



RALLIEMENT NATIONAL DES
MÉTIS
NATIONAL COUNCIL



THINK GROWTH

Supporting Métis Export Growth



Key Takeaways

- Métis people were amongst Canada's first exporters.
- Canadian Governments have an obligation under Article 36 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) to "take effective measures to facilitate" indigenous international trade.
- Canadian Governments could enhance Métis export success through taking effective measures to:
 - Foster mutually beneficial Métis export business relationships;
 - Build resilient Métis export ecosystems; and
 - Support Métis organizations to deliver export development opportunities.
- Métis Governments and institutions want to provide enhanced export training and export opportunities to indigenous businesses.

The purpose of this policy brief is to outline how small yet impactful changes to Government export support programs have the potential to improve the success of Métis exporters.

The Right to Trade

Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island have engaged in international trade for thousands of years.¹ Well-established trade networks developed to allow for easy exchange of prized materials and manufactured goods. The arrival and expansion of European settlements and the westward advancement of the fur trade created conflicts between Indigenous Nations. Today, many Indigenous peoples seek to re-establish and build new trading relationships and have often turned to multinational bodies to overcome the barriers to trade imposed by modern States.

¹ Keoke, Emory Dean and Poterfield, Kay Marie, "American Indian Contributions to the World: Trade, Transportation, and Warfare (New York: facts on file, 2005), p. 2.

Article 36 of UNDRIP, states that, "Indigenous peoples, in particular those divided by international borders, have the right to maintain and develop contacts, relations and cooperation, including activities for spiritual, cultural, political, economic and social purposes, with their own members as well as other peoples across borders."

Furthermore, Subsection 2 of Article 36 mandates that, "States, in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples, shall take effective measures to facilitate the exercise and ensure the implementation of this right." The message of Article 36 is clear: **Governments at all levels, have an obligation to support international Indigenous commerce.** The Métis Nation General Assembly has declared export growth as a key economic development priority.²

Supporting Métis Exporters

Mindful of this history and support expressed by Indigenous leaders, the Métis Nation is delivering data, research, and pilot initiatives to inform effective policy development and programs designed to fuel Indigenous export growth. The Métis Nation seeks to build upon recent initiatives aimed to support the growth of Indigenous exports. These initiatives consisted of:

- International Indigenous Export dialogues with Indigenous businesses;
- Indigenous export training sessions; and
- International export development exchanges, including through the Indigenous Peoples Economic and Trade Cooperation Arrangement (IPETCA).

Recommendations to Support Indigenous Export Success

MNC recommends that the following recommendations are considered by the Government when designing policies and delivering programs for Métis exporters.

1. Foster mutually beneficial Indigenous business relationships

The Métis Nation has found that Indigenous businesses in Canada and abroad seek to build meaningful relationships, informed by a common Indigenous principle of

² MNGA Resolution adopted on October 27, 2022.

reciprocity. Reciprocity involves exchanges for mutual benefit. Supporting Indigenous-to-Indigenous relationship building exercises, with a common sectoral focus,³ will require an investment of time and resources. However, virtual exchanges, encouraged by the pandemic, have revealed an opportunity to effectively build preliminary and exploratory business relationships, to support fruitful in-person meetings.

Recommendation: Support mutually beneficial, Indigenous-to-Indigenous virtual business dialogues.

2. Build resilient Métis export ecosystems

The Métis Nation's export development work has revealed that critical elements of building an export plan include market entry strategies, local legal implications, and local financial services. The Métis Nation has found that this training is most effective when delivered by Indigenous experts, who understand the unique needs of Métis businesses,⁴ can bring Indigenous peoples together in a good way and identify gaps in existing programs. These supportive export ecosystems, consisting of Indigenous experts, produce mutually beneficial outcomes that catalyzes Indigenous export growth.

Recommendation: Support Métis organizations to build their circle of Indigenous export catalysts to support Indigenous exporters.

3. Support Métis organizations to deliver export development opportunities

To foster the development of Métis export ecosystems, the Métis Nation proposes that Governments, at all levels, support Indigenous organizations to deliver export development initiatives and bring together Métis experts exporters. These initiatives must be driven by the identified needs of Métis businesses and must foster the growth of Indigenous institutional infrastructure. Additionally, all Government organizations should work in partnership with Métis organizations, to ensure that the design and delivery of their general business development programs also serves to build Métis capacity.

Recommendation: Governments devolve 1.69% of their export development program funding to Métis governments and Métis institutions.

3 This can include a focused conversation of Indigenous businesses within a specific industry, such as Aquaculture.

4 When seeking to grow their businesses, Indigenous exporters often find that non-Indigenous export organizations are not able to respond to their unique legal or place-based circumstances. This includes, but is not limited to, the unique logical challenges operating in rural and remote regions as well as on-reserve lands.