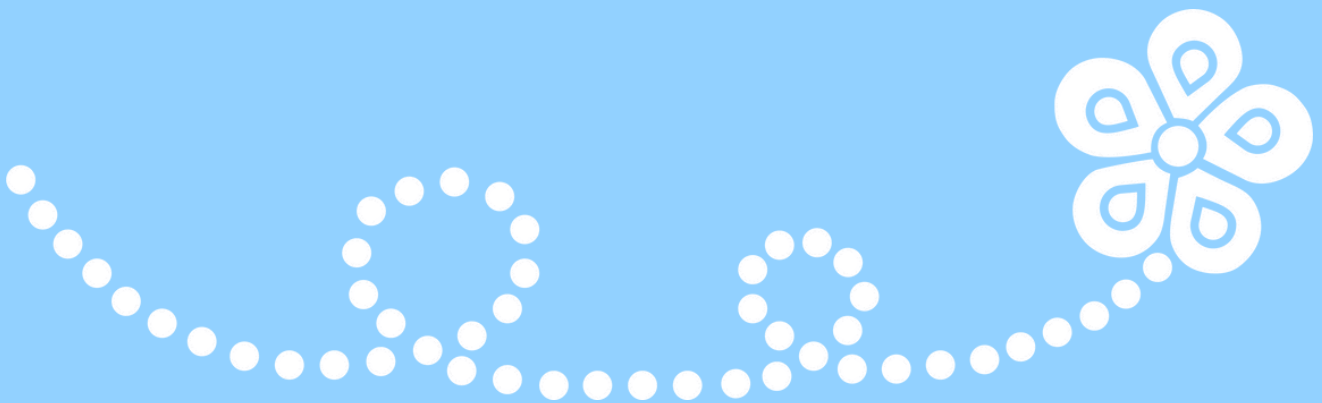




RALLIEMENT NATIONAL DES  
**MÉTIS**  
NATIONAL COUNCIL

# THINK GROWTH

Fostering Digital and Technological  
Inclusion for Métis Communities  
and Businesses in Canada



## Key Takeaways

- **Digital inequity is a key barrier** to the economic and social development of Métis communities and businesses in Canada, particularly in remote and rural areas.
- **Targeted investments in digital infrastructure** can unlock significant economic opportunities and enhance access to education, healthcare and governance for the Métis Nation.
- **Technological training and capacity building** are essential to ensure Métis communities and businesses can leverage digital tools for self-determination and economic empowerment.
- **Collaboration between Métis leadership, government, and private sectors** is crucial for sustainable digital inclusion.

The purpose of this policy brief is to provide recommendations to foster digital and technological inclusion for Métis Communities and Businesses in Canada.

## Background

Access to reliable digital infrastructure and technology is a fundamental driver of economic and social well-being. Yet, many Métis communities and businesses in Canada, especially those in remote and rural areas, face a digital divide that limits their ability to participate fully in the modern economy. According to the 2020 OECD report: "Linking Indigenous Communities to Regional Development in Canada," only a fraction of Indigenous communities, including Métis communities, have reliable broadband access and the infrastructure needed to bridge this gap is underdeveloped. On ISC's website, the Department notes that it is committed to helping First Nations communities bridge the digital divide but does not mention the need to also support Métis communities.<sup>1</sup> The challenges of digital exclusion are compounded by limited access to training programs, affordable technology and culturally relevant digital solutions.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1526995988708/1526996020578#sec7>

Many rural and remote Métis communities face significant challenges in accessing affordable and reliable telecommunications services. A 2019 CRTC report highlighted that only 24% of rural households had access to 50/10 Mbps broadband service, compared to 97% of urban households. This disparity limits economic opportunity, access to education and essential services like telehealth.

The need for digital inclusion is particularly acute for Métis youth, who represent a significant proportion of the Métis population. According to Statistics Canada, Métis youth under the age of 25 account for nearly 40% of the total Métis population. Without access to digital tools and infrastructure, these young people face barriers to educational achievement, employment and skills development, which can have long-term implications for the economic prosperity of Métis communities. Expanding digital access can empower Métis youth to pursue opportunities in emerging fields such as technology, engineering, and digital arts, positioning them as key contributors to the Canadian economy.

Furthermore, Métis entrepreneurs and small businesses often face challenges in competing in the digital marketplace due to limited online presence and e-commerce capabilities. A study by the Canadian Council for Indigenous Business (CCIB) revealed that while many Indigenous businesses are interested in expanding online, they often lack the resources, training, or infrastructure to do so effectively. Addressing these gaps is essential for enabling Métis businesses to thrive in an increasingly digital world and contribute to regional economic growth.

## Recommendations to promote digital and technological inclusion for Métis Communities and businesses

1

### Invest in Digital Infrastructure Development for Métis Communities

**Rationale:** Without reliable broadband and cellular infrastructure, Métis communities and businesses remain disconnected from the opportunities of the digital economy. Federal and provincial governments should partner with Métis Governments and organizations to expand high-speed internet access, prioritizing remote and underserved regions.

**Implementation:** Establish a dedicated fund for Métis digital infrastructure projects targeting Métis communities, supported by public-private partnerships and leveraging federal programs such as the Universal Broadband Fund.

**Expected Outcomes:** Improved connectivity will enable access to online education, telemedicine, and e-commerce platforms, fostering economic and social development for Métis communities.

2

### **Launch Targeted Technological Training Programs for Métis Businesses and Individuals**

**Rationale:** To maximize the benefits of digital infrastructure, Métis individuals and businesses need the skills to effectively use and adapt technology. Training programs should be co-designed with Métis leadership to ensure cultural relevance and local applicability.

**Implementation:** Partner with educational institutions, tech companies, and Métis organizations to create training initiatives focused on digital literacy, coding, and e-commerce specific to Métis business needs.

**Expected Outcomes:** Enhanced digital skills will empower Métis entrepreneurs, support local governance and improve access to education and job opportunities.

3

### **Promote Affordable Access to Digital Tools and Services for the Métis**

**Rationale:** The high cost of technology and internet services often excludes Métis communities and businesses from full digital participation. Policies to subsidize costs and provide affordable options are essential.

**Implementation:** Develop support interventions for low-income Métis households and create initiatives to distribute refurbished devices to Métis communities and businesses.

**Expected Outcomes:** Increased access to affordable technology will reduce barriers to connectivity and participation in the digital economy for Métis people.



## Conclusion

Bridging the digital divide is a strategic imperative for the economic and social empowerment of Métis communities.

The ability to access reliable digital infrastructure, acquire technological skills and fully participate in the digital economy is fundamental to self-determination and long-term prosperity for the Métis Nation.

By prioritizing targeted investments, fostering partnerships, and ensuring culturally relevant training, we can unlock unprecedented opportunities for Métis businesses, youth and communities.

