



## A FRAMEWORK...

for building relationships and identifying opportunities that **underpin joint business ventures.**

An Idea Connector Network

**Building Futures 2015 framework project**

After many conversations over the years with Aboriginal leaders and corporate executives we've concluded that a need existed for a method to be used by Aboriginal communities and organizations to guide collaboration with non-Aboriginal companies and organizations, and vice-versa.

For that reason, your Idea Connector team is pleased to offer you this Framework. We hope that you will find it a useful method to help guide you to identifying opportunities for the establishment of relationships sufficiently strong to underpin joint business ventures

**David Harries, Ph.D.**  
Foresight Director  
Idea Connector Network (ICN)  
Leader, ICN Foresight Project

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## The Vision

Photo: Fred Cattroll

There have been a number of successful business ventures between Aboriginal communities and non-Aboriginal corporations as well between and among Aboriginal communities. Those successes happened notwithstanding the continuing existence significant distrust and uncertainty among many potential partners, the result of combinations of history, cultural misunderstanding, inappropriate or insufficient consultation, and unwillingness to compromise.

Also challenging Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal businesses is identifying and making connections with a suitable community or company to partner with, even for those who are willing to engage in consultations governed by the principle that shared benefit is the foundation of a successful and durable venture.

Once a prospective partner is identified, there are not-very-secret ways to best go about setting up for and initiating consultations, beginning with becoming fully aware of and accepting one's own strengths and weaknesses. Research on the prospective partner's circumstances, business culture and traditions is always necessary. And knowing who first to meet with to explore settings for discussions is key; it will probably not be the Chief, or the CEO.

Thank you for joining us, we hope that this framework is another small step in gaining insights, so that Aboriginal Leaders and Corporate Executives can come together to stimulate economic growth while respecting cultural differences.

We welcome your contribution to the dialogue, please share your thoughts on this important subject in the space allocated for comments at the bottom of the ICN page where you have downloaded this Framework. If you prefer you may send me your comments directly. Thank you.

**Guy Dancause, CCO**  
guy.dancause@ideaconnector.net

# Introduction to the Project

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## Beginning in the autumn of 2014...

ICN began a new Foresight project. Its goal is the production of a Framework (method) which Aboriginal individuals, organizations and communities can use to guide collaboration with non-Aboriginal individuals, companies and organizations, and vice versa, by helping them identify opportunities for the establishment of relationships sufficiently strong to underpin joint business ventures.

It was understood, ab initio, that the project's Framework would be a generic one; a platform for consideration of any venture, as well as a structure for a specific venture that begins with study by the individual parties that leads to joint consideration of increasing detail enabling agreement to go ahead with it.

It was also understood that the Framework would be a resource for use in the future; a future which, given the increasing pace and the rising intensity of the interconnectedness of all the elements of change, means it will be substantially unlike the present (and the past).

Therefore, the project has taken account of the

words Mark Dockstator, President of the First Nations University of Canada<sup>1</sup> "You're best to get in front of it (change) as opposed to trailing it. He demonstrated the importance of this truism, and thereby the potential value of formal Foresight, by referring to numerous consequential events and circumstances of concern or importance to Canada's aboriginal communities of the past 40 years which, in the 1970s were either not expected or were assumed necessary or inevitable but did not come to pass.

A Framework for the relationships, as well as commercial cooperation, of Canadian Aboriginals with non-aboriginal colleagues, clients and customers that is 'in front of change' will be almost certainly be more durable than one focused on or reflecting only the status quo. And a key to shaping strong relationships is the willingness and ability to be a strong and consistent partner, one who knows and accepts one's needs and wants, and strengths and weaknesses, all in the context of the time, place and circumstances where and when they may apply.





## The Issue of Context

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**Context is continuously changing...** for everyone. Indeed, to an unprecedented degree all context is a work in progress. Histories are being rewritten, revolted against and refused. Events and circumstances happen almost daily which, if they were forecast or predicted, are so with less and less lead-time. The result is the 'next context' arrives sooner than ever before.

As for context in the long-term, the world is in such turmoil that 'long-term' is much foreshortened. Events or circumstances which in the past would have been considered 'unthinkable' in the 'foreseeable future' or unimaginable - an intellectual bridge too far and beyond the 'horizon' and therefore at least elements of a context *after next*, now appear suddenly and become new, often unexpected, governors of present reality.

# 4 STEPS to project delivery

*Late in 2014, it was decided that the Foresight project would have four steps, followed by the writing of this report. The steps are as follows.*

**Step One** In early 2015, ICN individually interviewed five accomplished Aboriginals and asked them to answer eight **“What if?”** questions, all framed in terms of **“Imagining Aboriginal People’s Future 2035”**.

**Step Two** On 16 February 2015, at ICN’s Ottawa studios, a moderated Panel discussion took place.

**The objective was** to collectively reflect on and analyze the proceedings of the five interviews of Step 1. The panelists were to come up with lists of themes, actions and scenarios on what could perhaps be Aboriginal People’s Future in 2035 and might inform the contents of a ‘Framework’ for discussion.

**Step Three** **A survey**, using e-mail and social media, of Aboriginal individuals who were requested to comment on or question the content and output of Step 1 and output of Step 2.

**Step Four** The panel of Step 2 was reconvened on 19 March with the task of **reaching consensus** on core material for the Framework document. The Consensus on Themes, Actions and Scenarios reach in Step 2 was confirmed and then amplified.

*To see the results of each step, view pages following*

# Step One

## The “What if?” questions

**What if** a Federal government was elected with a majority and a commitment and plan to promote an Aboriginal economic contribution to Canada’s growth to the same degree as for non-Aboriginal Canadians?

**What if** climate change was so strong that Canada became the bread basket of the world?

**What if** Canada’s ice cap melted so quickly and completely that the methane gas released reached levels that threatened Arctic communities?

**What if** most Aboriginal youth were offered the means to achieve their full potential?

**What if** most Aboriginal communities could elect forward-thinking leaders?

**What if** Aboriginal communities were guaranteed a fair and meaningful share of all the benefits of resource extraction?

**What if** a national Aboriginal venture capital fund was created where for each dollar invested by Aboriginal peoples or businesses the government would advance a multiplier, potentially creating a fund of a couple billion dollars?

**What if** Native American and Canadian Aboriginal peoples created joint venture companies in sectors such as resources, transportation, food, tourism, renewable energy?



## The Answers

To your left is a video collage, a synopsis of answers provided to the ICN questions, [click on video](#).

To view answers in full provided by each person, select a video below



Bob  
Crane



Karen  
MacKenzie



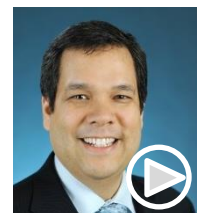
Dwight  
Powless



Chantal  
Fraser



Robert  
Lavigne



David  
Acco



# Step Two

## First Panel discussion

On 16 February 2015, at ICN's Ottawa studios, a moderated Panel discussion took place. **The objective was** to collectively reflect on and analyze the proceedings of the interviews of Step 1. The panelists were asked to produce lists of themes, actions and scenarios (**Imagining Aboriginal People's Future 2035**) that might inform the contents of a Framework.

**The panelists**, were guided in their discussion with advice on the value of using trends and drivers; two of Foresight's most powerful tools, and the importance of a set of lenses to identify, analyze and exploit them for maximum benefit. Appendix 1, identifies the panelists; *Appendix 2* provides information on characteristics of trends and drivers. *Appendix 3* introduces and explains the list of Lenses used, represented by the acronym: STEEPLES.



### Synopsis panel one discussion

To your left is a video collage, a synopsis of the first panel discussions, to view [click on video](#).

In picture panelist Karen MacKenzie



### Full panel one discussion

To view the full panel discussion [click on the video](#)

In picture left panelist Robert Lavigne and right Moderator David Harries

# Step Two

## Panel developing a vision

### Themes

- ✓ Education, in all its forms; formal (classroom), experiential (life-long learning), cultural and spiritual.
- ✓ Governance, in which all community members have equivalent rights of participation and responsibilities within their specific community and culture.
- ✓ Stewardship, for and by all, of the land and its use, of culture, of young and old in rural and urban settings, of all communities, of the value of spirituality, and of a satisfying future for Canada.
- ✓ Leadership, that promotes and sustains fair and inclusive sharing of knowledge, opportunities, resources, learning and awareness of one's circumstances.
- ✓ Trust, within and among cultures and communities.

### Actions

Proposed actions for the present and near term, to best promote progress on proposed themes

- ✓ Take a 'world view'. Listen and learn different perspectives, from the local to the global.
- ✓ Emphasize situational awareness. Making wise decisions depends on know *where* one is at and *why*.
- ✓ Make every effort to speak with 'one' Aboriginal voice. The fewer the number of voices competing for attention, the more likely those being called on will make the effort to listen to the message(s).
- ✓ Review the Indian Act. The 19<sup>th</sup> century Act should be brought into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- ✓ Formally engage with Aboriginal Youth. Youth are the future and need and deserve the time and effort to prepare to become its leaders.

# Step Two

## Panel developing a vision ... cont'd

### Scenarios

Plausible visions of the setting in 2035 in light of Actions.

- ✓ National Aboriginal Academic System. The primary goal is to mitigate and remove barriers to education throughout Canada
- ✓ National Aboriginal Youth Council. Holds regular national meetings of aboriginal youth and young adults for them to learn and share ways and means to make a difference going forward.
- ✓ Canadian Federal Minister of Education. Provide a national federal focus on formal classroom education from primary to post-doctoral, for all Canadians.
- ✓ Canadian Aboriginal Multicultural Council. Provide the vehicle for progress towards the establishment of 'one' voice for all aboriginals.
- ✓ International Aboriginal Commission. Create a standing Commission with a global mandate and wide aboriginal representation to share lessons learned, best practices, and what to avoid, going forward.
- ✓ National Aboriginal Trust Fund. A fund for support to Aboriginal business.



Photo: Fred Cattroll

# Step Three

## Public survey

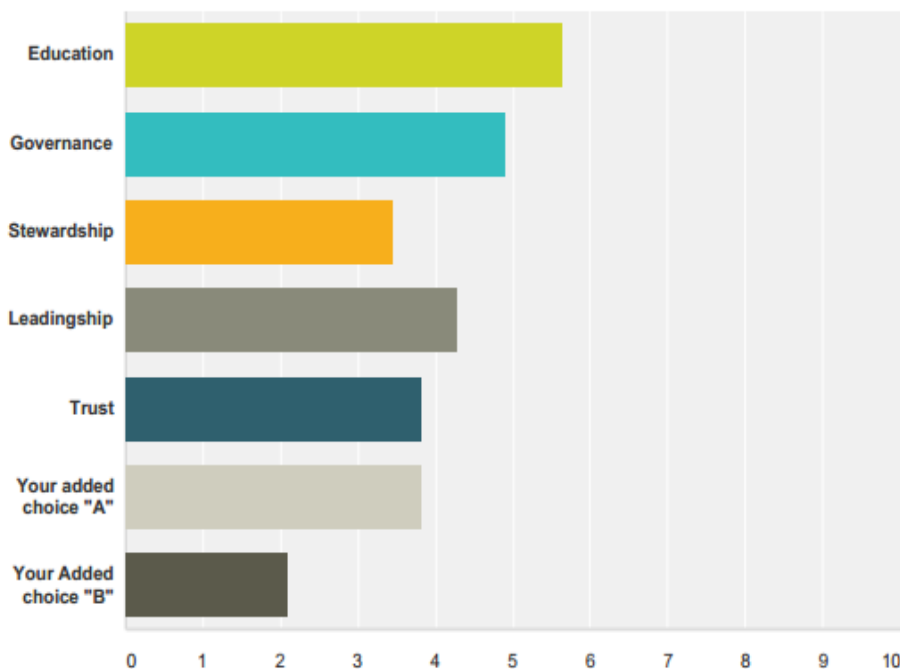
To broaden people's input into issues being explored as well as to validate these same issues a survey using e-mail and social media was published. The questionnaire was built using consensus arrived at by the panelist in step two.

The questionnaire was made available using Survey Monkey an invitation was sent to the Idea Connector list of 7,000 subscribers and to other tier party Aboriginal organizations. Aboriginal individuals were asked to comment on or question the content and output resulting from both 'Step one and two'

## Participants

- ✓ did not need to self-identify,
- ✓ were asked to respond in the context of 2035; i.e. the future,
- ✓ were asked to add two themes of their choice, and then pare down this new list of seven themes to four themes based on priority.

## Themes by order of priority as identified by poll participants



**Results** The five Themes from *Step Two* were confirmed as being those of the highest priority. Additions by some survey participants did not alter the picture.

# Step Four

## Reaching Consensus

The panel was reconvened on 19 March with the task of reaching consensus on core material for the Framework document. The Consensus on Themes, Actions and Scenarios arrived at in step two was confirmed and further amplified.



### Synopsis panel discussion on Reaching Consensus

To your left is a video collage, a synopsis of the second panel discussions, to view [click on video](#).

In picture panelists left Bob Crane and right Dwight Powless



### Full panel discussion

To view the full panel discussion [click on the video](#)

In picture from the left panelist Robert Lavigne, moderator David Harries, panelists Bob Crane and Dwight Powless

Note: For technical reasons Karen MacKenzie was unable to join the discussion on 19 March. She and the panel Moderator 'met' using digital means, on 20 April.



# Food for thought

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## Now we have a structural drawing, so what?

The four-step process outlined in this document represents what is considered to be a successful pilot. It's outcomes paved the way for the construction of the Framework that follows. Panelists encouraged ICN to consider a similar exercise for young Aboriginals to gain more and different perspective. That might promote a Framework with other elements, in a different order.

The Framework that follows is both generic and detailed; the implicit assumption underpinning its structure and contents being that neither/none of the parties to a prospective business relationship/venture have any past experience either building a business relationship, or with each other. In the event that one or more parties to a prospective venture are experienced, and know the other party/parties, it is likely that the Framework can be shortened in terms of the time it would take to implement because fewer steps/elements would be necessary.

Lastly, the Project and the Framework generated from it could be useful in an Aboriginals-only setting, or a non-Aboriginals-only one, as a means to build understanding and providing insights *before* moving on to consideration of and effort to connect Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal business interests.

**Let's now talk about**  
the application of the Framework



## Framework Introduction

**Overview** The project Goal, 'the production of a Framework' (method) which Aboriginal individuals, organizations and communities could use to guide collaboration with non-Aboriginal individuals, companies and organizations, by helping identify opportunities for the establishment of relationships sufficiently strong to underpin joint business ventures.'

The generic Framework that follows is informed by the cumulative output of the four steps of the Project, and has two uses:

**to inform any party to a potential business relationship** what may be Involved in its establishment, and describe ways and means of identifying opportunities for and threats to a business relationship under consideration.

**the frame/ structure on which to build the plan,** process and resource schedule for a specific, case-unique business opportunity.



Photo: Fred Cattroll

## Generic Framework

An engagement process is only as good as its durability and the confidence of those engaging that the costs and benefits of inputs and outputs are sustainably transparent and fair. Key to establishing confidence, in each party and jointly, the willingness to spend the time to accomplish two distinct but related operations:

***each actor/community, on its own***, comes to terms with and takes all possible to become a 'strong' partner, and

***all actors/communities listen and learn and dialogue together*** to build the durable understanding and trust that are the foundation of any successful joint venture.

Prior to a Joint Face to Face Meeting, the Framework has each actor, for themselves and as well as possible for other actors considered potential partners:

- ✓ Scan contexts (for wide-view and situational awareness)
- ✓ Identify trends and drivers and analyse their signals
- ✓ Reach consensus on one's strengths and weaknesses
- ✓ Anticipate one's needs and wishes
- ✓ Analyze options for resources for meeting needs and wishes, with time-lines
- ✓ Construct statement of interest and set of Questions about/for potential partner(s)
- ✓ Request statement of interest and set of Questions from actor(s) selected as potential partners, after providing it(them) the same.
- ✓ Review all reactions, using a third party to ensure impartiality of aggregation and clarification.
- ✓ Decision: go or no go to joint/shared consideration.

# Generic Framework ...cont'd

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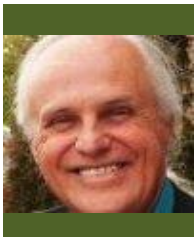
If the decision is to go ahead, the Framework continues, as follows

- ✓ Introduction meetings
- ✓ Listening visit(s)/meetings(s); A to nA, nA to A, together in neutral location/setting
- ✓ Reflection time, after each listening event (may involve some communication)
- ✓ Dialogue visit(s)/meetings(s); with facilitation, without facilitation
- ✓ Reflection time, after each dialogue event (may involve some communication)
- ✓ Planning visit(s)/meeting(s), with appropriate and agreed-upon subject-matter experts
- ✓ Reflection time, after each planning event (probably will involve communication)
- ✓ Options meeting(s), to table, clarify and discuss a 'decisions list' (liability-free)
- ✓ Meeting(s) to agree on a short-list of decisions.
- ✓ Reflection time after each short-listing meeting.
- ✓ Decisions meeting(s)
- ✓ Reflection after each decision meeting
- ✓ Decision: Venture agreement
- ✓ Decision Declaration



**Karen MacKenzie**

President & CEO, MacKintosh Canada Inc.  
ATHPASKA Group of Companies  
Cree-Metis heritage



**Robert Lavigne**

Amanda Communications  
Algonquin-Metis heritage



**Bob Crane**

Manager, Aboriginal Business Development (East)  
ATCO Structures and Logistics  
Blackfoot heritage, Silsika FN



**Dwight Powless**

Community Liaison Resources  
Algonquin College  
Mohawk heritage, Six Nations



**David Harries**

Foresight Specialist.  
Fellow World Academy of Art & Science



# On Trends and Drivers

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What will be possible in communities and in what time-frame is signaled by trends and drivers (T&D). Signal strength and clarity fall the farther out in time one is trying to receive and read them. ‘Now’, and in the near term, ‘experts’ can be expected to provide some reasonable predictions and forecasts to work with. Beyond that however, the signals may be small, and there are no experts on the future. But the benefits of getting ahead of change may be realized only if time and effort is allocated to looking for those small signals to anticipate what the future may hold, particularly the greatest opportunities and the greatest threats.



# Steeple

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Scanning for small signals and anticipation can be time-consuming and frustrating, and may, notwithstanding the best of intentions, miss important factors and connections in the absence of structure and process. A set of lenses provides the structure; the order and frequency in which they are used will be scan-specific, for the same reasons that each and every community and community of interest is unique.

A contemporary lens set that minimizes the likelihood that small but important signals and their connections will be missed and that promotes effective broad anticipation of futures is offered in the acronym STEEPLES

**S**ocial; cultures, customs, religions, demographics

**T**echnological; S&T, old, now, new, emerging, combinations

**E**conomic; costs/benefits and the metrics

**E**nvironmental; climate, geography, near-space, human space

**P**olitical; types, governance, succession, scope, compatibilities (e.g. aboriginal-non aboriginal)

**L**egal; treaties, rules, laws, compliance, justice, reconciliation (local, national, regional, global)

**E**thical; right, wrong, good, bad, neutral (non-consequential)

**S**ecurity; personal, professional, material, consequential (all sectors and domains)

# Making the future with foresight

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**Idea Connector** in collaboration with its not-for-profit partner the Proteus Canada Institute brings people together to help create possible vision of the future and to prepare for unforeseen circumstances.

Whether you are a strategic leader in a private sector organization looking to develop joint ventures with an Aboriginal community, or whether, you are an Aboriginal community leader looking to push out the economic boundaries of your community to generate new wealth while respecting the community's culture and traditions

We can help you develop a custom framework specific to your needs, may it be..

- ✓ To develop an understanding future trends,
- ✓ To identify potential areas for development,
- ✓ To deliver collaborative research programmes.

***We work with organizations, large and small, which strive for excellence and innovation we have practical tools, research, and programs that turn foresight into the critical new insights that ultimately lead to action.***

## Meet our Foresight practice leader

**David Harries, PhD., P.Eng**

Has worked in the public and private sectors as a senior military officer, as a consultant in personal and corporate security, and as a senior advisor and professor in heavy engineering, humanitarian aid, post-conflict/post-disaster response and recovery, executive development and university education. His current focus is on research, curriculum development, teaching and facilitation of strategic foresight related to security and resilience. He is Fellow of the World Academy of Art and Science. He is Chair of Canadian Pugwash and head of its Foresight Committee, a member of the Board of Directors of the Global Initiatives Project and Proteus Canada, Associate Executive Director of Foresight Canada.

**For more information, contact**

**Guy Dancause, CCO**

Idea Connector Network

[Guy.dancause@IdeaConnector.net](mailto:Guy.dancause@IdeaConnector.net)

Tel 613.686.1190 ext. 101

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