadian Council for Indigenous Business (CCIB): Collaborating with GAC to support Indigenous businesses and promote Indigenous-to-Indigenous commerce. This could involve leading initiatives to build relationships, provide mentorship, and support capacity-building among Indigenous businesses.
 - Universities and Colleges: Partnering to provide training, mentorship, and cultural exchange programs for Indigenous young people.



6. In which areas would you like to see greater capacity-building and/or coordination between GAC (or other government entities) and Indigenous organizations? How can we all work together to support each other in achieving your priorities and interests?

Survey Findings:

- Areas of capacity-building and coordination (8 respondents): Five (62.5%) of Indigenous businesses indicated that they would like to see greater capacity-building and coordination between Indigenous businesses, Indigenous organizations, and government agencies. Specific areas of collaboration cited by participants included increased export development opportunities tailored to Indigenous businesses, facilitating the development of Indigenous trading relationships and partnerships, investments in the development of Indigenous human resources and supports for Indigenous businesses and startups, cultural collaboration, and the development of sustainable supply chains. Three (37.5%) Indigenous businesses did not know or were unaware of areas for increased capacity-building and collaboration.

Roundtable insights:

Indigenous businesses identified several key areas where greater capacity-building and coordination between Global Affairs Canada (GAC) or other government entities and Indigenous organizations, such as CCIB, could significantly enhance engagement with the Indo-Pacific region. These areas included increased collaboration with Indigenous organizations to deliver programs and services, business and cultural exchanges, supply chain engagement, investment, and the development of authenticity standards for Indigenous products.

- Collaborative service delivery: Several Indigenous businesses highlighted the value of establishing an Indigenous Export Hub in partnership with an Indigenous organization such as CCIB. Participants indicated that such a program could work to facilitate Indigenous-to-Indigenous trade and create pathways for Indigenous businesses to break into international markets. Indigenous organizations could also assist in tailoring current programming and working to facilitate increased engagement by Indigenous businesses. Indigenous businesses also cited the value of increasing coordination and collaboration between Indigenous organizations in Canada with their counterparts in Australia, New Zealand, and the United States.



- **Business and Cultural Exchanges:** Indigenous businesses indicated that there would be value in increased business and cultural exchanges between Indigenous businesses in Canada with Indo-Pacific countries to establish stronger economic and cultural ties. These could take the form of trade missions to markets of interest organized collaboratively by GAC, TCS, and Indigenous organizations, as well as exchange programs supported by GAC, Indigenous organizations, and educational institutions.
- **Tailored programming for Indigenous businesses:** Several Indigenous businesses pointed to the value of export development programming such as the Trade Accelerator Program but acknowledged that these experiences could be improved through more tailored programming that accounts for the unique considerations relevant to Indigenous businesses. This could be accomplished through collaboration between government agencies, Indigenous organizations, and Indigenous businesses to ensure that these programs are designed with the end users in mind.
- **Regular Dialogue and Feedback Mechanisms:** Establishing regular dialogue and feedback mechanisms between government entities and Indigenous organizations can ensure that programs and initiatives are meeting the needs of Indigenous businesses. Creating a controlled database with frequently asked questions can streamline the process of accessing information and support.
- **Supply Chain Opportunities:** Indigenous businesses cited the importance of collaboration to support access to ethical production partners and sustainable supply chain opportunities. Some Indigenous businesses also saw potential to establish global value chains with Indo-Pacific partners in areas such as manufacturing. This could be achieved through collaboration between Indigenous organizations and government agencies such as GAC, TCS, EDC, and the Canada Commercial Corporation (CCC).
- **Investment:** Through collaboration between Indigenous organizations, government agencies such as the TCS, and Indigenous economic development corporations and financial institutions, Indigenous businesses indicated that there is immense potential to acquire foreign direct investment from the Indo-Pacific to support major projects such as natural resource and infrastructure development.
- **Authenticity standards:** Ensuring product authentication is crucial, especially for Indigenous products. There is a need for centralized marketplaces to facilitate this and the development of Indigenous-led authenticity standards with support from government agencies.



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