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CANADA

FIRST NATIONS, INUIT AND MÉTIS IDENTITY AND PARTICIPATION IN FEDERAL PROCUREMENT

**Report of the Standing Committee on Indigenous and
Northern Affairs**

Terry Sheehan, Chair

**OCTOBER 2025
45th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION**

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Chair**

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NOTICE TO READER

Reports from committees presented to the House of Commons

Presenting a report to the House is the way a committee makes public its findings and recommendations on a particular topic. Substantive reports on a subject-matter study usually contain a synopsis of the testimony heard, the recommendations made by the committee, as well as the reasons for those recommendations.

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THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON INDIGENOUS AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS

has the honour to present its

FIRST REPORT

Pursuant to its mandate under Standing Order 108(2), the committee has studied the barriers to Indigenous economic development and has agreed to report the following:

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LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of their deliberations committees may make recommendations which they include in their reports for the consideration of the House of Commons or the Government. Recommendations related to this study are listed below.

Recommendation 1

That the Government of Canada, in partnership with First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, agree on a federal policy to verify First Nations, Inuit and Métis sovereignty and membership that:

- **takes into account the diverse experiences and histories of Indigenous Peoples, including the effect of federal policies that disconnected Indigenous Peoples from their communities; and**
- **includes verification and enforcement mechanisms for non-compliance.** 13

Recommendation 2

That the Government of Canada, in partnership with First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, initiate a review of Indigenous identity verification processes within its departments, including Canadian Heritage's self-identification process. 14

Recommendation 3

That the Government of Canada engage First Nations, Inuit and Métis on potential amendments to Canadian intellectual property laws and/or a federal framework regarding protections for Indigenous intellectual and cultural property. 15

Recommendation 4

That the Government of Canada, in partnership with First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, develop a certification mark for Indigenous products. 16

Recommendation 5

That Indigenous Services Canada immediately begin work with First Nations, Inuit and Métis to develop an interim policy and approach to the identification and verification of Indigenous businesses under the Procurement Strategy for Indigenous Business and the Indigenous Business Directory, while longer term reforms are being developed.

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Recommendation 6

That Indigenous Services Canada immediately begin work with First Nations, Inuit and Métis on longer term reforms of the Procurement Strategy for Indigenous Business and the Indigenous Business Directory to support the participation of Indigenous businesses in federal procurement, including:

- an Indigenous-led approach to the development, management and maintenance of the Indigenous Business Directory;**
- eligibility criteria and verification of Indigenous businesses;**
- a stronger enforcement framework, including mechanisms to identify individuals who falsely claim an Indigenous identity to participate in the Strategy and the Indigenous Business Directory;**
- measures to ensure participants comply with program requirements; and**
- support from organizations such as the First Nations Procurement Authority, led by and for Indigenous Peoples, to develop targeted outreach, training and support services for recognized First Nations businesses to access public and private markets.**

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FIRST NATIONS, INUIT AND MÉTIS IDENTITY AND PARTICIPATION IN FEDERAL PROCUREMENT

INTRODUCTION

On 25 April 2022, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs (the committee) presented its second report, *[Barriers to Economic Development in Indigenous Communities](#)*, to the House of Commons. The committee's 2022 report described several barriers preventing many First Nations, Inuit and Métis individuals, communities and businesses from fully participating in the Canadian economy, including the legacy of colonialism, the failure to recognize Indigenous jurisdiction, inadequate infrastructure, administrative burdens, limited access to capital and limited access to federal procurement opportunities.

The committee's 2022 report also made 26 recommendations following five meetings with witnesses. Regarding procurement, the report described witness testimony about the importance of increasing Indigenous participation in federal procurement, noted challenges and made recommendations, including that the Government of Canada:

- require at least 5% of all federal contracts valued at over \$5 million to come from Indigenous suppliers;
- develop guidelines to ensure Indigenous organizations can benefit from the requirement that 5% of the value of their contracts are awarded to Indigenous-owned businesses;
- ensure transparency concerning how “federal departments are meeting the requirement that 5% of the value of their contracts are awarded to Indigenous-owned businesses”; and
- create a registry of Indigenous businesses and distribute it to federal departments to identify potential suppliers for federal procurement.

The [Government Response](#) to the report was presented in the House of Commons on 15 September 2022.

On [19 November 2024](#), the House of Commons adopted the following motion:



That the second report of the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs, presented on Monday, April 25, 2022, be not now concurred in, but that it be recommitted to the committee for further consideration, with a view to studying the economic and antireconciliatory barriers posed by fraudulent bids and applications for procurement opportunities set aside for Indigenous businesses, including those from non-Indigenous-owned companies, provided that, for the purposes of this study:

- (a) the following be ordered to appear as witnesses, for at least two hours each, at dates and times to be fixed by the Chair of the committee, but no later than Tuesday, December 17, 2024,
 - (i) the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages,
 - (ii) the Minister of Indigenous Services,
 - (iii) the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations,
 - (iv) the Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant,
 - (v) Arianne Reza, Deputy Minister of Public Services and Procurement,
 - (vi) Catherine Poulin, Assistant Deputy Minister, Departmental Oversight Branch, Department of Public Works and Government Services;
- (b) Felix Papineau and Shawna Parker, individuals currently or formerly associated with Global Health Imports, shall each be ordered to appear as witnesses, separately, for at least one hour each, at dates and times to be fixed by the Chair of the committee, but no later than Tuesday, December 17, 2024; and
- (c) it be an instruction that the committee,
 - (i) hold at least four other meetings to receive evidence from Indigenous partners, stakeholders and experts, proposed by the members of the committee,
 - (ii) report its findings to the House by Friday, January 31, 2025,

- (iii) give priority to this study, subject only to its order of reference concerning Bill C-61, An Act respecting water, source water, drinking water, wastewater and related infrastructure on First Nation lands,
- (iv) have the first priority for the use of House resources for committee meetings, subject to any special orders previously adopted, for the studies referred to in subparagraph (iii).

Between 5 December and 12 December 2024, the committee held additional meetings on barriers to economic development in Indigenous communities with a specific focus on First Nations, Inuit and Métis identity and participation in federal procurement. The committee wishes to thank all witnesses who participated in its study. The committee also notes that despite numerous attempts, it was unable to locate Felix Papineau and Shawna Parker, described as individuals currently or formerly associated with Global Health Imports in the motion adopted by the House of Commons. On 10 December 2024, the committee adopted the following motion:

That the committee summon Felix Papineau and Shawna Parker to testify before this committee, provided that the Chair and clerk be directed to retain, if necessary, the services of a skip tracer to assist with the service of the summonses, and that the Chair and clerk of the committee be empowered to action the necessary details pertaining to the contract of the use of a skip tracer.¹

The committee did not table a report on testimony heard in December 2024 on Indigenous participation in federal procurement prior to the dissolution of the 44th Parliament. On 24 September 2025, the committee adopted the following motion:

That the committee resume its study on barriers to Indigenous economic development that it undertook during the first session of the 44th Parliament pursuant to the order of reference of Tuesday, November 19, 2024; that the evidence and documentation received by the committee during that study be taken into consideration by the committee in the current session; and that the committee report its findings and recommendations to the House.

This report builds on the committee's previous 2022 report and presents what the committee heard from witnesses in December 2024, as well as the committee's findings and recommendations. The first section of this report discusses First Nations, Inuit and

1 House of Commons, Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs (INAN), *Minutes*, 10 December 2024.



Métis witness testimony regarding Indigenous identity. First Nations can register for “status” under the *Indian Act* which is used to determine eligibility for some federal programs. Status under the *Indian Act* does not necessarily result in membership or citizenship in a First Nations community. Some First Nations have developed their own membership or citizenship codes with additional criteria that do not necessarily require individuals to be registered under the *Indian Act*.² For Inuit, modern treaties negotiated between Inuit, the federal and, at times, provincial or territorial governments, include provisions about beneficiaries of these agreements. Métis organizations and governments have developed their own citizenship definitions and registries.

As explained by Pamela Palmater, Mi'kmaq Lawyer, Eel River Bar First Nation and Chair in Indigenous Governance, Toronto Metropolitan University, some First Nations women may not be members of their communities because of sex discrimination under the *Indian Act*.³ To register for status, individuals must apply to the Government of Canada to prove that they meet the criteria set out in section 6 of the *Indian Act*. Prior to 1985, legislative provisions concerning status explicitly favoured patrilineal lineage. Over time, and in response to court challenges brought forward by First Nations women and their descendants, Parliament has amended the *Indian Act* registration provisions in an attempt to address gender discrimination.⁴ However, Pamela Palmater argued that “[w]e have not gotten rid of all the sex discrimination in the *Indian Act*.”⁵

There are also other individuals who identify as First Nation but who may not be eligible for registration under the *Indian Act*. In *Daniels vs. Canada*, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that individuals who are non-status are within the federal government’s exclusive legislative authority alongside First Nations, Inuit and Métis.⁶

The remainder of the report discusses barriers to Indigenous economic development and Indigenous participation in federal procurement. The section on Indigenous participation in federal procurement considers the federal government’s Procurement Strategy for Indigenous Business and the Indigenous Business Directory, verification and

2 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 5900 (Pamela Palmater, Mi'kmaq Lawyer, Eel River Bar First Nation and Chair in Indigenous Governance, Toronto Metropolitan University, As an Individual).

3 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 5840 (Pamela Palmater).

4 The *Indian Act* was amended in 1985, 2010 and 2017. *An Act to amend the Indian Act*, R.S., c. I-5, Chapter 32, 1st Supp., 1985; *Gender Equity in Indian Registration Act*, S.C. 2010, c. 18, section 9; *An Act to amend the Indian Act in response to the Superior Court of Quebec decision in Descheneaux c. Canada (Procureur général)*, S.C. 2017, c. 25, sections 10 and 10.1.

5 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 5840 (Pamela Palmater).

6 [Daniels v. Canada \(Indian Affairs and Northern Development\)](#), 2016 SCC 12.

compliance mechanisms for Indigenous participation in federal procurement, and ongoing work to improve federal initiatives related to Indigenous procurement.

FIRST NATIONS, INUIT AND MÉTIS IDENTITY

Witnesses told the committee about First Nations, Inuit and Métis self-determination over membership and citizenship.⁷ For example, Jacques T. Watso stated, “We are the sole protectors of our nation, culture and heritage, and we know who our members and descendants are, as do all communities across Canada.”⁸

Witnesses explained that self-determination in relation to Indigenous identity and membership was, and continues to be, affected by federal policies and legislation that disconnect Indigenous individuals from their communities. For example, some witnesses noted individuals’ relationships and connection with their communities continues to be impacted by attendance at residential and day schools,⁹ the Sixties Scoop, the child welfare system, and the *Indian Act* registration provisions. Pamela Palmater argued that Indigenous women are disproportionately impacted by federal policies and legislation.¹⁰ For example, she cited sex discrimination under the *Indian Act*, including limits on who can pass down status to their descendants and how this disproportionately affects First Nations women.¹¹ As noted above, prior to 1985, legislative provisions concerning the transmission of status explicitly favoured the male line: status First Nations women who married non-First Nations men would lose their status. However, status First Nations men who married non-First Nations women retained their status and could pass it on to their wives and children. In 1985, Parliament amended the *Indian Act* with the intention of removing gender discrimination from the registration provisions. Among other matters, the 1985 amendments restored status to women who had lost it due to marriage to a non-First Nations man and established different categories of status.

7 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 1155 (Lorne Pelletier, Senior Economic Advisor to the President, Manitoba Métis Federation); 5925 (Jacques T. Watso, Advisor, Abénakis Band Council of Odanak); 6000 (Crystal Semaganis, Leader, Ghost Warrior Society).

8 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 5920 (Jacques T. Watso).

9 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 5830 (Pamela Palmater); 6000 (Crystal Semaganis); For more information about residential and day schools, please see: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, [Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada](#), 2015.

10 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 5840 (Pamela Palmater).

11 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 5840 (Pamela Palmater).



However, after two successive generations of mixed status parentage, individuals would lose eligibility for status, a rule commonly referred to as the “second-generation cut-off.”

The committee heard about the different requirements and processes for obtaining membership and citizenship among First Nations, Inuit and Métis.¹² For example, modern treaties and self-government agreements negotiated between Indigenous, federal and, at times, provincial or territorial governments, include provisions about beneficiaries of these agreements.¹³

Some witnesses told the committee that the number of individuals falsely claiming Indigenous identity is increasing in fields such as education and the arts, as well as federal procurement, a topic discussed later in this report.¹⁴ Darryl Leroux, Associate Professor from the University of Ottawa, argued that research suggests there has been an increase in individuals falsely claiming an Indigenous identity since the 2003 Supreme Court of Canada decision, *R. v. Powley*.¹⁵ In this case, the Supreme Court of Canada provided a test to determine the Aboriginal rights of Métis communities under section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*.¹⁶

Some witnesses described nuanced problems among individuals claiming an Indigenous identity. Crystal Semaganis, Leader of the Ghost Warrior Society, raised concerns about the lack of consistency in the application of Indigenous citizenship or membership criteria. For example, she argued there is no “generational cut off” for certain Métis government registries, whereas the “second-generation cut-off” prevents many First Nations from passing on their status to descendants. She argued, “[t]hen you have the Métis, such as the Métis Nation of Ontario, which seems to accept people up to 10 generations. There is no consistency across the board.”¹⁷ She stated,

12 INAN, *Evidence*, 9 December 2024, 2015, 2020 (Andrea Sandmaier, President, Métis Nation of Alberta); INAN, *Evidence*, 10 December 2024, 1145 (Lorne Pelletier); 1230 (Keith Henry, President and Chief Executive Officer, BC Métis Federation); 1100 (Natan Obed, President, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami).

13 INAN, *Evidence*, 10 December 2024, 1150 (Lorne Pelletier); 1100 (Natan Obed); 5805 (Pamela Palmater); 1230 (Keith Henry); 1125 (Darryl Leroux, Associate Professor, University of Ottawa, As an individual); 5925 (Crystal Semaganis); 5810 (Karen Restoule, Senior Fellow, Macdonald-Laurier Institute, As an Individual); 6020 (Anthony Wingham, President, Waceyá Métis Society).

14 INAN, *Evidence*, 10 December 2024, 1020 (Natan Obed); 1105 (Leah Ballantyne, Lawyer, As an individual).

15 INAN, *Evidence*, 10 December 2024, 1125 (Darryl Leroux).

16 *R. v. Powley*, [2003] 2 SCR 207.

17 INAN, *Evidence*, 10 December 2024, 6005 (Crystal Semaganis).

“[p]retendianism would not exist without the absolute failure of colonial systems to look at us and tell us who we are.”¹⁸

Pamela Palmater also stated that:

Unfortunately, the term “pretendian” is now being used to just cover everybody who isn't currently a registered member of a community ...

We really need to separate those who should rightfully be members but aren't because of, say, sex discrimination in the *Indian Act*—because of amendments, they will be members at some time—versus people who were told by their families that they had some [I]ndigenous great-great-great-great-grandmother 400 years in the past, versus people who were told by one of these fraudulent Métis organizations that, yes, you're Métis; yes, we've looked at your documents; yes, you've substantiated it, and here's a card that says you have rights.

There are people who are knowingly committing fraud. There are people who have been kind of scammed into believing they're [I]ndigenous. Then there are people on the edges, who are being put into the category of pretendians who shouldn't be.¹⁹

Chief Lance Haymond of the Kebaowek First Nation; Natan Obed, President, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK); Darryl Leroux; Lorne Pelletier, Senior Economic Advisor to the President, Manitoba Métis Federation; Jacques T. Watso and Crystal Semaganis expressed concerns about individuals and organizations who they believe are falsely asserting Indigenous identity and appropriating Indigenous cultures.²⁰ In some instances, Chief Lance Haymond, Natan Obed and Darryl Leroux argued that the federal government is in negotiations with, has recognized, and/or funded organizations that witnesses do not consider to be Indigenous.²¹

Chief Lance Haymond, Leah Ballantyne, Darryl Leroux, Pamela Palmater and Jacques T. Watso told the committee that individuals may falsely claim Indigenous identity for personal, financial, political or social gain, career advancement, to find a sense of

18 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 6005 (Crystal Semaganis).

19 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 5835 (Pamela Palmater).

20 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 0925, 0935, 0945 (Chief Lance Haymond, Kebaowek First Nation); 1050, 1120 (Natan Obed); 1125, 1210, 1215 (Darryl Leroux); 1155 (Lorne Pelletier); 5940, 6005 (Jacques T. Watso); 6000, 6005 (Crystal Semaganis).

21 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 0925, 0935, 0945 (Chief Lance Haymond); 1050, 1120 (Natan Obed); 1125 (Darryl Leroux).



belonging, and to avoid guilt and responsibility for colonialism.²² Darryl Leroux also argued that individuals falsely claiming Indigenous identity are:

[P]art of this process of what we call “settler colonialism”, which really seeks to eliminate, in different ways, [I]ndigenous [P]eoples from the landscape, whether that's through assimilation or through other policies that especially aim to render [I]ndigenous political entities as simply cultural organizations that the state or the Crown has no responsibility towards ... If all Canadians or millions of Canadians who were not [I]ndigenous suddenly claimed to be [I]ndigenous and were accepted as such, what would happen to actual [I]ndigenous [P]eople?²³

The committee heard that self-identification is used to determine Indigenous identity in many sectors including the arts, universities and the federal public service.²⁴ In some cases, witnesses noted that self-identification processes are confidential and claims are not verified.²⁵ Certain witnesses argued that self-identification alone is an inadequate means of verifying Indigenous identity, and is often used by individuals falsely claiming Indigenous identity.²⁶ Pamela Palmater stated:

While I understand that self-identification is one of those things that governments, universities and the arts community have done as a way of trying to be respectful and not put [I]ndigenous [P]eoples through additional verification processes because of all of the impacts of colonization on our identity already and all the hoops we already have to jump through, it's very obvious that self-identification is not enough. It's very easily exploited ... There's no accountability around self-identification.²⁷

The committee heard about how false claims of Indigenous identity affect Indigenous individuals, communities and all Canadians. Darryl Leroux stated that Indigenous Peoples have fought for decades to have representation in public institutions, yet opportunities intended for them are going to non-Indigenous peoples falsely claiming an Indigenous identity.²⁸ Natan Obed argued that, “[i]n an increasingly dangerous world, indulging in

22 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 0925 (Chief Lance Haymond); 1105 (Leah Ballantyne); 1125, 1205 (Darryl Leroux); 5835 (Pamela Palmater); 5920, 5940 (Jacques T. Watso).

23 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 1140 (Darryl Leroux).

24 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 5805 (Pamela Palmater); 1125 (Darryl Leroux).

25 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 5920, 5925 (Jacques T. Watso); 1125 (Darryl Leroux); 5805 (Pamela Palmater).

26 INAN, [Evidence](#), 9 December 2024, 2005 (Andrea Sandmaier); INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 1130 (Darryl Leroux); 5805 (Pamela Palmater); 5935 (Crystal Semaganis).

27 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 5805 (Pamela Palmater).

28 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 1200 (Darryl Leroux).

fantasies that support [I]ndigenous identity fraud will be used by foreign actors to drive wedges between and among Canadians, undermining our shared national unity.”²⁹

Chief Lance Haymond also explained that:

False claims can distort policy discussions, divert resources and even undermine the legitimacy of the rights we are fighting to protect ...

The consequences of this harm are wide-reaching. False claims can undermine the work of [I]ndigenous leaders like me who are advocating for meaningful policy change ...

These claims also create confusion and division within the broader Canadian society, hindering true reconciliation and the understanding of what it means to be [I]ndigenous in this country. In addition, the rising trend of pretend Indians further complicates efforts to protect our rights in court. When people falsely claim a connection to [I]ndigenous identity, it erodes the credibility of the legitimate claims and weakens the voice of people whose rights have been historically ignored, violated and stripped away.³⁰

Witnesses told the committee that people falsely claiming Indigenous identity are gaining access to limited federal funding for essential programs for Indigenous Peoples in areas such as housing and economic development.³¹ Natan Obed told the committee:

We know that there is a fixed amount of money for the equity that we are seeking and the implementation of our rights. We are worried that we are not able to get to equity quickly enough because of the funds that are mistakenly used for [I]ndigenous [P]eoples that have no standing.³²

Ultimately, witnesses explained that false claims to Indigenous identity undermine Indigenous rights and create divisions between First Nations, Inuit and Métis organizations.³³ Disagreements surrounding Indigenous identity can also lead to conflicting claims about lands and resources and this was a subject of concern raised by witnesses before the committee.³⁴

29 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 1020 (Natan Obed).

30 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 0925 (Chief Lance Haymond).

31 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 5935, 5945 (Crystal Semaganis); 5935 (Jacques T. Watso); 1120 (Natan Obed).

32 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 1050, 1115 (Natan Obed).

33 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 6055 (Keith Henry); 5920 (Jacques T. Watso); Lake Huron Regional Chief Scott McLeod, Anishinabek Nation, [Submission to the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs regarding Indigenous Identity Fraud and Barriers to Economic Development](#), 13 December 2024.

34 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 0925, 0935, 0945, 0950, 1005 (Chief Lance Haymond); 1105 (Leah Ballantyne).



Darryl Leroux argued that individuals who question those who are falsely claiming an Indigenous identity within “the federal government and other levels of government institutions” are often Indigenous women and are usually forced out “because the people who are accused of making false claims, or who actually have been shown to make false claims, often grow quite hostile. Their whole careers depend on this level of fraud.”³⁵

Karen Restoule, MLI Senior Fellow, argued that:

[I]n my view, we have groups of non-[I]ndigenous Canadians who have been taught over the years to be deferential to those who self-identify and not to question for fear of getting cancelled. I think that sentiment drives a lot of behaviour, whether it's with a government employee or with Joe Canadian writ large.³⁶

Some witnesses identified potential solutions to address individuals falsely claiming an Indigenous identity, including the development of federal policy on Indigenous identity, which some suggested should be Indigenous-led or jointly developed with Indigenous People.³⁷ The committee heard that while the majority of cases for verification would likely be straightforward, flexibility is needed for individuals who were and remain disconnected from their communities as a result of federal policies and legislation.³⁸ Others identified solutions such as eliminating self-identification processes for Indigenous identity.³⁹

Witnesses explained that mechanisms are needed to hold those who falsely self-identify as Indigenous to account.⁴⁰ Ghosts Warriors Society Leader, Crystal Semaganis, told the committee that, “[t]he problem is that there are absolutely zero legal consequences for claiming to be [I]ndigenous. There are a lot of resources to be exploited, and there's a lot of exploitation that has been going on.”⁴¹ The committee heard that Indigenous Peoples

35 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 1155 (Darryl Leroux).

36 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 5825 (Karen Restoule).

37 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 5830, 5850 (Pamela Palmater); 1125 (Darryl Leroux); 1000 (Chief Lance Haymond).

38 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 1125 (Darryl Leroux); 5830 (Pamela Palmater).

39 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 5945 (Crystal Semaganis).

40 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 5840 (Pamela Palmater); 5910 (Jacques T. Watso); 5955 (Crystal Semaganis); 6030 (Angela Jaime, Vice-Provost, Indigenous Engagement, University of Saskatchewan, As an Individual).

41 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 5955 (Crystal Semaganis).

must lead work to determine consequences for those who falsely claim an Indigenous identity.⁴²

The committee also heard about promising practices such as the University of Saskatchewan’s *deybwewin | taapwaywin | tapwewin* Indigenous Truth Policy. The policy requires individuals to provide documentation when claiming Indigenous membership or citizenship where it could result in a material advantage, such as an award, scholarship or funding.⁴³ Indigenous governments and communities tell the university what documentation to accept from its members and citizens.⁴⁴ The university works with the Indigenous governments and communities to verify the documents received from an applicant. Angela Jaime, Vice-Provost, Indigenous Engagement, University of Saskatchewan, noted that the “policy is not only about identity,” but rather “about who claims you.”⁴⁵ For non-status individuals who may have been enfranchised or lost status under the *Indian Act* due to various reasons, Angela Jaime further explained:

For [F]irst [N]ations people specifically, if their band writes a letter saying that they are a member of their band and they claim them as a member, that supersedes any Government of Canada determination that they are non-status. Again, it is the bands that make that determination.⁴⁶

The University of Saskatchewan also works with applicants to help them reconnect with their communities.⁴⁷

Based on the testimony, the committee recommends:

Recommendation 1

That the Government of Canada, in partnership with First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, agree on a federal policy to verify First Nations, Inuit and Métis sovereignty and membership that:

42 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 6030 (Angela Jaime).

43 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 6015 (Angela Jaime).

44 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 6015, 6025 (Angela Jaime).

45 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 6015 (Angela Jaime).

46 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 6030 (Angela Jaime).

47 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 6055 (Angela Jaime).



- **takes into account the diverse experiences and histories of Indigenous Peoples, including the effect of federal policies that disconnected Indigenous Peoples from their communities; and**
- **includes verification and enforcement mechanisms for non-compliance.**

Recommendation 2

That the Government of Canada, in partnership with First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, initiate a review of Indigenous identity verification processes within its departments, including Canadian Heritage's self-identification process.

The following section discusses additional testimony heard from witnesses on barriers to Indigenous economic development.

INDIGENOUS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

As a part of its study, the committee heard further testimony about barriers to economic development which prevent many First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities and businesses from fully participating in the Canadian economy. Witnesses and briefs identified many of the same barriers discussed in the committee's 2022 report, such as the impacts of colonialism, including discriminatory provisions and inequities in the *Indian Act*; limited capacity and resources; inadequate infrastructure; limited access to capital and lands; insufficient educational, training and mentorship programs or supports; administrative burdens; and poor or nonexistent supports for Indigenous businesses to move into emerging markets and to scale up.⁴⁸ For example, in a brief submitted to the committee, the Council for the Advancement of Economic Development Officers explained that a "central barrier voiced by First Nations communities" is a lack of resources "to properly attract, hire, train and retain full-time professional EDOs [Economic Development Officers]," persons who "strategically coordinate economic development activities and opportunities between the community, governments and private industry."⁴⁹

48 INAN, *Evidence*, 10 December 2024, 1045 (Brian Doxtator, Chief Executive Officer and Principal, Pure Spirit Solutions); INAN, *Evidence*, 10 December 2024, 5805 (Pam Palmater); 5810 (Karen Restoule).

49 The Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers (Cando), *Written Brief to the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs for the Report on Barriers to Indigenous Economic Development*, 18 December 2024.

The committee also heard about barriers to economic development specifically related to Inuit and Inuit Nunangat,⁵⁰ including access to infrastructure and connectivity, and concerns around intellectual property protections. Natan Obed explained:

We are ... in a new frontier for intellectual property, and the consideration for how we can protect Inuit intellectual property and things specific to Inuit society, culture and business moving forward is a point of great concern for us.⁵¹

Keith Henry, President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of both the British Columbia Métis Federation and the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada, described barriers to Indigenous economic development related to Indigenous tourism, such as access to capital and intellectual and cultural property protections. He explained that a \$2.6 billion investment is required to “enable Indigenous tourism to build to reach its potential” and to help Indigenous tourism businesses compete “at a market and export-ready level.” Regarding intellectual and cultural property protections, he explained:

The gift shop market in this country is huge, and the amount of made-in-China, made-in-India, made-in-everywhere inauthentic [I]ndigenous printed products being sold in gift shops in this country is billions of dollars. Getting proper legislation through [I]ndigenous economic development or economic strategy around making sure that [I]ndigenous products benefit [I]ndigenous artists and [I]ndigenous communities will in itself drive literally billions of dollars of important revenues back to [I]ndigenous [P]eople.⁵²

Based on the testimony, the committee recommends:

Recommendation 3

That the Government of Canada engage First Nations, Inuit and Métis on potential amendments to Canadian intellectual property laws and/or a federal framework regarding protections for Indigenous intellectual and cultural property.

50 ITK President Natan Obed explains that Inuit Nunangat is the Inuit homeland comprised of “over 74% of Canada’s shoreline and over 36% of Canada’s land mass.” INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 1020 (Natan Obed).

51 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 1050, 1110 (Natan Obed).

52 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 6035 (Keith Henry); see also: BC Métis Federation, [Submission to the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs, “Barriers to Economic Development,”](#) 18 December 2024.



Recommendation 4

That the Government of Canada, in partnership with First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, develop a certification mark for Indigenous products.

The committee also heard from several witnesses about existing programs and initiatives intended to promote Indigenous economic development. Otipemisiwak Métis Government (formerly the Métis Nation of Alberta) President Andrea Sandmaier explained that through their housing initiatives, the Otipemisiwak Métis Government has “become the largest Indigenous-owned housing developer in Canada.”⁵³ She further described how education, employment and skills training initiatives and programs intended for Métis entrepreneurs “help Métis citizens move into high-demand industries, address labour market gaps and, ultimately, improve economic outcomes for Métis families.”⁵⁴ Natan Obed described the anticipated Inuit Nunangat University, which is expected to open in 2030. He explained how the university will be Inuit-led and provide culturally appropriate educational programming with the aim of advancing economic development, among other interests.⁵⁵

The following section discusses federal Indigenous procurement programs, and what the committee heard regarding the benefits and challenges experienced by Indigenous individuals and businesses participating in federal procurement.

INDIGENOUS PARTICIPATION IN FEDERAL PROCUREMENT

The committee’s 2022 report identified limited access to federal procurement opportunities as a barrier to Indigenous economic development. The federal government has programs and initiatives intended to increase Indigenous participation in federal procurement. Indigenous Services Canada manages the Procurement Strategy for Indigenous Business (the Strategy), established in 1996 (then, the Procurement Strategy for Aboriginal Business). Karen Restoule, described the Strategy’s five policy objectives:

- increase Indigenous participation in federal procurement;
- promote Indigenous business development;

53 INAN, [Evidence](#), 9 December 2024, 2005 (Andrea Sandmaier).

54 INAN, [Evidence](#), 9 December 2024, 2005, 2030 (Andrea Sandmaier).

55 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 1045 (Natan Obed).

- provide enhanced Indigenous economic opportunities;
- create Indigenous employment; and
- support economic self-sufficiency for Indigenous communities.⁵⁶

The Procurement Strategy for Indigenous Business limits bidding for federal contracts through a set-aside program for Indigenous businesses. These “set asides” give Indigenous businesses “right of first refusal,” or exclusive bidding rights, to federal contracting opportunities. In some cases, set asides are mandatory.⁵⁷ In August 2021, the federal government set a mandatory requirement for all federal departments and agencies to award a minimum of 5% of the total aggregate value of federal contracts to Indigenous businesses each year.

Indigenous Services Canada also hosts the publicly available Indigenous Business Directory, which allows all levels of government and the private sector to identify Indigenous businesses. Indigenous businesses are defined as those with at least 51% ownership or control by Indigenous persons, but joint ventures between Indigenous and non-Indigenous businesses are also permitted to participate in the Strategy. Registration is required for those companies wishing to qualify under the Strategy.⁵⁸

Certain modern treaties also contain federal procurement obligations, such as article 24 of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, which includes sections on:

- Government of Canada and Nunavut territorial government responsibilities regarding procurement policies;
- bid invitation, solicitation, and criteria;
- maintenance of a list of Inuit firms;

56 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 5810 (Karen Restoule).

57 According to section 9.40.1 Public Services and Procurement Canada’s (PSPC) [Supply Manual](#), set asides under the Procurement Strategy for Indigenous Business are mandatory “if an Indigenous population is the primary recipient or end user of the goods or services being procured and the value exceeds \$5,000, provided that operational requirements, prudence, probity, best value and sound contracting management can be assured.”

58 An Indigenous business may be a band, sole proprietorship, limited company, co-operative, partnership or not-for-profit organization. In the case of a joint venture, at least 51% ownership or control of the joint venture must be Indigenous. PSPC, “[Annex 9.4: Requirements for the Set-aside Program for Indigenous Business](#),” [Supply Manual](#).



- evaluation and monitoring mechanisms; and
- the implementation of article 24.⁵⁹

The committee heard about the benefits and challenges experienced by Indigenous individuals and businesses participating in federal Indigenous procurement programs. For example, the past Minister of Indigenous Services told the committee:

There are tangible economic benefits to companies that for the first time have the Government of Canada as their customer. From experience to system navigation to growth of opportunity, government procurement could be a valuable component in the sales trajectory of an [I]ndigenous company. Now that we're seeing success in bringing [I]ndigenous companies into the sphere of government procurement, the federal government is working with partners to transform the procurement strategy.⁶⁰

President of the Waceyá Métis Society in British Columbia, Anthony Wingham, told the committee that for young Indigenous entrepreneurs and their businesses, federal procurement opportunities can present “a vital first step toward growth.” He stated:

When the system works as intended and contracts are verified and given to [I]ndigenous-owned businesses that invest in training, community projects and future bids, everybody benefits. Communities can begin to take real ownership of their economic futures by reinvesting profits into scholarships for youth, improving local infrastructure and fostering a cycle of prosperity and resilience.⁶¹

The Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) told the committee that the 5% federal Indigenous procurement target “reflects true and tangible [I]ndigenous reconciliation and has the potential to advance the economic participation of the Red River Métis in meaningful ways.”⁶² Natan Obed described the need for “expanded procurement opportunities,” particularly in the context of Arctic security and defence, as a means to developing “a robust private sector to support Inuit Nunangat.” He noted that “Canada’s Arctic requires substantial investment to be secure.”⁶³ However, some witnesses identified barriers to participation in federal procurement. For example, PureSpirIT Solutions Inc. CEO, Brian Doxatotor, explained that significant challenges remain for

59 INAN, [Evidence](#), 9 December 2024, 1710 (Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos, Minister of Public Services and Procurement); Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., [Article 24 – Government Contracts](#).

60 INAN, [Evidence](#), 9 December 2024, 1615 (Hon. Patty Hajdu).

61 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 6020 (Anthony Wingham).

62 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 1130 (Lorne Pelletier).

63 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 1020 (Natan Obed).

Indigenous businesses wishing to participate in federal procurement processes, including limited access to capital. Furthermore, he stated:

Many federal procurement vehicles are highly technical, requiring specific skills to interpret and prepare bids that comply with specifications. To compete, companies must invest in attracting and retaining the necessary talent and administrative resources. While we understand the need for efficient procurement, the lowest-priced bid mentality often leaves [I]ndigenous businesses struggling. Even when successful, profit margins are thin. Perhaps weighing factors other than the lowest possible price could ease this barrier. Another challenge for some [I]ndigenous businesses is access to reliable high-speed Internet. This has become more important since the pandemic, which has increased the need for remote work specifically to attract staff from rural and northern communities.⁶⁴

The MMF noted that “Red River Métis businesses continue to face...barriers to participation in Canada’s [I]ndigenous procurement.” The MMF described the federal Indigenous Business Directory registration process as “onerous,” and explained that only 5% of businesses on their own Red River Métis Business Registry are included on the federal Indigenous Business Directory.⁶⁵

Karen Restoule told the committee that while there is limited data on the number of Indigenous businesses and entrepreneurs across Canada, “recent estimates suggest that there are now over 70,000 [I]ndigenous-owned businesses in Canada.”⁶⁶ The past Minister of Indigenous Services told the committee that under the federal government’s Indigenous procurement program, the “value of contracts going to [I]ndigenous businesses has increased to approximately \$1.6 billion.”⁶⁷ Restoule explained that there is “a strong and compelling reason to question the validity of this data, given the rise in appropriation of [I]ndigenous identity, also referred to as pretendianism, and the rise in fraudulent bids.”⁶⁸

According to several witnesses, the identification and verification of Indigenous businesses creates challenges for Indigenous participation in federal procurement opportunities. The following section discusses witness testimony about the identification and verification of Indigenous businesses.

64 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 1030, 1045 (Brian Doxtator).

65 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 1130 (Lorne Pelletier).

66 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 5810 (Karen Restoule).

67 INAN, [Evidence](#), 9 December 2024, 1615 (Hon. Patty Hajdu).

68 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 5810 (Karen Restoule).



IDENTIFICATION AND VERIFICATION OF INDIGENOUS BUSINESSES

As noted above, to participate in the Procurement Strategy for Indigenous Business, Indigenous businesses must have at least 51% ownership or control by Indigenous persons, but joint ventures between Indigenous and non-Indigenous businesses are also permitted to participate. To be considered for a federal contract under the Strategy, a business must be listed on either the federal government's Indigenous Business Directory or listed on a modern treaty business list or directory.⁶⁹ To be added to the Indigenous Business Directory, business owners must register and provide proof that they are First Nations, Inuit or Métis, including, for example, through registration under the *Indian Act*.⁷⁰ The committee heard that each regional Inuit land claims organization has already developed definitions for what constitutes an Inuit business. Natan Obed explained that the Inuit Nunangat Policy, which was developed by the Inuit-Crown Partnership Committee and "which identifies the Inuit treaties [and] the Inuit collective rights holders of Canada," also includes an annex specifically dedicated to procurement.⁷¹

In the context of the Procurement Strategy for Indigenous Business, witnesses raised concerns about individuals falsely claiming Indigenous identity or partnering with Indigenous businesses in order to participate in federal procurement. Ghosts Warriors Society Leader, Crystal Semaganis, told the committee, "[i]t goes beyond procurement, but procurement is where we can see the actual dollar signs in terms of how impactful and how exploitative the false claims of [F]irst [N]ations, Métis and Inuit identity have been."⁷² Furthermore, Waceyá Métis Society President Anthony Wingham stated:

When non-[I]ndigenous companies masquerade as [I]ndigenous-owned, or when they install token [I]ndigenous partners with no real decision-making authority, they divert the resources away from those who truly need them. This practice not only undermines the credibility of set-asides and other supportive measures, but also removes the optimism from young entrepreneurs who see how easily outsiders exploit the system. They ask how we can compete on a level playing field, how we can ensure that the contracts are actually reserved for our communities and why enforcement is so lax that some people can simply game a system designed to lift us up.⁷³

69 Government of Canada, [Learn how federal Indigenous procurement works](#).

70 Government of Canada, [Register for the Indigenous Business Directory](#); INAN, [Evidence](#), 9 December 2024, 1605 (Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos).

71 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 1020 (Natan Obed).

72 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 5925 (Crystal Semaganis).

73 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 6020 (Anthony Wingham).

Witnesses also expressed concerns about the federal government’s approach to verifying Indigenous identity under the Procurement Strategy for Indigenous Business and recommended strengthening verification processes and enforcement penalties for non-compliance.⁷⁴ Anthony Wingham further explained:

Indigenous entrepreneurs consistently call for policies with real teeth and verification measures that ensure [I]ndigenous-owned businesses are genuinely rooted in their communities, accountable to local governance structures and recognized by respected [I]ndigenous institutions. They want a strong reporting compliance framework so that everyone, from the awarding body to the community members on the ground, can see that [I]ndigenous voices are making decisions, sharing profits and building their own capacity.

Karen Restoule also told the committee:

While federal government maintains the [I]ndigenous [B]usiness [D]irectory, which requires proof of majority [I]ndigenous ownership, these measures, in my view, are not sufficient. Strengthening the verification processes and ensuring swift consequences for non-compliance are critical to preserving trust, not only in [I]ndigenous procurement programs but in government as an institution.⁷⁵

Indigenous Services Canada explains that it performs “regular compliance audits” of the Indigenous Business Directory to verify adherence with Procurement Strategy for Indigenous Business requirements.⁷⁶ The past Minister of Indigenous Services also told the committee that she has called “for a full external audit” of the Strategy.⁷⁷

The committee heard that joint ventures between Indigenous and non-Indigenous businesses can be successful, particularly for Indigenous businesses and entrepreneurs just starting up and who have limited access to capital.⁷⁸ However, the committee also heard that there have been instances of abuse of joint ventures under the Procurement Strategy for Indigenous Business, with “people who are taking advantage of perhaps a

74 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 0940 (Chief Lance Haymond); INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 1030 (Brian Doxtator).

75 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 5810 (Karen Restoule).

76 [Government Response to the Second Report of the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs](#), 15 September 2022, p. 11.

77 INAN, [Evidence](#), 9 December 2024, 1615 (Hon. Patty Hajdu).

78 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 1045 (Brian Doxtator); INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 1000 (Chief Lance Haymond); INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 5850 (Karen Restoule).



reduced capacity or capability with [I]ndigenous parties to position themselves ... within a joint venture”.⁷⁹

Witnesses shared ideas about potential ways to address concerns with respect to the verification of Indigenous identity for eligibility to be added to the Indigenous Business Directory. The committee heard that the Directory is not an Indigenous-led initiative.⁸⁰ Some witnesses recommended that the federal government recognize existing Indigenous-led and verified business directories.⁸¹ Certain witnesses also described existing publicly available verified databases of Indigenous businesses, such as the Otipemisiwak Métis Government’s database Alberta MétisWorks and the MMF’s Red River Métis Business Directory.⁸² Otipemisiwak Métis Government President Andrea Sandmaier explained:

We believe that our registry offers a model for how governments can establish clear and enforceable criteria to ensure [I]ndigenous procurement contracts are awarded to legitimate Métis businesses. ... By applying a similar standard of verification to [I]ndigenous procurement, governments can ensure that opportunities meant for [I]ndigenous communities are not diverted to entities with tenuous or questionable claims.⁸³

However, the MMF explained in December 2024 that their directory is not recognized by the federal government as a source verifying an Indigenous business.⁸⁴ Therefore, if a Métis owned business listed on the Red River Métis Business Directory wishes to participate in federal procurement as an Indigenous business, they must also apply to be on the Indigenous Business Directory, which creates an additional burden for businesses.⁸⁵

The committee also heard that the University of Saskatchewan’s *deybwewin | taapwaywin | tapwewin* Indigenous Truth Policy, described earlier in this report, could

79 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 5850 (Karen Restoule).

80 INAN, [Evidence](#), 9 December 2024, 1910 (Hon. Gary Anandasangaree).

81 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 1140 (Lorne Pelletier).

82 INAN, [Evidence](#), 9 December 2024, 2030–2045 (Andrea Sandmaier); INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 1130 (Lorne Pelletier).

83 INAN, [Evidence](#), 9 December 2024, 2005 (Andrea Sandmaier).

84 Of note, in August 2025, the Government of Canada announced its recognition of the Red River Métis Business Directory as “a source of verified Red River Métis businesses.” Indigenous Services Canada, [Red River Métis Business Directory now recognized by the Government of Canada as a source of verified Indigenous businesses](#), News Release, 20 August 2025.

85 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 1130 (Lorne Pelletier).

serve as a model for the federal government’s Indigenous procurement strategy.⁸⁶ The policy requires verification documentation “for all incoming assertions of Indigenous membership/citizenship ... where that claim may result in a material advantage.”⁸⁷

The past Minister of Indigenous Services told the committee that the federal government is working with “Indigenous partners” to “transform the [P]rocurement [S]trategy [for Indigenous Business],” and ensure an Indigenous-led approach whereby Indigenous Peoples define and certify Indigenous businesses. She explained, however, that there is a lack of consensus from Indigenous Peoples on the approach to reform the Procurement Strategy for Indigenous Business.⁸⁸ While several Indigenous organizations may wish to take over the Indigenous Business Directory, the past Minister of Indigenous Services argued that too many differing lists can pose challenges for achieving program objectives.⁸⁹ The past Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations also explained that while a longer-term approach is being developed, “we need to have some significant safeguards to ensure that [I]ndigenous identity concerns are addressed immediately.”⁹⁰

Several witnesses told the committee that reforms to the Procurement Strategy for Indigenous Business, including the Indigenous Business Directory, must be Indigenous-led. Chief Lance Haymond explained:

[F]irst [N]ations have to be in charge and determining ourselves who are these businesses and what are the criteria that they meet. I really am a proponent of ensuring that benefits go to those that are rightly deserving of them, but at the same time, I don't want a process that's overbearing and cumbersome for our [I]ndigenous entrepreneurs ... At the end of the day, we need to have some type of registry system developed, managed and implemented by [F]irst [N]ations.⁹¹

Pamela Palmater told the committee:

[T]o make the procurement policy better, I think governments need to engage with [I]ndigenous experts on the topic ... There needs to be an accountability mechanism and annual reporting and analysis that comes back to our communities. At this point, we

86 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 6050 (Angela Jaime).

87 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 6015, 6050 (Angela Jaime).

88 INAN, [Evidence](#), 9 December 2024, 1615, 1635, 1640, 1710, 1750 (Hon. Patty Hajdu).

89 INAN, [Evidence](#), 9 December 2024, 1750 (Hon. Patty Hajdu).

90 INAN, [Evidence](#), 9 December 2024, 1910 (Hon. Gary Anandasangaree).

91 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 0935 (Chief Lance Haymond).



really need historic investigation into how much money in total has been allocated under [I]ndigenous procurement.⁹²

Natan Obed indicated the federal government is best suited to lead reforms, including changes to verifications and compliance processes. He stated:

We think the federal government is best suited to lead that reform. ... [F]or us, for Inuit, we are quite pleased when the government takes that obligation. It shows that it cares about its relationship with us to actually do the hard work of administration and of compliance. Recourse and remedy for anyone who does not comply with Canadian government policy is much easier through federal processes rather than through outsourced third-party processes. We would like the strength of Canada in the enforcement of these particular initiatives.⁹³

Finally, Anthony Wingham underlined the importance of reforming the Procurement Strategy for Indigenous Business and the Indigenous Business Directory:

We must remember that this isn't about adding more boxes to check. It's about ensuring that programs to design and advance [I]ndigenous self-determination and economic security actually fulfill their purpose. It's about confirming that when we say these contracts are for [I]ndigenous businesses, we mean it. Such reforms aren't about punishing outsiders, but about honouring the intent of these programs.⁹⁴

Based on the testimony, the committee recommends:

Recommendation 5

That Indigenous Services Canada immediately begin work with First Nations, Inuit and Métis to develop an interim policy and approach to the identification and verification of Indigenous businesses under the Procurement Strategy for Indigenous Business and the Indigenous Business Directory, while longer term reforms are being developed.

Recommendation 6

That Indigenous Services Canada immediately begin work with First Nations, Inuit and Métis on longer term reforms of the Procurement Strategy for Indigenous Business and the Indigenous Business Directory to support the participation of Indigenous businesses in federal procurement, including:

92 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 5805 (Pamela Palmater).

93 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 1100 (Natan Obed).

94 INAN, [Evidence](#), 10 December 2024, 6020 (Anthony Wingham).

- **an Indigenous-led approach to the development, management and maintenance of the Indigenous Business Directory;**
- **eligibility criteria and verification of Indigenous businesses;**
- **a stronger enforcement framework, including mechanisms to identify individuals who falsely claim an Indigenous identity to participate in the Strategy and the Indigenous Business Directory;**
- **measures to ensure participants comply with program requirements;
and**
- **support from organizations such as the First Nations Procurement Authority, led by and for Indigenous Peoples, to develop targeted outreach, training and support services for recognized First Nations businesses to access public and private markets.**

APPENDIX A: LIST OF WITNESSES

The following table lists the witnesses who appeared before the committee at its meetings related to this report. Transcripts of all public meetings related to this report are available on the committee's [webpage for this study](#).

44th Parliament – 1st Session

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
Hon. Randy Boissonnault, P.C., M.P., Edmonton Centre	2024/12/05	135
Hon. Gary Anandasangaree, P.C., M.P., Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations	2024/12/09	136
Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos, P.C., M.P., Minister of Public Services and Procurement		
Hon. Patty Hajdu, P.C., M.P., Minister of Indigenous Services		
Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor, P.C., M.P., Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages		
Department of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs	2024/12/09	136
Christopher Duschenes, Director General, Indigenous Institutions and Governance Modernization		
Valerie Gideon, Deputy Minister		
Georgina Lloyd, Assistant Deputy Minister, Northern Affairs		
Heather McLean, Assistant Deputy Minister, Implementation Sector		
Department of Employment and Social Development	2024/12/09	136
Colette Kaminsky, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Skills and Employment Branch		
Wojo Zielonka, Chief Financial Officer		

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
<p>Department of Indigenous Services</p> <p>Keith Conn, Assistant Deputy Minister, Lands and Economic Development</p> <p>Jessica Sultan, Director General, Economic Policy Development</p> <p>Gina Wilson, Deputy Minister</p>	2024/12/09	136
<p>Department of Public Works and Government Services</p> <p>Catherine Poulin, Assistant Deputy Minister, Departmental Oversight Branch</p> <p>Arianne Reza, Deputy Minister</p>	2024/12/09	136
<p>Otipemisiwak Métis Government</p> <p>Andrea Sandmaier, President</p> <p>Garrett Tomlinson, Senior Director, Self Government</p>	2024/12/09	136
<p>Abénakis Band Council of Odanak</p> <p>Jacques T. Watso, Advisor</p>	2024/12/10	137
<p>As an individual</p> <p>Leah Ballantyne, Lawyer</p> <p>Angela Jaime, Vice-Provost, Indigenous Engagement, University of Saskatchewan</p> <p>Darryl Leroux, Associate Professor, University of Ottawa</p> <p>Dr. Pamela Palmater, Mi'kmaq Lawyer, Eel River Bar First Nation and Chair in Indigenous Governance, Toronto Metropolitan University</p> <p>Karen Restoule, Senior Fellow, Macdonald-Laurier Institute</p>	2024/12/10	137
<p>BC Métis Federation</p> <p>Keith Henry, President and Chief Executive Officer</p>	2024/12/10	137
<p>Ghost Warrior Society</p> <p>Crystal Semaganis, Leader</p>	2024/12/10	137
<p>Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami</p> <p>William David, Director, Legal Services</p> <p>Natan Obed, President</p>	2024/12/10	137
<p>Kebaowek First Nation</p> <p>Lance Haymond</p>	2024/12/10	137

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
Manitoba Métis Federation Lorne Pelletier, Senior Economic Advisor to the President	2024/12/10	137
Pure Spirit Solutions Brian Doxtator, Chief Executive Officer and Principal	2024/12/10	137
Waceya Métis Society Anthony Wingham, President	2024/12/10	137

APPENDIX B: LIST OF BRIEFS

The following is an alphabetical list of organizations and individuals who submitted briefs to the committee related to this report. For more information, please consult the committee's [webpage for this study](#).

44th Parliament – 1st Session

Anishinabek Nation

BC Métis Federation

CANDO

REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this Report.

A copy of the relevant *Minutes of Proceedings* ([Meeting No. 3](#)) from the 45th Parliament, 1st Session and ([Meetings Nos. 135, 136 and 137](#)) from the 44th Parliament, 1st Session is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Sheehan
Chair

