

# ***STRENGTHENING THE AVAILABILITY OF FIRST NATIONS DATA***



Prepared for:  
Indigenous Services Canada &  
The Assembly of First Nations

*Shelley Trevethan  
QMR Consulting  
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*This research paper was prepared for Indigenous Services Canada and the Assembly of First Nations. The statements in this paper reflect the findings and conclusions of the contractor and are intended to inform discussions as part of the work by Indigenous Services Canada and the Assembly of First Nations to develop a new fiscal relationship between First Nations and the Government of Canada.*



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## Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide an environmental scan of the current data landscape for First Nations people, as well as to examine the need to develop a First Nations statistical function as recommended in a co-developed report by the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) (AFN & ISC, 2017). To accomplish this objective, the paper describes the current data landscape, issues with First Nations data, and information required. It also discusses the need for a focused First Nations statistical function, ideas relating to scope, mandate and guiding principles, and models that could fulfill the identified need.

The impetus behind this project is the move to a new fiscal relationship between the Government of Canada and First Nations as announced with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the AFN and Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) (2016). To realize this new fiscal relationship, it is necessary for First Nations to have the support and tools they require to govern their nations, including a strong supporting institutional framework. One aspect of this framework is the requirement for First Nations governments to have relevant, timely, comparable and good quality data to make decisions, monitor progress, and report on results to their citizens.

Information was gathered through literature searches and interviews with about 70 key stakeholders, including First Nations leaders, representatives from First Nations organizations, provincial/territorial statistical agencies, federal government departments, and academics. The following provides an overview of the results. The findings support other reports and calls to action regarding the need for First Nations data. However, the intent was to pull the information together in a single snapshot to support current discussions regarding the new fiscal framework and the need for First Nations data.

### **There are many sources of First Nations data, but available data do not fulfill the needs of First Nations governments for decision-making and reporting to their citizens**

An examination of the landscape regarding First Nations data reveals that there are a large number of organizations who collect information, and a vast amount of data being collected on, Indigenous peoples. This includes data from the Census, various surveys, administrative data, and research. However, stakeholders interviewed said there is a need to optimize how data are coordinated because data are often scattered across departments and organizations and are not easy to access by First Nations communities. Further, they noted that the available data don't necessarily respond to the information requirements that First Nations governments have. For instance, survey data aren't always available at the community level, aren't comparable across communities or with non-Indigenous peoples, and aren't timely or available at different points in time. Further, administrative data often focus on outputs rather than community wellness outcomes.

The result is that First Nations governments have said that they do not have a comprehensive profile of strengths and challenges of their communities with which they could prepare plans and report to their citizens on the progress of programs/services. Similarly, First Nations organizations who support communities have nowhere to go to obtain the basic information required to implement their mandates effectively. Provincial/territorial and federal governments have only a partial picture of the required information for funding requests and reporting to Parliament.

There has been some success in addressing the data issues. For instance, some First Nations governments or organizations have developed data agreements with federal and/or provincial/territorial governments. Further, standardized socio-economic outcome indicators are being co-developed by the AFN and the Government of Canada. In addition, the First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC) has been put in place to support the development of information governance and

management systems at the community level through regional and national partnerships, including surveys on First Nations reserves. Similarly, there are a number of regional centres that focus on data governance activities. But, the FNIGC and other organizations don't have core funding or capacity that would enable them to fully address the issues identified with First Nations data, in particular the coordination function.

**There is a need for better coordination of First Nations data**

Those interviewed were unanimous in their support of a mechanism to address the critical need for information on First Nations peoples and communities. It's clear that First Nations governments require data for planning and reporting purposes. In addition, First Nations organizations and federal/provincial/territorial governments need data to support First Nations communities and for reporting purposes.

The information requirements are broad and varied and can be filled through a number of different mechanisms. However, a coordinated approach would ensure that information on socio-economic and wellness of each community is standardized so that progress on closing the socio-economic gaps can be examined in comparison with other Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

**Stakeholders suggested a national statistical function with strong linkages with regional information governance centres**

Most of the stakeholders interviewed supported the concept of a national First Nations statistical entity or network to optimize coordination and consistency of First Nations data and ensure that First Nations governments have access to the data they require for planning, decision-making and reporting. It was also noted that there needs to be strong linkages with regional information governance centres who are more operational in nature and directly support First Nations governments.

Stakeholders identified the following as potential principles that should guide the creation of a First Nations statistical function:

- First Nations-led
- Independent
- Meaningful information
- Confidential
- Accessible
- First Nations Governance of Data
- Quality/Standardized
- Partnerships

Although there was general consensus that First Nations required access to, and governance of, their data, there were differences of opinion about some aspects of "Ownership, Control, Access and Possession" (OCAP®) principles. Some respondents stated that any First Nations statistical function needs to be guided by OCAP® principles because First Nations communities need to have ownership, control, access and possession of any data collected, analyzed and published about them. However, others said that there needs to be a balance, with the creation of data sharing agreements whereby First Nations communities access government databases and agreements identify the use of data collected about each community.

Based on these principles, two possible models emerged as the most feasible, both of which could ensure a strong relationship with regional information governance centres: broadening the mandate of the existing FNIGC; and, creation of a new organization.

Stakeholders provided ideas for the scope, mandate, functions and governance structure. Some areas where there tended to be agreement were:

- The need for some form of a national coordinating entity with strong linkages with regional data centres
- The importance of the statistical function being First Nations-led
- The need for independence from government
- Data should be collected on First Nations living both on- and off-reserve
- The need for a Board of Directors with regional representation and a clearly defined mandate
- The need to ensure access to administrative data from government departments/agencies
- The need for comprehensive community profiles for each First Nation with an emphasis on strength-based indicators

Some areas where there were differences of opinion:

- Whether a statistical function should be distinctions-based or pan-Indigenous
- Whether legislation was necessary to ensure access to administrative data
- Which functions should be a priority for a statistical function

Stakeholders interviewed strongly felt that First Nations leaders need to determine what they require in a statistical function. The FNIGC received funding from Budget 2018 to design a national data governance strategy and coordination of efforts to establish regional data governance centres (Finance, 2018). This results from this report may be useful in informing the consultations that the FNIGC will be leading – by providing information on the data landscape and data needs identified by stakeholders.

To implement a new fiscal relationship with First Nations, as well as a mutual accountability framework, it is critical to create additional First Nations institutions, including statistical capacity. It is important to address the data needs of First Nations governments in order to support their planning, decision-making and performance measurement. This includes developing standardized indicators that focus on relevant outcomes, coordinating access to information First Nations governments require, and funding and capacity building within First Nations communities. There have long been calls for a more coordinated approach to the provision of data, but the timing may be right to identify ways to address the issues.

# **1. Introduction**

For many years there has been significant pressure on the Government of Canada to address the issues and longstanding impacts of the *Indian Act* and increase Indigenous autonomy. The pressure has been imposed by political actions by various Indigenous groups and a number of Supreme Court of Canada decisions that established the validity of unextinguished Indigenous title and Indigenous rights of self-determination (e.g., *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia*, 1997; *Tsilhqot'in Nation v. British Columbia*, 2014; *Williams Lake Indian Band v. Canada*, 2018). In 2015, the Government of Canada made a commitment to develop a new relationship with Indigenous peoples, based on recognition of rights, respect, cooperation and partnership. Following a meeting with National Chiefs and Presidents from National Indigenous Organizations in December 2015, Prime Minister Trudeau stated:

*“Our overarching goal is to renew the relationship between Canada and Indigenous peoples. This renewal must be a nation-to-nation relationship, based on recognition, respect for rights, co-operation, and partnership.”* (PMO, 2015)

As part of this vision, the Government of Canada recently committed to a new fiscal relationship with Indigenous peoples. This included setting up permanent bilateral processes with First Nations, Inuit and the Métis Nation to identify each community’s distinct priorities and how to work together to develop solutions (Finance, 2018). This paper focuses specifically on the new fiscal relationship with First Nations.

In July 2016, the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs and the National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) signed a Memorandum of Understanding to “*initiate a process for Canada and First Nations to jointly undertake a comprehensive review of the existing fiscal relationship*” (AFN & INAC, 2016). The co-developed report, released in December 2017, describes a shared vision for a new fiscal relationship for First Nations and recommendations for action (AFN & ISC, 2017). To realize this new fiscal relationship, it’s necessary for First Nations to have the support and tools they require to govern their nations, including a strong supporting institutional framework. As noted by the Auditor General of Canada:

*“Provinces have established many organizations and structures to support local delivery of programs and services. For example, provinces have school boards and health services boards.... there [are] few similar organizations to support service delivery within First Nations communities.”* (OAG, 2018b)

Allowing First Nations greater influence, involvement and control over institutions will increase the opportunity to exercise their inherent rights of self-determination (Lees, 2017). A critical support required is access to data and the capacity to analyze and make sense of statistics so First Nations governments have the necessary information for decision-making, measuring performance and reporting. An effective data governance structure can be an important tool in rebuilding Indigenous governing institutions, as well as improving the relationships between Indigenous peoples and the Government of Canada.

## **1.1. Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to explore one of the recommended actions in the 2017 AFN/Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) co-developed report on the new fiscal relationship – the development of a First Nations-led statistical function.



Data are critical for First Nations governments in order to plan for the future and make decisions about what programs or services are required. Data can also be used to establish baseline information to monitor and measure the effectiveness of programs and services. It helps enhance accountability by providing information to clients and citizens. If data are relevant, of high quality and used in the proper context, it can serve as a cornerstone of effective governance (Bruhn, 2014).

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*You can't influence  
what you don't  
measure*

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This report describes the current landscape regarding First Nations data, statistical functions and governance in Canada, discusses gaps in First Nations data/information, and describes what data are required and by whom. It also discusses whether there is a need for a focused First Nations statistical function and possible approaches or models that could address this need. A list of acronyms is included as Appendix A.

## **1.2. Approach**

Information for this report was gathered from a number of sources. First of all, a thorough literature search of relevant documents was conducted, including articles on the new fiscal relationship, a profile of First Nations in Canada and issues they face, First Nations data types and sources, gaps in information about First Nations, and legislation in place. In addition, information was gathered on various statistical institutions and other organizations that gather or house First Nations data. Finally, information was gathered on users of First Nations data.

In addition to the literature search, interviews were conducted with about 70 key stakeholders across Canada to seek their views on data gaps relating to First Nations people and the need for a focused First Nations statistical function. Those interviewed included individuals from various First Nations organizations, First Nations leaders, statistical agencies, funding agencies, federal and provincial/territorial government departments, and academics. A snowball sampling approach was used whereby initial respondents were identified by the AFN and ISC, and those who were interviewed identified others who should be contacted. Appendix B provides a list of individuals interviewed and Appendix C provides a list of questions used in the interviews. On average, interviews were about one hour in length, although some took two or more hours.

Some caveats should be noted. First, the intent of the report was to support a better understanding of the current data landscape, needs and opportunities. It also explored potential models to address the needs, but does not provide recommendations as to which model would be the most suitable or specific functions. This should be determined through fuller discussions among First Nations. Second, at this preliminary stage, the purpose was not to conduct a comprehensive consultation on this issue, but rather to draw upon knowledge and expertise of stakeholders and the literature to describe the data landscape, identify priority information requirements and discuss ideas to address issues identified. As part of Budget 2018, the First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC) received \$2.5 million over three years to design a national data governance strategy and coordinate efforts to establish regional data governance centres (Finance, 2018). Therefore, the FNIGC will be examining this issue in more detail and this paper could be used to help inform these discussions.

In addition, this report primarily focuses on the data landscape at the national level, with some examination at the provincial/territorial level. It was out of scope of this project to examine data available at the First Nation community level. This is an area where further research is required in order to gain a better understanding of what First Nations governments are gathering. NVision Insight Group Inc. is currently coordinating research to examine data self-governing First Nations are collecting.

The next chapter of this report provides background on the past relationship between the Government of Canada and First Nations and the move to a new fiscal relationship. Chapter three describes the current data landscape regarding First Nations people, including organizations that collect data on First Nations people, and types of data available. Chapter four examines issues with First Nations data and information. Chapter five discusses the need for First Nations information. Chapter six discusses the need for a focused First Nations statistical function and the pros and cons of various models that could be utilized. The final chapter provides a discussion of the findings and discusses potential next steps.

## 2. Background

### 2.1. Indigenous People in Canada

Indigenous peoples in Canada have long been recognized as distinct and treated separately from other Canadians. Section 91 of the *Constitution Act* (1867) established that the Government of Canada was responsible for "*Indians and lands reserved for the Indians*" (*Constitution Act*, 1982). The *Indian Act* (1876) governs the federal governments interactions with all treaty and non-treaty peoples. It regulates band membership and government, taxation, lands and resources, and money management, among other things.

According to the Canadian Census of the Population, there were 1.67 million Indigenous people in Canada in 2016 (4.9% of the total Canadian population). Over one million identified themselves as First Nations (820,120 Registered Indians and 232,380 Non-Status First Nations), 537,855 as Métis, and 64,325 as Inuit<sup>1,2</sup> (ISC, 2018b). The number of Indigenous people in Canada has increased substantially – from 1.4 million in 2011 and 1.17 million in 2006. It is estimated that, in the next two decades, the Indigenous population is likely to exceed 2.5 million (Statistics Canada, 2018e).

First Nations people are diverse, with about 3,300 Indian reserves across Canada (ISC, 2017a). According to ISC (2018e), there are 618 First Nations in Canada, representing more than 50 Nations and more than 70 Indigenous languages (Statistics Canada, 2018e). About 40% of the Registered Indian population live on reserve (ISC, 2018b).

Indigenous peoples face unique issues that most other Canadians do not. Many commissions and reports have documented the factors that have led to these circumstances, including the impacts colonization has had on traditional governance structures and practices, and the socio-economic circumstances of Indigenous peoples (e.g., Erasmus & Dussault, 1996; House of Commons Special Committee on Indian Self-Government, 1983; OAG, 2011; TRC, 2015; UN General Assembly, 2007). These reports document governmental attempts at forced assimilation of Indigenous people which led to the fragmentation of nations through the creation of reserves or relocation to remote areas. In addition, the creation of residential schools and other historic policies implemented by the government resulted in devastating and intergenerational impacts on language, culture, governance and community well-being for Indigenous peoples.

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*Things have happened that are painful to recount and are deplored by the great majority of Canadians. Many of these events were the result of greed or ill will; others were the product of ignorance, misguided intentions or a lack of concern for peoples already at the edge of Canadian society. They have left their legacy in the social and economic conditions of Aboriginal communities and in the distrust and betrayal felt by Aboriginal people (Erasmus & Dussault, 1996)*

The effects of colonization and government policies can be seen in the health and well-being of First Nations peoples. For instance, First Nations have:

- higher rates of diabetes than non-Indigenous people (17% on reserve vs 5% of Canadian adults) (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2011)

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<sup>1</sup> This is based on those who reported being First Nations (North American Indian), Métis or Inuit. Registered Indian refers to persons who reported being a Treaty or Registered Indian. Non-Status Indian refers to persons who identified as First Nations only and indicated no registration status under the Indian Act, with or without membership to a First Nation or Indian band.

<sup>2</sup> The remainder include people with band membership only or multiple identities and no registered Indian status.

- a lower life expectancy (males 73 vs 79 in the general population; females 78 vs 83 in the general population) (Statistics Canada, 2017g)
- a lower Community Well-being score (in 2011, the average community score was 20 points lower than for non-Indigenous communities) (INAC, 2014)

The living conditions for First Nations, particularly Registered Indians on reserve, are generally substandard compared to other Canadians:

- they are more likely to live in houses in need of major repairs (44% on reserve vs 6% of non-Indigenous) (Statistics Canada, 2018e)
- they are more likely to live in crowded households<sup>3</sup> (37% vs 8.5% non-Indigenous) (Statistics Canada, 2017h)
- a large proportion of children are in foster care (although First Nations account about 5% of children aged 0-4, they comprise 41% of children in foster care) (Statistics Canada, 2017d)

First Nations, particularly Registered Indians on reserve, do not experience the same standards as non-Indigenous people in terms of education and employment:

- fewer have at least a high school certificate or equivalent (57% of Registered Indians on reserve vs 89% non-Indigenous) (ISC, 2018a)
- a larger percentage are unemployed (22% of Registered Indians aged 25-64 living on reserve vs 6% non-Indigenous) (ISC, 2018a)
- they have lower median incomes (Registered Indians aged 25-64 - \$20,400 vs \$42,900 non-Indigenous) (ISC, 2018a)

They are also over-represented within the justice system:

- violent victimization among Indigenous people is more than double that of non-Indigenous people (in 2014, 163 incidents per 1,000 people vs 74 for non-Indigenous) (Boyce, 2016)
- police-reported crime on First Nations communities is 12,235 per 100,000 (compared to 5,200 per 100,000 national average) (ISC, 2018c)
- Indigenous peoples are over-represented in prisons (although they represent 4% of the Canadian adult population, 28% of provincial/territorial and 27% of federally sentenced offenders are Indigenous) (Malakieh, 2018)

It should be noted that the above data are from various data sources and are gathered at various points in time. Further, some data refer to First Nations overall, some to Registered Indians on reserve, and some to or Indigenous peoples in general. This is a good example, as will be discussed later, of the issues with First Nations data – there is a lack of consistency in the data, it is difficult to find timely data, and there are gaps in the data. This makes interpretation and comparisons difficult, and there is often not a complete picture of community well-being for First Nations.

The above demonstrates the issues that First Nations peoples in Canada have faced for generations. As noted in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples:

*“Indigenous peoples have suffered from historic injustices as a result of... their colonization and dispossession of their lands, territories and resources, thus preventing them from exercising, in particular, their right to development in accordance with own needs and interests.”* (UN General Assembly, 2007)

In examining progress on previous recommendations on programs for First Nations on reserve, the Office of the Auditor General of Canada (OAG) concluded that conditions had generally not improved for First Nations and, in some cases, had gotten worse (e.g., a wider education gap; increased

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<sup>3</sup> Refers to more than one person per room.

shortage of adequate housing on reserves, comparability of child and family services not ensured; reporting requirements remain a burden) (OAG, 2002, 2011, 2018a). Further, it was noted that ISC's main measure of socio-economic well-being on reserves - the Community Well-Being index - was not comprehensive because it lacked several aspects of well-being such as health, environment, language and culture. Also, ISC didn't adequately use the large amount of program data provided by First Nations, nor did it adequately use other available information (OAG, 2018a).

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) final report identified ways to improve conditions for Indigenous people, stating:

*"Reconciliation calls for federal, provincial, and territorial government action. Reconciliation calls for national action. The way we govern ourselves must change. Laws must change. Policies and programs must change. The way we educate our children and ourselves must change. The way we do business must change. Thinking must change. The way we talk to, and about, each other must change."* (TRC, 2015)

Throughout history, there have been numerous changes to the structure and relationship between Indigenous peoples and the Government of Canada but, as noted by AFOA (2017), although the overarching theme of Indigenous communities' desire to self-govern has been identified in all reports and recommendations, the goal hasn't been supported to the extent necessary to achieve results.

## **2.2. Move to a New Fiscal Relationship**

The following describes the move to a new fiscal relationship between the Government of Canada and First Nations.

### Calls for a New Fiscal Relationship

First Nations have long objected to the inherent paternalism of the *Indian Act*, arguing that this imposed regime is ill-suited to their needs and aspirations. Throughout its long history, the *Act* has been a subject of controversy and there have been numerous calls for its reform or elimination. The creation of a new fiscal relationship between First Nations and Canada has been an ongoing subject of discussion. In 1983, a report of a House of Commons Special Committee on Indian self-government (the Penner report) recommended restructuring fiscal relationships between Canada and First Nations. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal People made similar recommendations:

*"[A] new relationship... [should]... include, above all, recognition that Aboriginal peoples have a right to fashion their own destiny and control their own governments, lands and resources. They constitute nations, with an inherent right of self-government. The federal Crown should undertake to deal with them as such. This would pave the way for genuine reconciliation..."* (Erasmus & Dussault, 1996)

Over the years, First Nations have advocated for a new fiscal relationship with the Government of Canada and, during the 1990's, the AFN passed a number of resolutions. For instance, Resolution 5/96 supported the development of new fiscal relationships between First Nations governments and the Government of Canada, based on principles of flexibility, fairness, choice, certainty of government service delivery comparable to other jurisdictions, economic incentives and efficiency. In 2001, the AFN General Assembly endorsed the recommendation of a Chiefs Committee that four new national First Nations fiscal institutions be established through federal legislation (Hurley & Tiedemann, 2004).

Since then, the move to restructure fiscal relationships between First Nations groups and the federal government has remained part of the broader movement toward Indigenous self-government.

### Broadening First Nations Economic Authorities

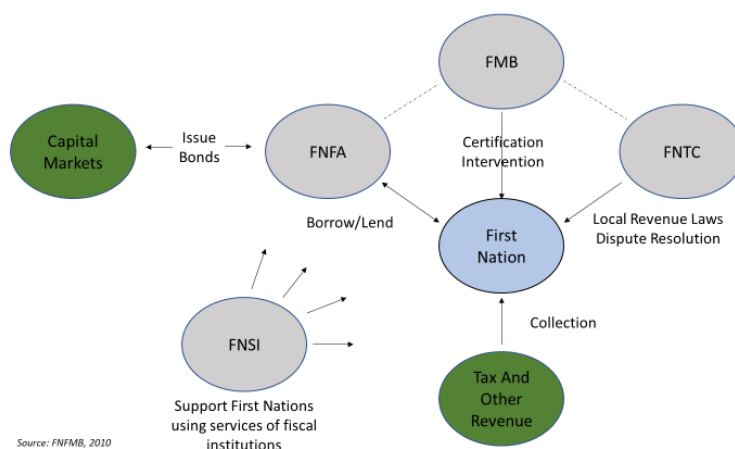
The First Nations Fiscal Institutions Initiative has roots in the 1988 Kamloops Amendments to the *Indian Act*. Following Bill C-115, some institutions were created to help First Nations governments with the new taxation system. In 1989, the Indian Taxation Advisory Board (ITAB) was created to help First Nations achieve self-determination by the establishment of taxation jurisdiction. In 1995, the First Nations Financial Institute was created to provide investment opportunities for First Nations, with a view to providing long-term financing for public debt.

The Kamloops Amendments (Bill C-115) was the initial First Nation-led change to the *Indian Act*, establishing the power of First Nation governments to charge property taxes on reserve (FNTC, 2013).

Several bills were introduced in the early 2000s with the goal of enabling First Nation governments to establish their own financing through property tax and borrowing regimes<sup>4</sup>. The 2005 *First Nations Fiscal and Statistical Management Act (FNFSMA)* was created to provide for real property taxation powers which would enable First Nations governments to establish their own financing through property tax and borrowing regimes. It also created an institutional framework to provide First Nations that chose to participate in its scheme with tools to address economic development and fiscal issues on reserve. Four financial institutions were created through this *Act*:

- **First Nations Tax Commission (FNTC)**: replaced the ITAB and assumed and streamlined real property tax by-law approval process to help reconcile community and rate-payer interests.
- **First Nations Financial Management Board (FNFMB)**: to establish financial standards and provide independent and professional assessment services required for entry into the FNFA borrowing pool.
- **First Nations Finance Authority (FNFA)**: to allow First Nations that come within the legislation to collectively issue bonds and raise long-term private capital at preferred rates for roads, water, sewer and other infrastructure projects.
- **First Nations Statistical Institute (FNSI)**: to assist First Nations in meeting local data needs while encouraging participation in, and use of, integrated national systems of Statistics Canada (STC).

The FNFMB (2010) depicted the relationship between the four fiscal institutions established by the *FNFSMA* and participating First Nations, taxpayers on reserve lands, other revenue sources, and capital markets:



<sup>4</sup> Bill C-19 died on the Order Paper when Parliament was prorogued in 2003, and Bill C-23 when Parliament was dissolved in 2004.



There were mixed views on the *FNFSMA* – the federal government and some First Nations viewed it as part of an evolution toward greater economic self-sufficiency and political autonomy; while others criticized it as being an attempt by the federal government to “municipalize” First Nations (Simeone, 2004). In 2012, the Government of Canada and First Nations met to discuss renewed relations and develop solutions to remove barriers that hinder First Nations governance, including a movement toward single, multi-year Government of Canada financial arrangements for First Nations with high-performing governance systems, improved accountability provisions for all parties, and financial self-sufficiency of First Nations as an end goal (AFOA, 2017).

In 2013, the *FNFSMA* was renamed the *First Nations Fiscal Management Act (FNFMA)* and the *FNSI* was removed from the *Act* and closed. In that year the *First Nations Fiscal Transparency Act (FNFTA)* was also implemented, with the goal of enhancing financial accountability and transparency of First Nations. The *FNFTA* required preparation and public disclosure of audited consolidated financial statements and schedules of remuneration and expenses of First Nations chiefs and councillors. It was argued that the *FNFTA* was unnecessary because First Nations governments already reported on finances through requirements in contribution agreements with the Government of Canada (AFN, 2010; AFOA, 2017).

### **Creating a New Fiscal Relationship**

In December 2015, the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs issued a statement indicating that Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) had stopped all discretionary compliance measures related to the *FNFTA*, was re-instating funding withheld from First Nations under these measures and was suspending court actions against First Nations who hadn't complied with the *Act*. She committed to engaging in discussions on transparency and accountability with Indigenous peoples based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership and that build towards a renewed, nation-to-nation relationship (INAC, 2015b).

In July 2016, the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs and the National Chief of the AFN signed a Memorandum of Understanding to “*initiate a process for Canada and First Nations to jointly undertake a comprehensive review of the existing fiscal relationship, research, and develop proposals and recommendations for the design of a new fiscal relationship that moves toward sufficient, predictable and sustained funding, and lifts the 2% cap on annual funding increases to First Nations*” (AFN & INAC, 2016). With a goal of improving the economic and social well-being of First Nations communities and citizens, the parties established technical working groups to examine each of three core dimensions of a new fiscal relationship: sufficiency of funding; predictability of funding; and mutual accountability. Technical Working Group # 3 was tasked with proposing options for a mutual accountability framework to demonstrate results to citizens, First Nations communities, governments and Parliament.

In December 2017, a report co-developed by the AFN and ISC entitled “A New Approach: Co-development of a New Fiscal Relationship between Canada and First Nations” described a shared vision for a new fiscal relationship for First Nations and recommendations for action (AFN & ISC, 2017). The report noted that the existing fiscal relationship between the Government of Canada and First Nations is not working and envisions a new fiscal relationship that recognizes First Nations’ right to self-determination; supports First Nations-led capacity enhancement; is evolving and empowering; ensures sufficient funding; ensures greater predictability, flexibility and autonomy of funding arrangements; is founded on a mutual accountability relationship where First Nations governments are accountable to their own citizens; and a new fiscal relationship will underpin progress toward the elimination of socio-

economic gaps between First Nations citizens and other Canadians. Recommendations for action included:

- Establishing a permanent advisory committee
- Creating 10-year grants for qualified First Nations
- Co-developing an approach to repeal the *FNFTA* and replacing it with a co-developed mutual accountability framework supported by First Nations institutions-led audit and statistical functions
- Replacing the Default Prevention and Management Policy (DPMP) with a new proactive approach

The report states that closing gaps in employment and income between First Nations and other Canadians would be a boon for the Canadian economy. The proposed actions have the potential to significantly accelerate progress by enhancing funding and services, re-imagining the accountability relationship, and strengthening First Nations' capacity to exercise their right to self-determination. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples echoes this idea:

*“Control by Indigenous peoples over developments affecting them and their lands, territories and resources will enable them to maintain and strengthen their institutions, cultures and traditions and to promote their development in accordance with their aspirations and needs”* (UN General Assembly, 2007)

In August 2017, the Prime Minister announced the dissolution of INAC and created two separate departments - ISC and CIRNA - based on recommendations of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. It was noted that this was a first step in ending the *Indian Act* and an important step in building a true nation-to-nation, Inuit-Crown, and government-to-government relationship with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples in Canada (PMO, 2017). It also stated that one fundamental measure of success will be that appropriate programs and services will be increasingly delivered, not by the Government of Canada, but by Indigenous Peoples as they move to self-government.

According to AFOA (2017), Canada's political landscape has undergone changes with a new federal leadership focusing on nation-to-nation relationship building with Indigenous leaders. In addition, public conversation about reconciliation and improved accountability has become a focus for all stakeholders.

It should be noted that the Government of Canada and Self-Governing Indigenous Governments are jointly developing a new self-government fiscal policy framework. In May 2016, representatives from the Government of Canada and self-governing Indigenous groups from across Canada met to initiate a collaborative fiscal policy development process. This process ensures that the fiscal policy framework supports renewed relationships with Indigenous peoples (INAC, 2016).

### **First Nations Institutional Framework**

Since the 1990's, the AFN has called for the creation of national-level First Nations institutions to support and build capacity among First Nations. For instance, during the 1990's and 2000's, the AFN passed a number of resolutions supporting the creation of First Nations fiscal institutions (e.g., 49/98, 6/99, 7/99, 5/2000, 6/2000, 48/2009 – see Hurley & Tiedemann, 2004; AFN, 2018).

There are some national-level First Nations-led institutions currently in place. The FNIGC was created in 1996, and incorporated in 2010, with a mandate to build capacity and provide credible and relevant information on First Nations (FNIGC, 2018c). As noted earlier, in 2005 the *FNFSMA* created four First Nations institutions: FNFMB, FNTC, FNFA, FNSI (the FNSI was closed in 2013). The purpose of the *Act* was to establish an institutional framework to provide First Nations communities with tools to address economic development and fiscal issues on reserve.



There are also some subject-matter specific First Nations organizations, such as the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR), the First Nations Health Managers Association (FNHMA), and AFOA Canada. There is also a vast array of First Nations organizations at the regional and Tribal Council level. However, it has been argued that, in order to effectively implement a new fiscal relationship with First Nations, including a mutual accountability framework, there is a need to develop additional institutional capacity. Greater influence and control over institutions would increase the opportunity for First Nations to exercise their inherent rights. As noted by Missens (2008):

*“The success in building governance will... require a critical review, realignment and the creation of new institutions by First Nations communities and their partners. In addition, a strategic and deliberate effort must focus on the development of skills, technology and policy that support the elements of good governance.”*

Recent discussions focus on creating a First Nations Institutional Framework, that lays out which First Nations institutions are required, how new institutions will work to complement the work of those already in place, and the relationship with federal government institutions. Some new First Nations institutions could include a First Nations Auditor General, a First Nations Ombudsman, and some form of a focused First Nations statistical function/entity. The 2018 federal budget provided \$188.6 million over five years to strengthen First Nations institutions and community capacity, including funding to strengthen FNFMB, FNTPC and FNFA, and funding to support the FNIGC to design a national data governance strategy and coordinate efforts to establish regional data governance centres (Finance, 2018).

### **2.3. Chapter Summary**

With a move to a new fiscal relationship with First Nations and a nation-to-nation approach, numerous initiatives are underway to develop appropriate structures to support First Nations governments as they take over provision of programs and services for their citizens. This includes developing indicators that focus on relevant outcomes, capacity building within First Nations communities, and addressing data needs to support planning, decision-making and performance measurement. There have long been calls for a more coordinated approach to the provision of data, but the timing may be right to identify ways to address the issues.

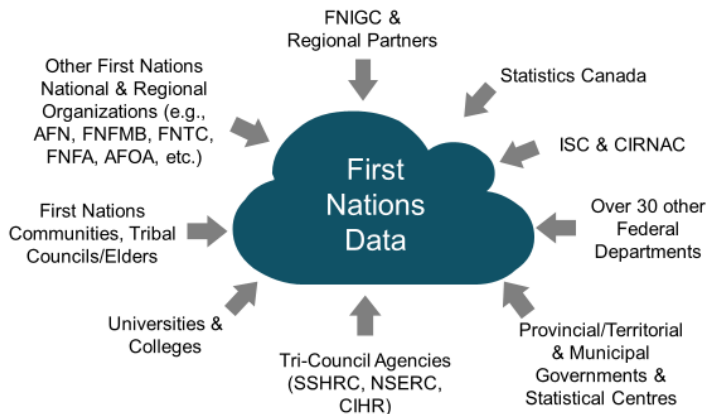
### 3. Current First Nations Data Landscape

This chapter describes data and information available on First Nations people, including sources of information, and the types of information available. The focus is primarily at the national level and provincial/territorial level. A full examination of data at the community level was out-of-scope for this project.

#### 3.1. Organizations that Collect First Nations Data

There are a number of statistical agencies, government departments/agencies, First Nations organizations and universities across Canada that gather, analyze and disseminate data on First Nations peoples.

#### Current Data Landscape



The following provides a brief description of some of these organizations but is not meant to be an all-inclusive list.

#### Statistical Organizations

Statistics Canada (STC)	<p>Under the <i>Statistics Act</i> (1918), STC is required to collect, compile, analyze, abstract and publish statistical information relating to the commercial, industrial, financial, social, economic and general activities and condition of the people of Canada (Statistics Canada, 2016b). Through surveys such as the Census of Population, Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS) and others, Statistics Canada is able to provide some data on First Nations, Métis and Inuit people.</p> <p>STC is undertaking a modernization initiative focused on ensuring users have the information and data they need, when they need it, in the ways they want to access it, with the tools and knowledge to make full use of it. It also focuses on developing and nurturing partnerships that allow for the open sharing of data, expertise and best practices (Michaud, 2017). For example, Aboriginal Liaisons work with Indigenous communities and organizations to increase the understanding of, and access to, STC data products and services, and promote the use of these data for decision-making and community-planning activities (STC, 2018e).</p>
First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC)	<p>The FNIGC is a non-profit First Nations organization, created in 1996 and incorporated in 2010, with the mandate to build capacity and provide credible and relevant information on First Nations (FNIGC, 2018c). Working with regional representatives, the FNIGC respects the rights of First Nations self-determination for research and information, in compliance with First Nations principles of Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP®). Through funding agreements with various federal</p>

	<p>departments, the FNIGC is responsible for the First Nations Regional Health Survey (FNRHS), the First Nations Regional Early Childhood, Education and Employment Survey (FNREEES), the First Nations Community Survey (FNCS), and the First Nations Labour and Economic Development Survey (FNLED).</p> <p>Budget 2018 provided the FNIGC with funding to design a national data governance strategy and coordinate efforts to establish data governance centres in the regions (Finance, 2018).</p>
First Nations Statistical Institute (FNSI) [closed]	<p>FNSI was a First Nations-led Crown Corporation, created in 2006 and dissolved in 2013 (FNSI, 2012). FNSI was created through the <i>FNFSMA</i> to provide statistical information on, and analysis of, fiscal, economic and social conditions of First Nations; promote quality, coherence and compatibility of First Nations statistics; work with, and provide advice to, federal departments/agencies and provincial departments/agencies on First Nations statistics; work in cooperation with Statistics Canada to ensure the national statistical system met the needs of First Nations and Canada; and to build statistical capacity within First Nations governments (<i>FNFSMA</i>, 2005).</p>
Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI)	<p>CIHI is an independent, not-for-profit organization that provides essential information on Canada's health systems and the health of Canadians, including delivery of health care in Canada, performance of health systems and factors that affect Canadians' health. Their strategic plan indicates that First Nations, Métis and Inuit health will be one of their focuses for 2016-2021 (CIHI, 2016).</p>
Regional First Nations Information Governance Centres (RFNIGC)	<p>The 2018 federal budget provided funding to support the FNIGC in coordination of efforts to establish regional data governance centres (Finance, 2018). One regional data governance centre in place is the Alberta FNIGC (AFNIGC) which has been in existence since 2010, with a mandate to use research and information collected from First Nations communities in manners that will benefit the health and well-being of First Nations (AFNIGC, 2018). As noted by Phillips (2016), other regions are at different stages of creating data governance centres.</p>
Provincial/Territorial Statistical Organizations	<p>All provinces and territories have a statistical agency with the mandate to produce high quality data intelligence about the citizens, economy and government of the province or territory. Each provincial/territorial statistical agency is a statistical focal point and sits on the Canadian Statistics Advisory Council which is chaired by Statistics Canada (<i>Statistics Act</i>, 1918). Provincial/territorial statistical agencies have similar mandates. For example, BC Stats, part of the Government of British Columbia, is the provincial government's leader in statistical and economic research, information and analysis. It conducts surveys for British Columbia government ministries, crown corporation and agency clients (Government of British Columbia, 2018).</p> <p>Most provincial/territorial statistical agencies get extracts of Statistics Canada data in order to conduct analyses for their province/territory. Some also pay for additional sample of Statistics Canada surveys to allow for greater disaggregation of communities. They often also prepare community profiles of First Nations utilizing Census and other data. Some statistical agencies use administrative data from other provincial departments, and some conduct their own surveys. For instance, the Yukon Bureau of Statistics runs its own economic and employment and skills surveys (Yukon Bureau of Statistics, 2017), and the NWT Bureau of Statistics conducts a Census in the off-years of the Canadian Census in order to provide more timely information (NWT Bureau of Statistics, 2018). These surveys provide additional First Nations data.</p>

### Federal Government Departments/Agencies

In addition to Statistics Canada, numerous other federal government departments and agencies gather and hold data on Indigenous peoples. According to ISC, 34 federal departments and agencies are involved in providing programs and services to Indigenous and northern programs (INAC, 2015a), although other federal government departments and agencies would also have some administrative data relevant to First Nations people. According to a Federal Inventory of Aboriginal Data Holdings, in 2011 at least 20 federal departments/agencies held specific data on Indigenous peoples (FNSI, 2011). Some of the main departments with data on Indigenous people are ISC (which now also includes the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch which was moved from Health Canada), Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), and Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). Other departments/agencies include Correctional Service of Canada (CSC), the Parole Board of Canada (PBC), Public Safety Canada (PS), the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), Natural Resources Canada (NRC), and others.

There are three federal research agencies, who do not collect data, but rather fund research, including research relating to Indigenous peoples:

<b>Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)</b>	Federal research funding agency mandated to promote and support post-secondary based research and training in the humanities and social sciences. SSHRC is leading an initiative in collaboration with the other granting agencies and First Nations, Métis and Inuit to develop a strategic plan that identifies new ways of doing research with Indigenous communities, including strategies to grow the capacity of Indigenous communities to conduct research and partner with the broader research community (SSHRC, 2018).
<b>Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC)</b>	Supports university students in their advanced studies, promotes and supports discovery research, and fosters innovation by encouraging Canadian companies to participate and invest in post-secondary research projects. NSERC has the Aboriginal Ambassadors in the Natural Sciences and Engineering (AANSE) award which aims to engage Indigenous students and fellows in promoting interest and participation in the natural sciences and engineering by visiting Canada's Indigenous communities and schools and sharing their research and education experiences or participating in science promotion events and activities (NSERC, 2018).
<b>Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)</b>	As the Government of Canada's health research investment agency, CIHR supports excellence across all four pillars of health research: biomedical; clinical; health systems services; and population health (CIHR, 2017). One of CIHR's institutes is the Institute of Indigenous Peoples' Health (IIPH). IIPH fosters the advancement of a national health research agenda to improve and promote the health of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples in Canada, through research, knowledge translation and capacity building. The Institute's pursuit of research excellence is enhanced by respect for community research priorities and Indigenous knowledge, values and cultures (CIHR, 2018).

In addition to the research agencies, information and data are also available from research and evaluations conducted by federal departments/agencies. For example, ISC has a centre of expertise that works with a variety of government, Indigenous and academic partners on Indigenous demographic and socio-economic research, analytics and statistics to support the availability of high-quality evidence for decision making. CSC conducts research on Indigenous offenders which is used for decision-making for correctional operations and programs for Indigenous offenders. ESDC conducts research on skills and employment for Indigenous youth and adults for planning on program and service delivery.

### **Provincial/Territorial/Municipal Government Departments**

Although provinces/territories and municipalities don't have any formal constitutional responsibilities for Indigenous peoples, in practice, they provide programs and services to the off-reserve Indigenous population. Provinces/territories have jurisdiction over several key portfolios, including health care, education, provincial corrections, property, civil rights, marriage, direct taxation. Data are collected to monitor the continued implementation of programs falling under these provincial/territorial domains. Municipalities are responsible for water supply, sewage, refuse removal, electricity and gas, municipal health services, municipal roads and storm water drainage, street lighting and municipal parks and recreation.

Similar to federal departments, provinces/territories and municipalities collect administrative data on areas for which they have jurisdiction for (e.g., health, education, provincial prisons, etc.). In addition, provinces/territories and federal departments both share some key data. For instance, each province/territory has a vital statistics agency/division and contributes information on births, deaths and marriages to the Canadian Vital Statistics System. Both provinces/territories and the federal government collect health data and corrections data.

### Indigenous Organizations

Numerous Indigenous organizations gather data or conduct research on Indigenous peoples. Some examples include:

Assembly of First Nations (AFN)	The AFN is a national advocacy organization representing First Nation citizens in Canada, which includes more than 900,000 people living in 634 First Nation communities and in cities and towns across the country. The AFN produces a wide variety of research products aimed at responding to current and emerging priorities within the Indigenous policy landscape and meeting the needs of their member nations. Research uses statistical analysis, qualitative research, literature searches, and other research methods to inform topics such as funding, governance, health, economics, infrastructure, language and culture, justice, and others (AFN, 2013).
Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC)	NWAC is founded on the collective goal to enhance, promote, and foster the social, economic, cultural and political well-being of First Nations and Métis women within First Nation, Métis and Canadian societies. NWAC is an aggregate of thirteen Native women's organizations from across Canada and conducts research in policy areas relating to Indigenous women, such as missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, poverty, housing, education, etc. (NWAC, 2018).
First Nations Financial Management Board (FNFMB)	The mission of the FNFMB is to provide the tools and guidance that will instill confidence in First Nations' financial management and reporting systems to support economic and community development. The FNFMB has access to some administrative data provided by First Nations who have asked the FNFMB to support them in managing their finances. The FNFMB operates as a shared governance institution, accountable to the Minister of ISC, but with an arm's length relationship with the federal government (FNFMB, 2018).
First Nations Tax Commission (FNTC)	The FNTC is a shared-governance institution with overall responsibility of maintaining the integrity of First Nation taxation. Instrumental in that regard is the creation of national standards, procedures, and policies which govern how the Commission reviews and approves First Nation laws, and how the Commission approaches dispute prevention and resolution (FNTC, 2018).
First Nations Finance Authority (FNFA)	The FNFA is a non-profit organization created to provide First Nations governments with the financial instruments to build their futures on their own terms. Its mandate, set out in the <i>FNFMA</i> and related regulations, is to provide financing, investment and advisory services for First Nations governments (FNFA, 2018).
National Indigenous Economic Development Board (NIEDB)	The NIEDB is committed to providing advice and guidance to the federal government on issues related to Indigenous economic opportunities that enable the Indigenous peoples of Canada to have a voice in government policy. The NIEDB conducts economic benchmarking and publishes research on a number of economic topics related to First Nations (NIEDB, 2017).
National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR)	Located within the University of Manitoba, the NCTR is the permanent home for all statements, documents, and other materials gathered by the TRC relating to residential schools. The NCTR ensures that: former students and their families have access to their own history; educators can share the Indian Residential School history with future generations of students; researchers can more deeply explore the Residential School experience; the public can access historical records and other materials to help foster reconciliation and healing; and the history and legacy of the residential school system are never forgotten (NCTR, 2018).
First Nations Health Authority (FNHA)	As of October 1, 2013, the FNHA took over and plans, designs, manages, delivers and funds the delivery of First Nations health programs across British Columbia. The FNHA operates under a Tripartite Data Quality and Sharing Agreement signed in 2010 by the First Nations Health Society and the governments of Canada and British Columbia (First Nations Health Society, 2010). The Agreement allowed for the creation of a First Nations Client File using Indian Registry data held by ISC which is transferred to the British Columbia Ministry of Health who acts as the data custodian.
Aboriginal Financial Officers Association (AFOA)	AFOA Canada was founded as a not-for-profit, non-political association in 1999 to help Aboriginal people better manage and govern their communities and organizations through a focus on enhancing finance and management practices and skills. AFOA Canada provides training in finance and management to Indigenous individuals and communities to support them in their journey toward self-reliance and economic prosperity (AFOA, 2018).
Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network (UAKN)	The UAKN is a research network of urban Aboriginal communities, policy makers and academics, engaging in community driven research with the goal of contributing to a better quality of life for urban Aboriginal people (UAKN, 2018). There are four research centres across Canada: UAKN Atlantic (New Brunswick); Central Research Circle (Ontario); Prairie Research Centre (Regina); and Pacific Research Centre (British Columbia).
Indigenous People's Health	The IPHRC is a partnership between the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy and the First Nations University of Canada. The IPHRC is focused on building capacity for community-based

Research Centre (IPHRC)	Indigenous health research in Saskatchewan, and creating networks of Indigenous health researchers regionally, nationally, and internationally (IPHRC, 2018).
Thunderbird Partnership Foundation	The Thunderbird Partnership Foundation was created in June 2015, as the result of a merger between the National Native Addictions Partnership Foundation and the Native Mental Health Association of Canada (Thunderbird Partnership Foundation, 2018). This new national organization brings together the efforts of these organizations to develop and support holistic healing approaches of the First Peoples of Canada as defined within the First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum Framework and the Honouring Our Strengths Renewal Framework. Thunderbird Partnership Foundation works with First Nations and Inuit communities. The Thunderbird Partnership Foundation has developed national databases for the Native Wellness Assessment, Addictions Management Assessment Instrument and First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum.

### **First Nations Bands/Governments/Tribal Councils**

In addition to data collected from various organizations, First Nations bands, governments and Tribal Councils also collect and utilize data. Often, this information is used for reporting to federal government departments under Contribution Agreements and includes information on programs and services provided to their citizens. Some interesting partnerships are being created between First Nations and governments. For instance:

Tui'kn Partnership	A health partnership of the five Cape Breton First Nations (Eskasoni, Membertou, Potlotek, Wagmatcook, Waycobah), with the district health authorities, the Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness, and Health Canada. The Tui'kn Partnership created the Unama'ki Client Registry, which is a community-owned, locally designed registry of the Unama'ki population that has been linked with provincial data sources to provide communities with information about the health of communities (Tui'kn Partnership, 2018).
Common Surveillance Plan	Aims to support Quebec First Nations communities in activities related to planning, evaluation and intervention. The First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission (FNQLHSSC) developed indicators and uses data from the Census, health surveys and various administrative databases held by the Government of Quebec (FNQLHSSC, 2018).
Saskatchewan First Nations Regional Dashboard	Information tool developed with First Nations in Saskatchewan to help in community planning. The Dashboard contains key data points relevant to First Nations in Saskatchewan and a Resources Library. The data and data visualizations from many sources provide users a glance at over 100 indicators and the Resources Library contains over 500 programs, services and planning resources to support First Nations in implementing their priorities (Saskatchewan First Nations, 2018).

### **Colleges/Universities**

There are also a large number of colleges and universities that are conducting research on Indigenous peoples. Appendix D describes some of these programs.

## **3.2. First Nations Data**

The following provides an overview of the different types of First Nations data available in Canada<sup>5</sup>. Each type of data is described, with information on its strengths and challenges. More in-depth information on specific surveys and databases, including who holds the data, are included in Appendix E. This is not an exhaustive list because many organizations collect data relating to their services and programs, and there is rarely good information available on all of them. There are five general types of data/information:

### **National Census Data**

Census data are collected for statistical purposes from the entire population of interest, and include data on a broad range of outcomes, as well as socio-demographic and other potential determinants of

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<sup>5</sup> This section draws some information from reports by Steffler (2016) and Van de Ligt (2017).



those outcomes. For example, in Canada, there is the Census of the Population and National Household Survey.

### Strengths of a Census:

- Only data source that reliably provides comparable community-level information for most communities in Canada, including First Nations and Inuit communities
- Captures a wide spectrum of Canada's population data and characteristics
- Best source of data to assess socio-economic gaps across time, geographies and populations (e.g., Census and National Household Survey data used to prepare the Community Well-being index to track socio-economic conditions of First Nations communities)
- Continuity of information over many years
- High degree of confidence in the results due to large numbers
- Well documented data definitions
- Distinctions-based (data on First Nations, Métis, Inuit, Status/non-Status)
- Is currently well-placed for data linkage projects

### Challenges of a Census:

- Doesn't provide depth of information
- Timeliness – provides a snapshot of data every 5 years which may not be sufficient for some indicators
- Indigenous indicator is based on self-identification
- There has been some undercounting due to non-participation of some reserves

### Survey Data

Survey data are collected for statistical purposes from a sample of a population of interest, and generally include more detailed data related to a few priority outcomes and their potential determinants. Examples are:

- Labour Force Survey [STC]
- Aboriginal Peoples Survey [STC]
- First Nations Regional Early Childhood, Education and Employment Survey [FNIGC]
- First Nations Regional Health Survey [FNIGC]

There are also numerous surveys being conducted at the regional, provincial/territorial and community-level. For instance, the Yukon Bureau of Statistics conducted a business survey in 2017 where First Nations businesses were able to be examined (Yukon Bureau of Statistics, 2017).

### Strengths of surveys:

- Some surveys (e.g. APS, FNRHS, FNREEES) are unique survey instruments dedicated to Indigenous people
- Because they tend to focus on a specific topic, can provide a deep understanding of underlying factors of socio-economic outcomes in priority areas
- First Nations principles of OCAP® can be implemented
- Can provide distinctions-based analysis (e.g., First Nations – including breakdowns, Métis, Inuit)
- Can be high quality data because Statistics Canada and FNIGC have expertise in data collection
- Some have achieved high response rates

### Challenges of surveys:

- Because they are often topic-specific, often don't provide a breadth of data

- Some are one-time only surveys so don't allow for examination of changes over time
- Some provide snapshots every 5 years, so the data may not be current enough for some indicators
- Usually can only provide national and regional level estimates due to small sample sizes
- Comparisons to other populations may be limited if the questions aren't the same as surveys completed on other populations
- Concerns have been raised about the APS not being developed in consultation with Indigenous people (doesn't meet OCAP® principles)

### **Administrative Data**

Administrative data refer to information collected by government departments/agencies in support of their operations, or for legislative or reporting requirements under the terms and conditions of funding agreements. These data are collected by various levels of government with various levels of coverage. Examples include birth and death records, taxation records, and information gathered from grants and contribution programs. Typically, these data focus on outputs rather than outcomes, and were not created for research or analysis purposes.

In 2011, a federal inventory of Aboriginal data holdings was prepared (FNSI, 2011), listing data from over 20 federal departments/agencies. There does not appear to be a more recent inventory focusing on Indigenous data from federal departments/agencies. According to Info Source (INAC, 2015a), ISC alone has over 160 databases relating to Indigenous peoples. Some examples include:

- Indian Registry System [ISC]
- Community-based Report Template [ISC – FNIHB]
- Aboriginal Skills & Employment Training Strategy [ESDC]
- Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy [DFO]

Strengths of administrative data:

- Information is collected on a broad array of topics
- Is usually collected on a more frequent basis than census or surveys (e.g., real time, annual, etc.)
- Could have great potential as information technologies are advancing especially in the context of data linkages
- Utility to First Nation government in conducting performance measurement and program evaluation, where that capacity exists

Challenges of administrative data:

- Data vary widely with respect to whether they can be re-purposed for statistical research or performance measurement
- Wide differences in the quality of the data (depending on who enters the data)
- Some data are in text form, so require a great deal of work to code and analyze
- Often lacks Indigenous identifiers
- Often is output data which may not provide information required on outcomes
- Governance of the database varies widely and access is usually limited
- In most cases it doesn't comply with OCAP® principles

### **Data Linkages**

There are also new data sets formed by combining or linking multiple administrative and/or survey data sets so that they can be used together to provide new information. Some examples include:



- Social Data Linkage Environment [STC]
- First Nations Client File [BC FNHA]
- Manitoba Population Research Data Repository [University of Manitoba]

Strengths of data linkages:

- Utilizing existing data from surveys or administrative databases can provide information without any additional response burden
- Cost effective because it utilizes existing data
- Timely because there is not need to collect additional data
- Fills important data gaps and can contribute to new research
- Potential to provide a longitudinal lens where outcomes can be looked at over one's life course

Challenges of data linkages:

- Inconsistent database structures in the different databases can make linking data challenging
- There may be uncertainty about the quality of the data (depending on how data were gathered)
- Some databases lack of Indigenous identifiers, so can only be linked with databases with identifiers if one wants to provide useful data
- Lack of transparency because data were collected for one use and is being used for another purpose
- Governance of data needs to be addressed because the data may not meet the principles of OCAP® if permission to use the data is not granted

### **Qualitative Data**

Qualitative data can be based on study groups, interviews, story telling, oral histories, etc. The data seek to better understand and contextualize social outcomes and help interpret the meaning of research results that are more numerical in nature (quantitative).

Strengths of qualitative data:

- Can provide greater context to an issue, allowing one to tell a story
- Describes the characteristics of qualities of an issue
- Can examine behaviour, emotions, personality and needs in a fuller way
- Allows one to more fully examine Indigenous knowledge and cultural experiences
- Allows for flexibility in research when it is not clear exactly trends will emerge

Challenges of qualitative data:

- Often more difficult to perform statistical analysis than it is with quantitative data because it requires coding and development of themes in order to interpret the findings
- Often small sample sizes
- Difficult to generalize and make comparisons
- Can be subjective

### **3.3. Chapter Summary**

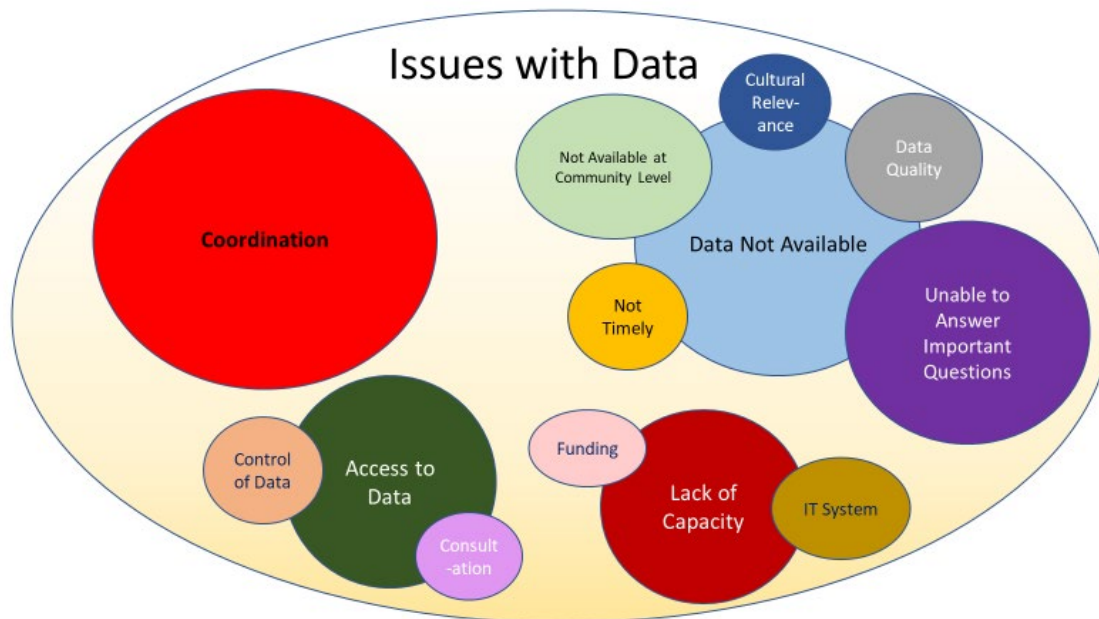
As illustrated above, there are a large number of organizations and a vast amount of data being collected on Indigenous peoples, and data sources continue to expand. In terms of the types of data available, stakeholders indicated that the Census is the most utilized because it provides a broad range of socio-economic data on First Nations on- and off-reserve and allows comparisons over time with other First Nations and with non-Indigenous peoples. However, the Census doesn't provide depth of data on topics and can not always be disaggregated to the community level.

One area where there has been quite a bit of focus is in the area of health. The FNRHS conducted by FNIGC provides good health-related information on First Nations on reserve (with the Statistics Canada Community Health Survey providing data for those off reserve). In addition, many regional and national centres have identified health and wellness as a priority area for data collection. For example, the FNHA in British Columbia and the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy were created with a specific focus on First Nations health. Further, the AFNIGC collects and utilizes data for the FNRHS and produces health trend fact sheets on an ongoing basis (AFNIGC, 2018). The Thunderbird Partnership Foundation has implemented a “Native Wellness Assessment” which measures the effect of cultural interventions on a person’s wellness, from whole person and strengths-based perspective. They also have developed an Addictions Management System (Thunderbird Partnership Foundation, 2018).

Administrative data are still a largely untapped resource. Although there are many challenges with administrative databases, such as accessing the data and the quality and consistency of the data, this type of existing information can be linked with other sources to provide a great deal of useful information for First Nations without great expense or effort. Of course, data confidentiality and control need to be addressed as important concerns. A few organizations have begun to link data from various sources.

## 4. Issues with First Nations Data/Information

As illustrated in the previous chapter, there is a great deal of First Nations data available from a number of sources. However, stakeholders interviewed identified a number of issues associated with the data, including the need to optimize the coordination of the data, that available data don't always adequately allow First Nations governments to answer important questions or describe the whole context of an issue, difficulties accessing the data, and lack of capacity. The graph depicts the themes identified based on how often the issue was raised (bigger circles indicate more frequent responses).



Each of these issues is discussed below, and an examination of issues identified by various users is at the end of the chapter.

### 4.1. Coordination

Based on interviews with stakeholders and reports that discuss the issue (e.g., Bruhn, 2014; Erasmus & Dussault, 1996; Fiscal Realities Economists, 2017; OAG, 2002, 2006, 2018b; TRC, 2015), one of the main issues identified is the need for better coordination of First Nations data. First Nations governments and other stakeholders need data for planning, decision-making and to examine whether the gaps in outcome indicators are closing.

The FNSI was put in place in response to calls for a body that could systematically examine what data were available on First Nations people and identify ways to access missing data. With its closure in 2013, the gap has been partially filled by organizations such as the FNIGC and regional information centres. For instance, the FNIGC is building upon the success of the FNRHS to provide information, research, training, data collection, analysis and dissemination services to First Nations at the community, regional and national levels. It is also supporting the development of regional centres that will serve the strategic First Nations information and research needs as determined by each of the participating regions (FNIGC, 2018b). However, a number of stakeholders interviewed said that, while regional centres are helping to coordinate data and provide it to communities, there is still a need to optimize coordination among the various regional centres to provide standardized data that can be

compared across time and with other Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations. Further, the FNIGC doesn't have core funding to provide this coordination need.

It was also noted that, although data are available from a number of sources at the community, regional and national levels, data tend to be collected in a piecemeal fashion or for specific purposes. Statistics Canada has the responsibility for collecting certain data (e.g., Census, APS), the FNIGC other data (e.g., FNRHS, FNREEES), federal and provincial/territorial departments/agencies and First Nations are responsible for the administrative data they collect, and researchers often hold data they gather for their studies. It is not clear where to go to access data on First Nations people.

Administrative data collected by government department/agencies is particularly problematic because First Nations data collection is not typically coordinated across departments or even within a department. Instead, individual divisions usually gather information based on their requirements (e.g., they have databases of administrative data based on programs/services they are providing) (OAG, 2011). Therefore, there is no current listing of data available on First Nations from government administrative databases. "Info Source", the Government of Canada repository of information about, or collected by, the Canadian government, is perhaps the best source for a list of federal administrative data on First Nations people (Government of Canada, 2018). However, Info Source doesn't include databases about First Nations communities, so it is not a complete list of data available. It also contains a broad range of data holdings, ranging from excel spreadsheets to comprehensive databases. Further, Info Source doesn't break out the information by First Nations, making it very difficult to determine what administrative data are available on First Nations peoples. The FNSI (2011) inventory of Aboriginal data holdings appears to be the last comprehensive listing of federal databases relating to Indigenous people.

With so many different organizations gathering data and trying to pull information from administrative databases, it isn't always clear what information is available, at what level of aggregation, whether it is comparable to other information, and what timeframes data are available for. There is sometimes overlap and duplication of efforts, but more often, there is insufficient information. As noted by Fiscal Realities Economists (2017) *"fiscal relationship administrative statistics gaps remain and are growing as FNFMA participation increases and discussions about a new fiscal relationship advance towards eventual implementation"*.

In recognition of this issue, in 2016 the AFN General Assembly called for coordination of First Nations regions, data governance champions and national partners to establish a national First Nations data governance strategy (AFN, 2016). Budget 2018 provided \$2.5 million over three years to support FNIGC in designing a national data governance strategy and coordination of efforts to establish regional data governance centres (Finance, 2018). A national data governance strategy and the establishment of regional governance centres will help to identify a way to better coordinate the data, however, a major issue is that the FNIGC does not currently have the funding nor capacity to take on the ongoing role required. It receives funding on a project-by-project basis, with no core funding to implement a First Nations data strategy.

It should be noted that there are different ways to optimize coordination of data, such as utilizing existing organizations to provide subject-specific data services to First Nations governments, expanding the role of the FNIGC to include a stronger coordination role, providing a mechanism for regional governance information centres work in close collaboration to develop standardized indicators, as well as other approaches. Importantly, First Nations governments need to be involved in determining what they require for planning, decision-making purposes and performance reporting. In addition, as part of mutual accountability, there is a need for other stakeholders to access certain information for reporting purposes. This will be discussed later in the report.

## **4.2. Unable to Answer Important Questions**

### Data Not Available

As will be discussed in the next chapter, stakeholders interviewed identified numerous socio-economic gaps in First Nations data. Even when a survey or administrative database collects information on First Nations, many data collection instruments exclude certain populations. For instance, the Labour Force Survey only gathers information on Indigenous peoples in urban areas due to the costs of conducting surveys in small or remote communities, as well as privacy issues associated with releasing information on small populations. Therefore, no information is available from this survey for those living on reserve and in the north, making it of little use to most First Nations governments.

Although data may be available on a specific topic through surveys conducted by Statistics Canada and others, or from administrative databases of federal and provincial/territorial governments, many surveys and databases lack Indigenous identifiers, meaning that the data cannot be analyzed for First Nations people and communities. Recently some initiatives have begun to link data from sources without identifiers to sources with Indigenous identifiers which may be a way to utilize already existing data to provide information on First Nations populations, without additional burden on the First Nations to provide the data.

There is also incomplete coverage for certain surveys because some reserves choose not to participate in surveys. The Census is the largest source of population and socio-economic data on Indigenous people in Canada, however, some communities choose not to be enumerated. Non-participation isn't evenly spread across Canada and limits availability of socio-economic and health indicators in these communities, as well as the accuracy of national statistics. The 2016 Census had the best participation it has ever had, with only 14 out of 984 reserves not enumerated. The reason for not participating is often that there is a lack of trust in government agencies collecting data on First Nations. Even if a reserve participates in a survey, there may still be gaps in residents choosing to participate which may result in data quality issues with on-reserve data (i.e., those who participate may differ from those who do not).

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### ***Increasing Participation of First Nations communities in the Census***

*Data from the census are an important source of information as it provides a comprehensive picture of the characteristics of the people in the community— age, family characteristics, housing, education, labour and language. The 2016 Census had the highest number of participating reserves, with only 14 reserves that were not enumerated of a total of 984. This represents a significant change from 1986, when 136 reserves were incompletely enumerated (STC, 2018d)*

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There are data gaps in other populations as well, including Indigenous businesses and entrepreneurs, children, those living in institutions (e.g., hospitals, shelters, senior's homes), and those temporarily living off reserve for health/other services (Statistics Canada, 2018e). This can lead to skewed information if certain populations aren't included.

### Data Not Disaggregated to Community Level

Even when data are collected on First Nations people, a concern raised is that the information released is often aggregated to the provincial or national level, which is not useful to First Nations governments who require specific information about their community for planning and operations. Aggregated data may lead to misleading information about some communities if they are grouped with different populations. The importance of data collection and disaggregation for Indigenous peoples has come from the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous issues who identified it as a "topic of primary importance". They noted that official data collection and disaggregation on Indigenous peoples tends to

be inadequate and sometimes non-existent. This lack of data on how Indigenous people are faring in relation to the realization of individual and collective rights is directly related to weakness of governments and intergovernmental bodies in formulating and implementing Indigenous-sensitive decisions and programs (UNDESA, 2018).

Disaggregation of data can be difficult for small First Nations while still retaining confidentiality. One option is for First Nations to collect the information themselves and aggregate the data to higher levels as required.

### Data Quality


Another issue is that various definitions of First Nations are used for different databases, including on-reserve, off-reserve, Status Indian, having Indigenous ancestry, self-identification as Indigenous, or a combination of indicators. Issues stemming from inconsistent definitions of Indigenous identity contribute to concerns regarding incomplete representation of the First Nations population. For instance, there may be under-reporting when self-identification of Aboriginal identity is used, or there may be differences in reporting between those on- and off-reserve<sup>6</sup>. When analysis is conducted by Indian Status, non-status and many off-reserve First Nations are excluded. Different or ambiguous definitions can impact on how data are interpreted and could result in inappropriate funding distributions. For example, if funding is based upon the First Nations population, are all communities being counted in the same manner? If analyses don't take gender into account, important differences in life experiences between men and women may be hidden.

Mobility of First Nations population between reserves and cities, and between jurisdictions, can also contribute to inaccurate population counts. For example, those who move back and forth between living on reserve to living in urban areas may inflate the size of towns/cities but may not be recorded in the Census. At the same time, First Nations communities responsible for providing services on reserve, may be under-funded because the population count may not include the more transient population. Another contributing factor is "ethnic mobility" - when individuals change the reporting of their ethnic/cultural affiliation from one census to the next (e.g. from a non-Indigenous identity to an Indigenous one) (INAC, 2010).

Further, the quality of data in various administrative databases varies widely and there is little quality control. Administrative databases are typically created for tracking or audit purposes, not to extract and use for research. The databases require restructuring or extensive work to clean the data and sometimes to code data that are in text form. Also, spelling may not be correct which makes it difficult to accurately filter the data. There are also sometimes limited records and variables.

### Timeliness

Stakeholders also pointed to a need for information that is in real-time in order to make informed decisions about community services on an ongoing basis. Some surveys are only conducted once so there are no time series data to support comparisons across time. Further, some surveys such as the Census collect information every five years which may not provide information with sufficient frequency to examine changes or make decisions in a timely way. It would be important to identify which outcome indicators require more frequent information because some measurements change very little over time.



*Indigenous perspective is lost because data is lost inside large datasets. Population health data from national and regional holdings needs to disaggregate Indigenous peoples' health information to profile health and to describe community (Reading, 2016)*

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<sup>6</sup> There has been a large increase in Indigenous people living in urban areas beginning to self-report Indigenous ethnicity (INAC, 2013).



Data timeliness was identified as an acute consideration for *FNFMA* organizations seeking bond ratings for communities, as financial credit rating agencies require financial data to be no more than one year old. Inter-censal numbers, particularly accurate population counts are required by provincial ministries delivering programs and their absence is a major gap, especially Indigenous population data at the regional level (FNSI, 2011).

### **Cultural Relevance**

Many stakeholders raised concerns that surveys are based on a colonial, western-style approach and don't always include culturally-relevant content. For example, research questions often focus on the individual or the nuclear family rather than the broader community which may be more relevant for First Nations people.

Further, often because they have not been consulted in the development phase, the data collected may not address important questions that are relevant to First Nations governments and community members. This may be because the data are developed for government reporting purposes and focuses on outputs such as what was spent, what was done and what was produced, rather than outcome information which examines the actual impacts and effects of programs. It is sometimes also that the data don't provide the underlying context that may influence the results. For instance, data on the number of individuals who have committed suicide doesn't provide information on the underlying reasons that this is occurring, which makes it difficult to implement effective interventions. As noted by Bruhn (2014):

*“Beyond being not useful, data collected to support activities may undermine the ability of Aboriginal governments to define and meet their own needs by supplanting them with data needs and demands of external governments”*

Many stakeholders criticized the use of deficit-focused data and argued that indicators should be strength-based. It was suggested that, in order to be of more use to First Nations communities, indicators should measure progress toward desired end goals rather than examining weaknesses, problems and gaps. This approach involves a more holistic view of individuals and the community and includes an examination of strengths and resources in a community in order to build upon them. It was noted that additional work is needed to determine the specific indicators that are useful for First Nations communities.

## **4.3. Issues with Use of Data**

### **Lack of Access to Data**

Another important issue raised relates to access of First Nations data. As noted earlier, it is not easy to determine what information is being collected on First Nations people, so there may be useable data which is not utilized. One issue is that First Nations may not know where to go to get the data. As problematic, even if data sources are known, it was noted that First Nations governments are often unable to access the data because survey and administrative data are often under the control of the Government of Canada and subject to the *Privacy Act*. As noted by FNSI (2011), departments often don't share information among themselves, nor with Indigenous organizations or communities. Therefore, even when data are available, they are often inaccessible.

Some initiatives are beginning to address accessibility issues by developing data sharing agreements and partnerships. An example of this is the Tripartite Data Quality and Sharing Agreement between the Canadian and British Columbia governments and the First Nations Health Society, which allows data linkages with the Indian Registry and provincial health data (First Nations Health Society, 2010).

Similarly, the Tui'kn Partnership in Nova Scotia (2018) and the Common Surveillance Plan in Quebec (FNQLHSSC, 2018) have created agreements to link various data sources.

In addition to accessing available data from other sources, capacity to collect their own data would help First Nations ensure they have the required information for their needs.

### **Lack of Consultation**

Lack of consultation with First Nations about research is another concern raised by First Nations leaders and organizations. It was noted that true consultation often has not occurred, rather First Nations organizations and communities have simply been provided with the research instrument or results. This issue was noted by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples who said:

*"In the past, Aboriginal people haven't been consulted about what information should be collected, who should gather the information, who should maintain it, and who should have access to it."* (Erasmus & Dussault, 1996)

Because they have not been involved in the initial processes of the survey, First Nations communities sometimes choose not to participate, or do not trust the results. For instance, some First Nations have declined to participate in the Census due to mistrust in the use of information and fear that the data will be manipulated without their consent, causing biased information and potentially lower levels of federal funding. Similarly, in 2006 the AFN withdrew their support for the APS due to criticism that it infringed on First Nations' rights to govern their own information (Bruhn, 2014). The APS has not been conducted on reserves since then.

Recently, there has been an effort to work with First Nations in data collection. As noted by the FNIGC (2018d), the principles of OCAP® have been successfully applied in dozens of First Nations communities across Canada over the past two decades, as communities and individuals have increasingly asserted jurisdiction over their own data. First Nations communities have passed their own privacy laws, established research review committees, entered data-sharing agreements, and set standards to ensure OCAP® compliance. An example of this is the FNRHS, where national and regional partners collaborate, and each region coordinates the RHS in their own region. Also, ISC worked in close collaboration with the FNIGC in the development of the FNREEES and the FNLED surveys. Similarly, Statistics Canada utilizes Aboriginal Liaisons across Canada to strengthen lines of communication with First Nations. They have also recently initiated dialogues with First Nations, Métis and Inuit about the content of the 2021 Census and data needs (Statistics Canada, 2018e).

### **Control of Data**

Because research involving Indigenous peoples in Canada has often been defined and carried out by non-Indigenous researchers, the approaches generally do not reflect Indigenous world views, and the research has not necessarily benefited Indigenous peoples. As a result, Indigenous peoples tend to regard research with an apprehension or mistrust (CIHR, NSERC & SSHRCC, 2014). In response to these concerns, the concept of OCAP® (Ownership, Control, Access and Possession<sup>7</sup>) was created in 1998 to assert First Nations jurisdiction over their own data and set standards for data collection and research on First Nations people (FNIGC, 2014).

In 2016, the AFN passed two resolutions related to First Nations data governance at an AFN General Assembly (AFN, 2016). Resolution 52/2016 directed the National Chief to prepare a letter to the Federal Ministers of Health, INAC, ESDC, and research funding agencies to state the importance of all employees taking the Fundamentals of OCAP® on-line course to further their understanding of First

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<sup>7</sup> The original term was OCA.



Nations data sovereignty and information governance. The letter also recommended that potential recipients of research grants targeted for First Nations be required to take the Fundamentals of OCAP® training prior to receiving grant approvals.

Resolution 57/2016 resolved to recognize Indigenous data sovereignty as a cornerstone of nation rebuilding and direct the federal government to fund:

- Engagement on data governance between First Nations leadership within each respective region.
- The establishment of a First Nation data governance champion in each region, identified by First Nations regions themselves.
- The development of fully functional regional First Nations information government centres.
- Coordination of First Nations regions, data governance champions and national partners to establish a national First Nations data governance strategy.

### **4.4. Capacity**

Stakeholders interviewed often noted that many First Nations and Indigenous organizations lack the capacity and resources to gather, analyze and disseminate the data they require. Also, for small communities, it may not be feasible to gather and analyze the data themselves. Other options could be that outside experts are hired as required, or several First Nations could jointly hire the required resources.

#### **Funding**

A major concern among stakeholders was the lack of funding for communities to gather and analyze data for planning, decision-making and reporting. Conducting surveys or data collection in remote areas of Canada can be extremely expensive due to travel. Without sufficient funding for programs and services, it is not possible for First Nations governments to allocate additional funding for data collection and analysis.

Limited and unpredictable funding also impedes the ability of First Nations communities and organizations to build sustainable internal capacity and limits opportunities to hire external assistance for data-related needs. For instance, funding provided on a project-by-project basis hinders the ability of First Nations to build sustainable data systems and hire analysts. Further, the use of funding is often dictated by government departments/agencies. Reading (2016) argues that “*funding needs to grow to support Indigenous-led data centres and institutions, disconnected from government interference*”. The FNIGC was recently provided with funding to coordinate the establishment of regional data governance centres which may help to address this issue to some extent (Finance, 2018).

#### **Need for Training**

In accordance with principles of OCAP®, data collection should be community driven, so some First Nations need capacity development to understand the importance of data in supporting effective, functioning First Nations governments, as well as to identify data requirements for their community.

There is also a need for statistical capacity building. For persons without training in research, it can be difficult to locate and pull together existing data from all the different data sources. Strong research and statistical training are required to develop, carry-out and analyze data from surveys or other information sources. One has to understand how to collect data that will provide the needed information and analyze it so it is understandable by those using the information to make decisions.

As noted above, although it may not be possible for all First Nations communities to conduct their own data collection and analysis, it is important that there is an understanding of what the data mean in order to use it effectively.

### **Need for IT Systems**

In addition, some stakeholders identified the need to develop data systems at the community and regional level in order to input, analyze and track data. Issues with connectivity in small and remote communities was sometimes seen as a barrier to online access for surveys and data sharing.

## **4.5. Issue – by User**

### **First Nations Citizens/Governments**

First Nations governments and citizens are most impacted by issues with data. They require community-level information about health, well-being and socio-economic conditions in order to make decisions and plan for the future. However, First Nations communities often lack the resources, training and tools to gather and analyze the information they require. In addition, they are often not aware what data are available from governments or other sources about their community and do not know where to get the information they require. They are most hampered by the data not being available at the community level or the lack of information about certain indicators to make decisions about specific issues facing their community. Further, they have greater challenges than other users in terms of accessing data from government departments, are not always consulted when surveys are being developed, and often don't have control over the data created.

### **First Nations Organizations**

Regional and national First Nations organizations are also impacted by data issues, but to a lesser extent than First Nations communities. Because there is not a fully-implemented coordination of data sources, there can be duplication of efforts or inconsistency across regions in the data collected, making comparisons across regions or with non-Indigenous populations difficult. Gaps in the data are less of a concern at the regional level because data are more often available at an aggregated level. However, missing data, timeliness and cultural relevance are still problematic. Regional representatives noted that they have a difficult time accessing administrative and survey data from governments, although some recent data sharing agreements have alleviated this issue to some extent. Regional organizations have noted that they lack sufficient capacity to gather, analyze and publish information.

### **Federal/Provincial/Territorial Governments**

Individuals working at the national level usually have access to significantly more data than those at the community and regional levels. Federal and provincial/territorial departments have access to the administrative data that they collect and can often obtain data from other departments. Although lack of data and timeliness are issues at the national level, issues of disaggregation aren't typically an issue because data are usually utilized at higher levels of aggregation. Those interviewed noted the need to optimize coordination of data, in particular knowing what data other federal/provincial/territorial departments or regional organizations have, but this is much less of an issue than at community or regional levels. Capacity is not typically an issue at the national level.

## **4.6. Chapter Summary**

Stakeholders noted lack of resources and capacity at the community and regional levels to gather and analyze data effectively, making it difficult for First Nations governments to plan and make decisions

about programs/services. Another major concern noted is that the data often aren't useful for making operational decisions at the community level because they don't address the important questions First Nations governments have about the well-being of the community. Stakeholders identified the need to optimize coordination of data as one of the main issues because, although there are numerous sources of data, First Nations governments aren't always aware of what is available from governments and, even if they are aware, data aren't always accessible to them.

## 5. Need for First Nations Information

With the move to a new fiscal relationship with First Nations peoples, in particular with the development of 10-year grants and self-government, there is a need for specific information on First Nations peoples and communities in order for First Nations governments to develop community action plans with outcomes relevant to their community, and to monitor and report on progress. In addition, other governmental departments and First Nations organizations have data requirements to support the work they are responsible for.

The following describes the need for First Nations data/information for First Nations citizens, First Nations governments, First Nations organizations, and federal, provincial/territorial/municipal governments. It also discusses types of data required.

### 5.1. Who Needs the Information


#### First Nations Citizens

First Nations citizens in general have a need for information rather than data. They should expect to receive information from their governments on the state of their community. This includes an overall view of their community in terms of well-being, economic prosperity, appropriate infrastructure, etc. Further, they should be able to access community plans with a roadmap to sustainability, self-sufficiency and improved governance capacity. Finally, First Nations citizens should receive information on programs/services in place, and progress on achieving outcomes, in order to hold those with authority to account. As noted by Steffler (2016) *“For users, the bottom line is about relevancy, access and assurance that research will bring about positive change”*.

#### First Nations Governments/Band Councils

With the new fiscal relationship and move to 10-year grants and ultimately self-government, First Nations governments will be increasingly responsible for making decisions about what programs and services are needed in their communities, program planning, funding allocations, and monitoring whether programs and services are having an impact. They are also accountable to their citizens and need to provide information to First Nations citizens on how money has been spent and whether intended outcomes are achieved. Within a mutual accountability framework, both First Nations and governments are accountable to one another for outcomes.

Therefore, First Nations governments require accurate and credible data for local governance purposes, including planning, monitoring and reporting relating to activities they are responsible for. Without data, it is difficult to make informed decisions, prepare plans, determine governance structures, look for opportunities for economic improvement, determine the need for programs/services, and report on progress to citizens.



*A new fiscal relationship must be supported by data and statistics to at least compare service quality and levels; facilitate transfer or equalization formulas; and measure performance, outcomes and innovations (Fiscal Realities Economists, 2017)*

In addition, First Nations leaders require the resources and capacity to understand the data, analyze it and prepare it into reports as information. Indigenous-led statistical capacity building is an important aspect of self-determination and is instrumental for First Nations leadership and government in planning, delivery and reporting to their own citizens (Statistics Canada, 2018e).

### First Nations Organizations

National, regional, provincial/territorial and local-level First Nations organizations require extensive information on First Nations peoples. At a national level, the AFN and other national Indigenous organizations require information in order to be actively engaged in co-development of the new fiscal relationship and other advocacy work. First Nations organizations also require data to help First Nations communities build capacity.

The three First Nations organizations created under the *FNFA* require information to help them in achieving their mandates. For instance, they require administrative data for fiscal comparisons, investment facilitation, and debenture financing.

### Federal/Provincial/Territorial/Municipal Government Departments

First Nations are eligible for a range of federal programs and services delivered by a variety of federal government departments and agencies, in areas such as education, health, social services, housing, community infrastructure, culture, band government and economic development. At this point in time, the federal government provides separate funding to each First Nation that is not self-governing, typically in the form of contribution agreements.

The federal government has always required First Nations data for corporate and program planning, to manage the funding allocations provided to First Nations for programs/service delivery, and for funding renewals. Data are also needed to support policy briefings, for program evaluations, and to report to Parliament on spending and performance of programs. Data typically utilized come from Statistics Canada (e.g., Census, APS), as well as from administrative data gathered from First Nations as part of contribution agreements. Recently, a number of initiatives have had an impact on the need for First Nations data. First of all, a relatively recent focus on evidence-based decisions and measuring meaningful results can be seen in the concept of “Deliverology” (Barber, Kihn & Moffit, 2011). The Treasury Board Policy on Results (TBS, 2016) and Federal Ministers’ mandate letters (Government of Canada, 2017) are concrete examples that identify performance measurement as a priority and establish an expectation to report regularly on departmental progress toward fulfilling the commitments. Therefore, there is an even greater need for federal departments to have access to data to enable informed decisions about resource allocation and program delivery, and achievement of results for Canadians through consistent monitoring and reporting.

Secondly, there is a need for additional information to respond to the Calls to Action from the TRC Final Report (TRC, 2015). Many of the recommendations have implications for data collection, sharing and analysis. Recommendations call for monitoring progress on closing gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities on various health and socio-economic indicators, such as infant mortality, maternal health, suicide, chronic diseases, education and income. For instance, Call to Action # 55 calls upon the government to provide annual reports and data requested by the National Council for Reconciliation (NCR) so it can report on progress towards reconciliation. This was most recently stated in the interim NCR’s final report:

*“Call to Action 53... mandates the NCR as an oversight body. The NCR can only fulfill this oversight mandate if it has adequate and timely data and information. Lack of data and information will cripple the NCR’s attempts to monitor and oversee the progress on reconciliation.” (NCR, 2018)*

There is also a need for data to measure the success of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The UN identified 17 goals to eradicate poverty and hunger and ensure a sustainable and prosperous planet and resilient peoples. The declaration makes explicit references to Indigenous peoples (UN Development Programme, 2015).

Finally, with the move to a nation-to-nation relationship, including the dissolution of INAC and the transfer of program and service delivery to Indigenous governments instead of by federal departments, the data required by federal departments may change. There may be less need for federal departments to have in-depth information for decision-making about specific services/programs. However, there will still be a need for data to determine funding allocations for each First Nation and facilitate transfer or equalization formulas. As well, there will still be a need for data for policy planning, performance measurement and reporting to Parliament. Also, until all First Nations take over all program and service delivery, federal departments will need to continue to manage the contribution agreements currently in place. There will also be a need for good quality information to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of the new fiscal relationship.

Provincial and territorial governments are responsible for areas such as education, health care, some natural resources, road regulations, and provincial prisons. First Nations are generally subject to provincial laws of general application, such as those respecting education (Library of Parliament, 2001). Municipal governments are responsible for areas such as libraries, parks, community water systems, local police, roadways and parking. They receive authority for these areas from the provincial governments.

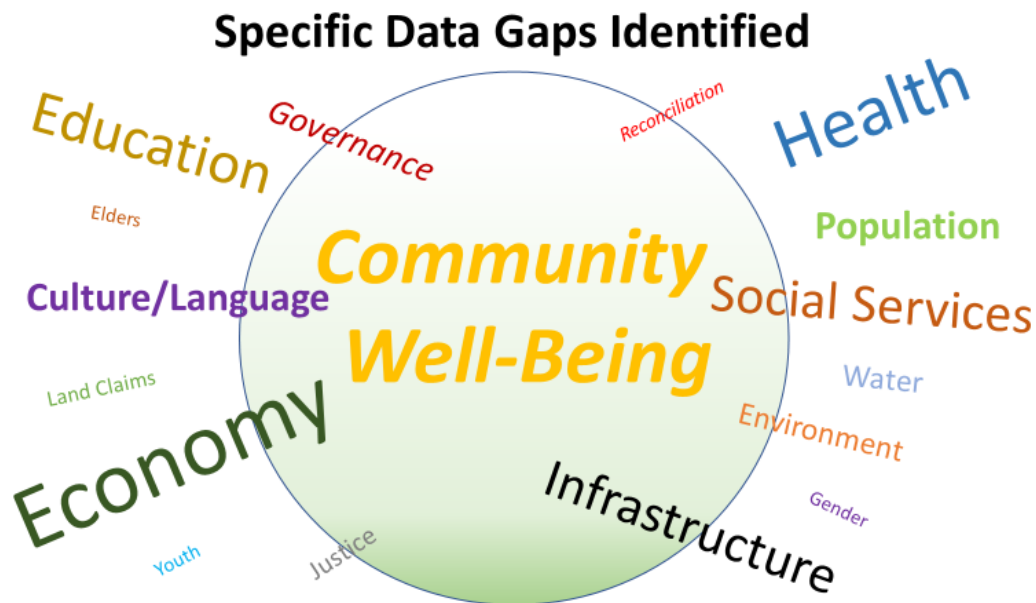
Similar to federal departments, provincial/territorial and municipal governments utilize data about First Nations for decision-making about the programs and services they are responsible for, and to report on spending and performance. As with federal departments, data on First Nations used by provinces/territories and municipal governments typically come from Statistics Canada (e.g., Census, APS), and from administrative data gathered from First Nations as part of program delivery. In addition, all provinces/territories have statistical agencies, often as part of the department. Most of the statistical agencies conduct surveys for government clients.

Data requirements of federal/provincial/territorial/municipal governments include reliable, relevant and up-to-date information on:

- National-level data about the socio-economic situation facing First Nations people: to describe the current situation and examine changes over time; to determine funding that should be allocated nationally for specific issues; legislative or policy amendments; reporting to Parliament.
- Provincial/territorial/municipal-level data about the socio-economic situation facing First Nations people: to describe the current situation and examine changes over time; to determine funding that should be provided to provinces/territories/municipalities
- First Nations community profile data: for current contribution agreements and longer-term grants, negotiations, legal challenges, etc.

### **5.2. Types of Data Required**

There is a wide variation in the amount of information available on First Nations people, especially in comparison to data that exist for all Canadians. When asked about data/information gaps, the stakeholders interviewed provided a long list. The following graph shows the responses – with larger text indicating that it was stated more frequently.



Many of the people interviewed noted that, rather than trying to fill specific information gaps, there is a need for a comprehensive profile of each First Nation community, focusing on strength-based well-being outcome indicators. This would provide a baseline of the socio-economic and wellness of the community so that leaders can determine what areas need to be focused on in their communities and develop plans to close the socio-economic gaps. It is critical to collect this information on an ongoing basis to track progress.

With the move to a new fiscal relationship, the main area where stakeholders noted a major void was in financial and economic statistics to support First Nations governments and First Nations financial organizations (e.g., FNFMB, FNTC, FNFA) in their mandates. Some of the gaps noted include community-specific information on: employment rates, economic performance, statistics to support credit rating applications, standardized annual local revenue and expenditure accounts, investment strategies, debts, etc. Financial information is necessary for First Nations communities to examine their financial situation and demonstrate to lenders that they are stable (Fiscal Realities Economists, 2017).

Although there has been a focus on health-related data, those interviewed for this report identified a critical need for additional health data, as well as the need to better coordinate the health data being collected. Some specific data gaps noted include community-specific information on: suicide rates, diseases, life expectancy, addictions, and mental health. Those interviewed also noted the need for additional community-specific information on education, such as information on school counts, curriculums, retention rates, outcomes (e.g., completion rates), quality of education, and information on post-secondary education.

Data on social services was also identified as a need, including information on children in care (in relation to Jordan's principle), success of social programs, and social assistance. In terms of infrastructure, gaps identified included: quality of housing, mould, overcrowding, quality of water, sanitation, and operational maintenance costs. Information on culture and language was also identified as a gap, specifically information on cultural initiatives, Indigenous knowledge and wellness in languages.

Other data gaps identified include: population projections; governance; justice; environment; land claims; and reconciliation.

### **5.3. Chapter Summary**

It's clear that there is a need for First Nations data at all levels, although clearly the need is greatest at the community level. The information requirements are broad and varied, with a need for comprehensive community profiles for each First Nation with an emphasis on strength-based indicators. With the emergence of a new fiscal relationship, financial data were also emphasized as a major need.



## **6. Need for a Focused First Nations Statistical Entity**

### **6.1. Is there a Need for a First Nations Statistical Entity?**

First Nations leaders and other stakeholders/partners have said that there is a definite need for additional information on First Nations people and communities in order to determine where to focus programs and services, to report back to their citizens on progress towards addressing socio-economic gaps, and for mutual accountability with the federal government. The question is whether this need could be addressed by organizations currently in place, by expanding an existing organization, by creating a new organization, or some other approach?

A number of reports have discussed the need for a First Nations Statistical Institute. During the 1990's and 2000's, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (Erasmus & Dussault, 1996) and the AFN (Hurley & Tiedemann, 2004) supported the creation of First Nations fiscal institutions. The FNIGC was created because there was a need to conduct surveys on reserve. As noted by Fiscal Realities Economists (2017), the FNSI was created because there was an identified need for an institution to focus on First Nations data. As noted by the FNTC (2018), this gap still exists.

In the years following the closure of FNSI, the FNIGC has continued to support the development of information governance and management systems at the community level through regional and national partnerships, including conducting surveys on First Nations on reserve. But, the FNIGC doesn't currently have core funding that would enable it to address the gaps in First Nations data. A number of regional organizations also focus on data governance activities (e.g., AFNIGC, BC FNHA, BCFNDGI, Thunderbird Partnership Foundation, etc.). But, there are calls for a more consolidated approach, in particular to support the new fiscal relationship between Canada and First Nations (e.g., AFN & ISC, 2017; Fiscal Realities Economists, 2017; FNTC, 2018; IOG, 2017). As noted by the IOG (2017):

*“...it is clear that a supportive structure for the data needs of First Nation governments and for the common needs of First Nations and Canada must exist if the fiscal relationship between the Crown and Indigenous peoples is to progress towards better outcomes and INAC should work with the AFN either to identify a suitable successor organization, or encourage government to support a new entity (or entities) capable of supporting the production and delivery of timely, relevant, and accessible data on First Nations in Canada.”*

Key stakeholders were asked “Do you think there is a need to establish some kind of focused First Nations statistical functions (e.g., one dedicated entity or through a number of organizations)?”. Respondents were almost unanimous in saying there is a need to do something to address the critical need for First Nations data. It was felt that the current situation, with data being collected from numerous sources, was not as effective as it could be. It was also clearly felt that there is a need for a First Nations-led approach to data collection and analysis so that First Nations citizens trust the data.

As will be discussed next, respondents had different ideas on how the data needs could be met, but almost all felt that status quo was not acceptable, and there was a need to focus on coordinating First Nations data and getting it into the hands of First Nations governments.

### **6.2. What Functions are Needed?**

Prior to describing possible institutional models, it is important to discuss the scope and principles that should guide a First Nations statistical function, whatever its form, as well as ideas for the mandate,

functions, and governance structure. It should be noted that most stakeholders interviewed said that First Nations leaders should be the ones to determine all aspects of an entity like this. Therefore, the following provides ideas identified by those interviewed rather than specific recommendations. They may help to begin a discussion among First Nations leaders.

### Scope

Stakeholders were asked what they thought the scope of a First Nations statistical function should be, and what areas should be focused on. There was strong agreement that information should be collected for those living both on- and off-reserve. It was felt this was necessary because citizens may move back and forth between living on reserve and in urban areas and First Nations governments need to consider the needs of all of their citizens.

Opinions varied about whether the scope should focus on distinctions-based information (i.e., only First Nations) or be pan-Indigenous (i.e., data on First Nations, Inuit and Métis). Many said that there is a need for a First Nations-specific focus because each of these groups are at different points in deciding what they require in terms of a statistical entity. Since the Government of Canada has separate bilateral processes with First Nations, Inuit and the Métis Nation, and each have distinct priorities, it was argued that it doesn't make sense to discuss the complexities of a pan-Indigenous approach at this point in time. On the other hand, some said that the scope should be expanded to be pan-Indigenous because there may be similar data needs across groups and it would be more cost efficient. However, it was emphasized that, even if this were the case, there would still need to be different streams for each Indigenous group because there is great diversity across First Nations, Inuit and Métis. In addition, the three groups may choose to focus on different data priorities.

The vast majority of stakeholders interviewed said that there needs to be a national function of some kind in order to coordinate all the sources and types of data/information being collected. It was noted that a national function could provide a "one-stop" information centre for First Nations governments to access information they require from the Census, surveys or government departments. It could also help with capacity-building among First Nations governments or help them develop tools they require if they want to gather and analyze their own data. If agreed-upon by First Nations, this function could also help ensure consistency of information across regions, including agreed-upon standardized definitions of data elements (e.g., common definitions for outcome indicators). A national function could also bring together regional representatives to discuss best practices, provide common tools/systems to First Nations communities, gain access to federal administrative data for First Nations to use, and roll-up national-level data as required. It should be noted that there were a small number of respondents who argued that there was no need for a national function, and any additional funding should be put into regional organizations already in place.

Although most stakeholders felt that there should be a national First Nations statistical function of some sort, most also identified the crucial need for the regions to continue to work with First Nations communities at an operational level. They recognized the important work that regional information governance centres and other organizations were doing in the provision of information and support to First Nations governments. Therefore, the consensus among most stakeholders interviewed was that there was a need to support, better resource and expand regional organizations who collect data and work directly with communities for capacity building. At the same time, they supported the idea of a stronger national function to help coordinate activities among the regional centres, ensure consistency and standardization of data for comparison purposes, access data from government departments, and prepare national roll-ups as required. There was recognition of the need for strong linkages between regional centres and a national function.

In terms of a structure, many argued that there needs to be a bottom-up approach, with a national network or coalition rather than a national organization per se. This network would allow regional organizations to develop in ways that meet their individual needs but would bring regional organizations together to discuss best practices and ensure consistency. Phillips (2016) described an approach that would be similar to this. It should be noted that the FNIGC currently has strong linkages with regional centres and helps to provide this coordination role. However, as noted previously, the FNIGC is currently funded on a project-by-project basis and does not currently have sufficient funding to do the work that stakeholders seem to envision is necessary.

*Indigenous Nations believe that a true partnership based on recognition and reconciliation can be developed so that First Nations take the lead, supported by Canada, the provinces and territories, in building Community-driven, Nation-based data governance capacity that will enable the accounting for relationships, investments and outcomes. (Phillips, 2016)*

More discussion is required regarding the scope of a national function and the interlinkages with regional information governance centres and other organizations. Although it is clear that most of the stakeholders interviewed felt that a national function of some kind was necessary, there wasn't a consensus about how it would be structured or how it would operate. In the following sections, some ideas on the role and structure are discussed.

### Guiding Principles

Stakeholders were asked “*If this idea moves forward, what principles do you think should guide the creation of focused First Nations statistical functions?*” Guiding principles are precepts that guide an organization throughout its life in all circumstances, irrespective of changes in its goals, strategies, type of work, or the top management (Webfinance, 2018). The following guiding principles were identified by stakeholders:

- **First Nations-led:** it was felt that the structure of any First Nations statistical function should be designed and led by First Nations, including determining the scope, mandate, role, and governance structure.
- **Independent:** whatever model is used, it must be neutral and non-political in nature. The data need to be impartial and objective and trusted by First Nations citizens, as well as other partners and stakeholders.
- **Meaningful Information:** the information produced needs to be relevant and useful for First Nations communities and governments. For instance, it needs to be based on First Nations world views and focus on strength-based outcome indicators. The data needs to be collected and analyzed in order to provide information that can help with decision-making at the community level. It was also noted that different communities will have different priorities, therefore there needs to be flexibility so that the data are relevant to the needs of each community.
- **Confidential:** it was agreed that privacy of the information was critical and appropriate protections must be built in.
- **Accessible:** it was argued that all forms of data and information must be accessible to First Nations governments, as well as other stakeholders where required.
- **First Nations Governance of Data:** it was generally agreed that First Nations governments should be responsible for how data about their community is collected and used. It also means that the data are developed to serve First Nations, with First Nations governments being accountable to their citizens for the results. However, there were differences of opinion about some aspects of the OCAP® principles. Some respondents stated that any First Nations statistical function needs to be guided by OCAP® principles because First Nations communities

need to have ownership, control, access and possession of any data collected, analyzed and published about them. Others said that there needs to be a balance, with the creation of data sharing agreements whereby First Nations communities access government databases, and the agreements identify the use of data collected about each community (similar to the tripartite agreement for the FNHA). Some raised concerns that OCAP® could limit access to data for both First Nations communities and governments and argued for transparency of information with appropriate anonymity and privacy protections.

- **Quality/Standardized:** there needs to be good quality of data that can be trusted and is comparable. It was felt that it was important that standardized definitions for data elements be used in order to allow for comparisons, as well roll-up at regional and national levels as required. Many noted that a key role of this entity could be to work with regional statistical centres and First Nations communities to agree upon data definitions.
- **Partnerships:** it was noted that there needs to be a strong link between a national statistical entity and regional centres that work directly with communities. There is also a need for partnerships with existing statistical agencies, First Nations organizations, and other stakeholders.

Many of the guiding principles identified by stakeholders are similar to the fundamental principles of official statistics approved by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (2013). These include the concepts of independence, access to information, consistency/standardization, quality of data, and confidentiality.

### Mandate/Roles

The stakeholders interviewed provided a range of ideas of what they thought could be the mandate and roles for a First Nations statistical function. The most common response was that the overall mandate should be to ensure that all First Nations governments have a comprehensive ongoing picture of their community for decision-making and reporting to citizens.

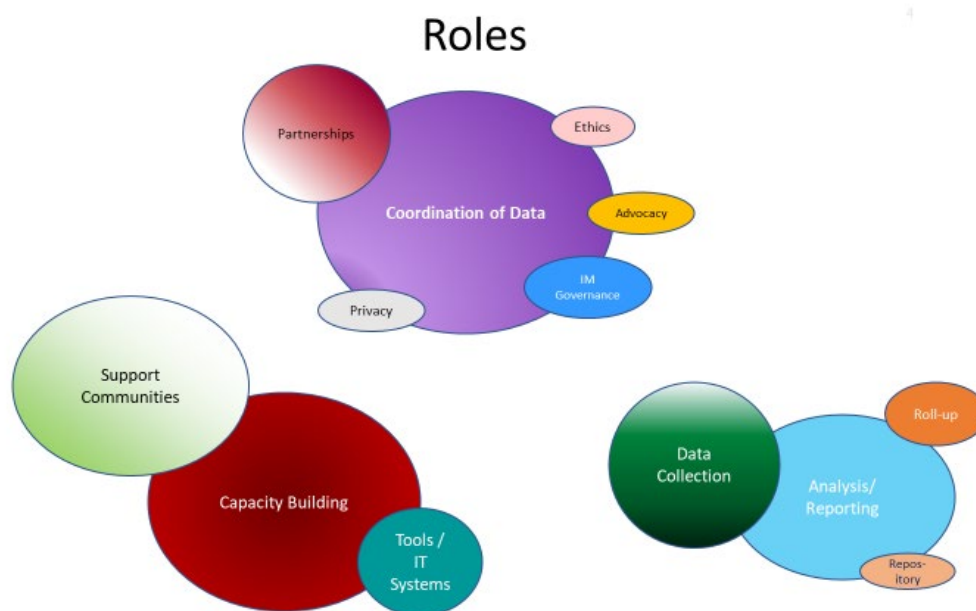
Some respondents felt that the mandate should be broader, including capacity building for communities. Others thought that the mandate should include support for data requirements of First Nations organizations. Some felt that the entity should be responsible for developing a national picture of First Nations peoples and communities.

In terms of roles, stakeholders identified a broad range of possibilities, including:

- **Coordination:** pulling together First Nations information from various sources, including brokering/facilitating access for First Nations governments to data from statistical agencies and federal/provincial/territorial administrative databases. Also, helping communities with their data needs, and supporting regional statistical organizations.
- **Capacity Building:** building statistical capacity within First Nations governments and communities through training and knowledge development.
- **Supporting Communities:** helping communities with what they require regarding data, including community profiles and development of strength-based outcome indicators.
- **Data Analysis/Reporting:** secondary analysis and interpretation of existing data on population, economic and social conditions of First Nations peoples and communities, and publishing/disseminating statistical reports to First Nations communities and others.
- **Data Collection:** collecting statistical information on population, economic and social conditions on First Nations peoples and communities.
- **Tools/IT Systems:** developing tools, data systems, and data collection models for First Nations communities to utilize.

- **IM Governance/Standards:** being responsible for IM/IT governance, including promoting quality, standardization, coherence and compatibility of First Nations statistics and their production in accordance with generally accepted standards/practices.
- **Partnerships:** developing strong relationships with Indigenous organizations, governments, and First Nations leaders and communities to leverage data.
- **Data Repository:** establishing a clearinghouse of First Nations statistical data which would support an integrated data system.
- **Privacy:** ensuring data is secure and confidential.
- **Advocacy:** advocating for accessible data and improved capacity for community data collection and analysis within well-defined role as information provider or facilitator.
- **National Roll-up:** preparing national overviews of First Nations data, as required.
- **Ethics:** developing ethics protocols and guidelines and ensuring implementation of guidelines.

The following graphic identifies the main roles identified – with larger circles indicating more frequent responses, and grouped into similar themes.



Overall, the suggested roles seem to group into three themes: coordination; data collection/analysis; and/or providing support to First Nations communities. Although stakeholders identified numerous and varied mandates and roles that could be performed, it is important to ensure that the mandate and roles aren't so broad that expectations of First Nations communities and other stakeholders can't be met. It has been noted that, when the FNSI was created, the legislation expanded the mandate to fill many gaps identified with First Nations statistics. However, this broad a mandate meant that FNSI was unable to meet the expectations of all of the stakeholders (Fiscal Realities Economists, 2017). It is also important that First Nations leaders and organizations have an opportunity to determine the mandate and roles so that their needs are met.

### Governance Structure

In alignment with the suggested guiding principles, there was general consensus that the governance structure needs to ensure a First Nations-led process which is independent from the government so that First Nations communities trust the information. Although some argued that the First Nations



statistical function could be part of a government department or a Crown Corporation, the majority felt that it needed to be completely separate from government. Many noted that part of the reason that the FNSI failed was because it was too close to the government and First Nations leaders didn't support it.

If it is decided that a national entity of some sort is required, a difficult governance question is to whom this entity could report. The following describes some possible governance structures but does not provide an in-depth analysis of each, nor does it offer recommendations. This is an area that should be examined in more detail if it is determined that a national statistical function is required.

- **Crown Corporation:** distinct legal entity owned by the Crown that operates at arm's length from the government in day-to-day operations; accountable to the government through a Minister for the conduct of their affairs; appointment of Chair and Directors through Orders-in-Council (TBS, 2015). The FNSI was a Crown Corporation.
- **Administrative Agency:** independent, quasi-judicial body that operates at arm's length from the responsible Minister; established by an act of Parliament to perform administrative, research, supervisory or regulatory functions of a government nature (TBS, 2015). The Parole Board of Canada is an administrative agency.
- **Shared Governance Organization:** doesn't report to Parliament; Canada's role is limited to the authority to appoint or nominate one or more members to the governing body. Canadian airport authorities are shared governance organizations (TBS, 2015).
- **Non-profit Organization:** an association that is organized and operated solely for social welfare, civic improvement or any other purpose except for profit; independent of government and accountable to the community; Board members are appointed by its members (CRA, 2017). The FNIGC, FNFMB and the National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC) are non-profit organizations.
- **Foundation:** non-governmental entity established as a non-profit or charitable trust with a purpose of making grants to unrelated organizations, institutions or individuals for scientific, educational, cultural or other charitable purposes (Grantspace, 2018). The Aboriginal Healing Foundation (AHF) and Indspire are examples of foundations (Bruhn, 2017).

Most of those interviewed said that a Crown Corporation would not be independent enough. However, there was also concern that a non-profit organization or foundation may not have access to data that is required and may not receive secured funding from the government. A Shared Governance organization may be more independent because the government's only authority is to appoint or nominate one or more board members. The Interim NCR recommended that a foundation model be used for the permanent NCR, with an endowment agreement and opportunity to develop other funding arrangements (NCR, 2018).

As noted earlier, another option is a national network rather than a national organization. If this were the case, information governance centres would be developed in regions where they don't already exist. A national network could support the regions in developing a national data governance strategy and coordinate them coming together for sharing best practices.

Those interviewed tended to see the role of the Government of Canada primarily as a funder and data supplier in the creation of a First Nations statistical function. The government would need to support the creation of the approach First Nations leaders agree upon, put in place any legislation or governance mechanisms required, and provide ongoing funding. Depending on the governance structure, there may be a Board member appointed by the government. The government would also need to access some of the First Nations data created by the entity or by First Nations governments who have reported to their citizens as part of an agreed-upon mutual accountability framework.

Almost all of those interviewed agreed that there was a need for a Board of Directors with regional representation. Many pointed to lessons learned from the FNSI where they said the mandate of the Board of Directors had not been clearly defined. It was noted that the Board needs to have a clearly defined mandate with a focus on governance rather than operations. They also said that the Board of Directors needs experienced, knowledgeable and independent members appointed on merit of expertise.

No matter what structure is decided-upon, it will be necessary to have access to administrative data from government departments. A Crown corporation would have greater access to these data, but some argued that data sharing agreements could achieve the same goal, while keeping the entity arms-length from the government. Others argued that access to data from Statistics Canada and government departments should be built into legislation.

About one-half of the people interviewed said that legislation needs to be put in place in order to ensure there is the authority to collect data, to access administrative data, and to ensure the data are protected. Some suggested the legislation should be similar to what provincial/territorial statistical agencies have in place. The Interim NCR noted that creating the NCR through legislation would ensure legitimacy and allow it to deliver on its mandate by ensuring that all affected parties respond (NCR, 2018).

### **Resources**

Depending on the model and governance structure identified, the amount of funding required will need to be determined. Those interviewed said that there needs to be core funding that ensures stability of the organization. It was noted that the FNIGC model would not be sufficient because it currently only has project-related funding and is unable to work on other priorities that may be identified.

Many also noted that the majority of the funding needs to flow to the regions and communities, rather than all being allocated to a national organization.

Various funding models should be examined to determine what best fits the agreed-upon structure. A funding model recommended by the Interim NCR (2018) is that the permanent NCR have an annual funding agreement to cover initial set-up and administrative/operational costs for the first five years, and an endowment fund to ensure continuity. They also recommended that the NCR shouldn't be restricted from seeking funding from other sources.

### **6.3. Possible Models**

There are a number of models that could be used to address the need for First Nations data and information. For instance, Bruhn (2014) describes models such as a single-organization data hierarchy, data partnerships and data commons. Chapter 3 noted some models that currently are (or were) in place. At the national level these include statistical organizations such as Statistics Canada, the FNIGC, FNSI, CIHI, and the Thunderbird Partnership Foundation. There are also non-statistical models such as the FNFMB, FNTC, AHF, AFOA, etc. At the regional level there are information governance centres like the AFNIGC. At the provincial/territorial level, there are statistical agencies. In addition, there are various provincial First Nations organizations with specific topics, such as the British Columbia FNHA which focuses on health data. Importantly, any model needs to incorporate the scope, guiding principles, mandate, and governance structure that is determined by First Nations leaders.

The following discusses the positive aspects, as well as the challenges, associated with the three models most often suggested by stakeholders: expanding the FNIGC; creating a new organization; and, creating a First Nations division within Statistics Canada. Among those interviewed, about one-half



supported the idea of expanding the role of the FNIGC and about one-half supported the idea of creating a new First Nations statistical organization. Only a small number of stakeholders supported the creation of a Statistics Canada First Nations-specific division, or the idea of having another existing organization take on this mandate. In any of these models, the roles of regional information governance centres could be involved and/or expanded.

### **Expand Role of FNIGC**

A large number of stakeholders supported expanding the role of the FNIGC to optimize the coordination of data and help address other issues identified. Currently, the FNIGC receives project-based funding to conduct the FNRHS and other surveys. This model would envision a broader focus whereby the FNIGC would have core funding for the national function, and regional information governance centres would be expanded to continue to provide direct support to First Nations governments. Phillips (2016) has suggested more of a national network than a national organization. It envisions the creation of Regional FNIGCs (RFNIGCs) that have common functions, but also have forms appropriate for each region. RFNIGCs would function as regional organizations and be members of a national FNIGC that would report to the AFN Chiefs-in-Assembly. A National Data Governance Strategy would align regional approaches with broader political and reporting reform initiatives across governments.

#### **Positives:**

- First Nations-led
- As a non-profit organization, seen as independent from government
- FNIGC is already established
- Most First Nations see FNIGC as a trusted and credible source of data
- Has expertise in conducting First Nations surveys and existing capacity could be leveraged to expand to other data sources
- Has a 20+ year track record of working in collaboration with regional partners in the design and delivery of unique data-gathering initiatives for First Nations
- Has developed partnerships with regions, the AFN, and some federal departments
- OCAP® compliant
- The cost implications would be less than creating a new entity because the structure is already in place

#### **Challenges:**

- Board of Directors may not agree to expanding the role of the FNIGC
- Due to diverse perspectives and priorities, may be challenging for Board of Directors to come together with a national perspective to ensure standardized and comparable data
- Because it is a non-profit organization, the FNIGC doesn't have the same access to federal and provincial/territorial administrative data as a department/Crown Corporation would have
- FNIGC doesn't currently have core funding (currently project-based)
- Currently only collects on-reserve data
- FNIGC doesn't have experience working with all types of data (e.g., not administrative or financial data)
- Data may not be comparable to other data sources (e.g., Census, LFS, APS)
- OCAP® may make data sharing difficult
- While privacy protocols are in place, FNIGC doesn't have the privacy protection of the *Statistics Act*
- Not all First Nations organizations/leaders accept the FNIGC

#### **Risks:**

- May not be supported by all First Nations leaders/organizations

- May not be effectively implemented if the Board of Directors doesn't agree to expanding the role of the FNIGC
- May not succeed in providing the support that First Nations governments require
- May not gain access to administrative data

### **Who May Support:**

- Regional First Nations statistical agencies (see Phillips, 2016; FNIGC, 2017)
- Many, but not all, First Nations leaders/organizations
- Some federal departments (see IOG, 2017)

### **Creation of New Entity**

A large number of stakeholders supported the creation of a new entity to take on the First Nations statistical function. This could be based on models such as FNHA, AHF, AFOA, etc., and it would be important to take important lessons learned from the closure of FNSI. The structure of this entity could range from a network to a more formal organization, depending on what First Nations leaders agree upon. It could also include a strong role for regional information governance centres.

### **Positives:**

- The mandate, roles, scope, governance structure and data requirements could be developed specifically for this entity based on what First Nations want, instead of revising an existing mandate of an organization
- The composition of the Board of Directors could be determined before the organization/network is created
- Could be structured to ensure independence from government
- Could be developed as First Nations-led
- Could be developed as OCAP® compliant
- Could be structured in a way to ensure access to federal and provincial/territorial administrative data (e.g., through legislation or data sharing agreements)
- Could be set up to work in collaboration with the FNIGC
- Could be set up with core funding
- Could be set up with privacy protections (through legislation)
- Could be set up based on what First Nations organizations/leaders want (therefore buy-in)

### **Challenges:**

- A new organization would need to be created from scratch, which would take time and a lot of effort to put in place
- May be seen as a duplication of the FNIGC (extra costs, confusing)
- Since FNSI failed, there may be a perception that a new organization would also fail
- Would need to develop the expertise in collecting, analyzing and disseminating First Nations data of all types
- Would need to develop trust of First Nations and others to be seen as a credible source of data
- Would need to build strong working relationship with regional organizations
- Would need to develop partnerships/relationships with First Nations, federal/provincial/territorial governments, Statistics Canada, others
- The cost implications would be more than the other options because the entity would need to be created
- Data may not be comparable to other data sources (e.g., Census, LFS, APS)

### **Risks:**

- There may be a perception of overlap with FNIGC which causes confusion and friction
- The new organization could fail because effective governance and resources aren't put in place

- The mandate may be too broad and expectations may be too high
- May not receive buy-in from all First Nations
- Costly

### Who May Support:

- Many *FNFMA* organizations (see Fiscal Realities Economists, 2017; FNTC, 2018)
- Some government departments
- Some, but not all, First Nations leaders

### Statistics Canada First Nations Statistics Division

A few stakeholders suggested the creation of a dedicated First Nations statistics division within Statistics Canada that would focus on the collection and analysis of First Nations statistics, and capacity building with First Nations communities. This model could include a strong role for regional information governance centres.

### Positives:

- Would be relatively easy to create a division within Statistics Canada
- Statistics Canada has extensive expertise in collection, analysis and dissemination of all types of data
- Statistics Canada has experience with First Nations data (e.g., Census, APS)
- Statistics Canada has access to administrative data from federal departments and has experience doing data linkages
- Can ensure comparability of data through national statistics program
- Statistics Canada has the experience to help First Nations communities develop capacity with data/analysis
- Statistics Canada has established partnerships/relationships with federal departments, provincial/territorial statistical agencies, many First Nations communities and organizations
- Internationally well respected and credible agency
- Non-political
- *Statistics Act* provides assurances of confidentiality and privacy
- The cost implications would be less than creating a new entity because the structure is already in place and can utilize Statistics Canada to support the work

### Challenges:

- Would likely not be viewed by First Nations as independent enough from government
- Not First Nations-led
- Statistics Canada's priorities may not be the same as First Nations government's priorities
- Not viewed as OCAP® compliant
- Doesn't use an Indigenous world view
- Difficult for First Nations to get access to micro-data

### Risks:

- First Nations are likely not to buy-in to this approach
- Some First Nations may not agree to having Statistics Canada collect data on their reserves
- Could end up focusing on Statistics Canada priorities rather than First Nations priorities

### Who May Support:

- Statistics Canada
- Some government departments
- Some provincial/territorial statistical agencies

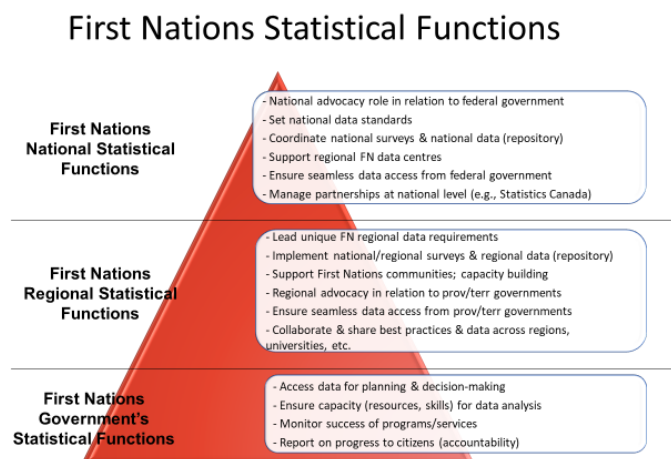
## 6.4. What is Needed for Success?

To move this concept forward successfully, stakeholders were asked “*What do you think needs to be in place to ensure focused First Nations statistical functions succeed?*” The major ideas identified were:

- **Buy-in:** it is critical that First Nations leaders, communities and organizations are fully engaged and consulted on what they think is required before it moves forward in order to ensure support. In addition, First Nations leaders need to endorse a final agreed-upon approach, and the government needs to agree to support the approach and provide the funding.
- **Strong Governance Structure:** it was agreed that a well-defined governance structure is key to the success of a statistical entity, including independence from government and non-political appointments of Board members who have a clear mandate and specific skills and experience.
- **Regional Involvement:** most felt that a national entity would not succeed without strong linkages with regional organizations.
- **Funding:** sustained core funding needs to be put in place.
- **Data Sharing Agreements:** formalized data sharing agreements need to be in place to ensure there is agreement on the use of the data and that data can be accessed. Some argued that this should be codified in legislation.
- **Well Designed Launch:** it is critical that the launch of this approach is well planned and coordinated. There needs to be a strong communications strategy that ensures awareness, champions who support it, and some quick wins so that communities see the benefit of this new initiative.

## 6.5. Chapter Summary

Overall, the majority of stakeholders interviewed argued that there was a need for a national First Nations statistical function in order to optimize coordination and consistency of First Nations data and ensure that First Nations governments have the data they require for planning, decision-making and reporting. Most seemed to prefer a structure whereby there would be one national coordinating body, with strong links to regional information governance centres who would be more operational in nature and work directly with the First Nations communities. However, funding would be necessary for RFNGICs to expand so they can provide support to First Nations governments, and a national organization or network could support the RFNGICs, provide a coordination role, and roll-up of national-level data as required. The following graphic illustrates the potential functions of First Nations statistical functions at the national, regional and community level.



In terms of models, few people supported the idea of a Statistics Canada First Nations statistical division. However, equal proportions supported the other two options: broadening the mandate of the FNIGC; and, the creation of a new entity. One possibility, mentioned by a few stakeholders and recently described by the FNTC (2018) would be to create a FNSI-type model to focus specifically on financial data, and another organization (potentially the FNIGC) could focus on survey data. This is an interesting idea because each organization could focus on specific and distinct types of data. However, there would be additional costs and potential confusion, overlap and/or gaps.

## 7. Conclusion

### 7.1. Discussion of Findings

The purpose of this paper was to examine the need for a focused First Nations statistical function. This included an overview of the current data landscape and issues relating to information on First Nations peoples, and interviews with key stakeholders to determine the need, and possible models, for a statistical function that could help provide First Nations governments with the data/information they require about their communities for planning and reporting purposes.

The scan of data sources and types revealed that a great deal of data exist on First Nations peoples and communities. In particular, there has recently been a focus on health and well-being data. First Nations governments are collecting and utilizing available data about the well-being of their communities. At the provincial/territorial and regional level there are information governance centres like the AFNIGC and BCFNDGI, financial organizations such as the FNFMB, FNTC and FNFA, and First Nations organizations with specific topics such as the FNHA and the Tui'kn Partnership. At the federal and provincial/territorial level, there are statistical agencies and departments/agencies that gather data on First Nations people. In addition, the FNIGC was specifically created to support the development of information governance and management systems at the community level through regional and national partnerships, including conducting surveys on First Nations on reserve.

However, stakeholders identified numerous issues with information on First Nations. For instance, lack of resources and capacity at the community and regional levels make it very difficult for First Nations governments to know where funding should be targeted and if programs are effective.

Stakeholders also noted that there is a need to optimize coordination, so First Nations governments and other stakeholders know what data are currently available and from what sources, and to develop consistent definitions and standardized data so First Nations governments are able to compare the data to determine where socio-economic gaps exist and examine whether the gaps are closing. With the limited funding available, the FNIGC and regional data governance centres have begun this coordination effort, but stakeholders felt this needed to be optimized. One product that would be very useful would be an up-to-date inventory of data on First Nations people, which would help create awareness of existing data. There is also a need to develop data sharing agreements so that First Nations governments can access governmental administrative data. Data linkage projects could also help provide additional data to First Nations governments.

Further, the data that currently exist do not always meet the needs of First Nations decision-makers. Stakeholders noted the need for baseline information on socio-economic and well-being indicators for each community which would help First Nations governments develop plans. Currently, the data focus on outputs rather than outcomes, and are not necessarily culturally relevant, so do not always provide useful information. With so many different data sources, the data are often disjointed and not always comparable across time or communities. Further, data can not always be disaggregated to the community level, so doesn't provide a clear picture of individual communities.

Stakeholders interviewed were unanimous in saying these issues need to be addressed to ensure access to good quality and relevant First Nations data. This need is most critical for First Nations governments but is also important at the regional and national levels. In particular, First Nations governments require comprehensive community profiles with which they can determine gaps in wellness and socio-economic indicators and examine progress over time.

The majority of interviewees supported the idea of a national First Nations statistical function of some kind which could help coordinate regional work and access to data, ensure consistent and standardized data for comparison purposes, and ensure First Nations governments have the information they require. In terms of structure, most felt that there should be one national coordinating body, and that regional data governance centres would work with communities on an operational level.

Stakeholders provided ideas for principles, mandate/functions, scope and governance structure. In addition, two viable models arose from the interviews: expanding the mandate of the FNIGC to take on the national coordinating role; and, creating a new entity. However, it was strongly recommended that a broader engagement with First Nations leaders should occur so they can determine how they would like to address the data gaps. With the funding from Budget 2018, the FNIGC is developing an approach to this consultation.

Given the Government of Canada's commitment to a new fiscal relationship with First Nations, including support for First Nations-led institutions, the timing may be right for the development of a First Nations statistical function. With the growing number of data suppliers and the increasing reliance on measurable outcome results, there is an urgent need to put something in place that is better able to provide First Nations governments and other stakeholders with the information they require for decision-making, monitoring success and reporting to citizens.

### **7.2. Possible Next Steps**

This report describes the current landscape regarding First Nations data, and issues stakeholders identified with the data/information. It is noted that the majority of stakeholders think there is a need for greater coordination of the information so that First Nations governments have access to the information they need for decision-making.

The following identifies a few possible next steps.

#### Strategy

As noted earlier, this report drew upon knowledge and experience of various stakeholders to examine data needs and issues, and possible ways to address the issues. However, this was not meant to be a comprehensive consultation and it is necessary to consult further with First Nations leaders on an approach to address the issues identified.

Budget 2018 provided the FNIGC with funding to design a national data governance strategy and coordinate efforts to establish data governance centres in the regions (Finance, 2018). In developing this strategy, they will be consulting with First Nations leaders and organizations, as well as other partners and stakeholders. This report can be used to help inform these consultations.

#### Additional Work

A number of possible areas of further research or work were identified through the development of this report. These include:

- Development of outcome-based (rather than output-based) indicators to examine well-being of First Nations communities. This work has begun, with the AFN and ISC co-developing indicators for use with the 10-year grants to be implemented in 2019 with certain First Nations. In addition, an initiative is underway by self-governing Indigenous governments to develop a set of common outcome-based indicators.
- The need for an up-to-date inventory of data regarding First Nations/Indigenous peoples (e.g., federal and provincial/territorial administrative databases; regional organizations; community-level information)



- A more in-depth examination of data sharing agreements in place with governments and First Nations governments or organizations to inform what works
- Further examination of best practices and lessons learned from other countries relating to Indigenous data and self-government
- Examine what the future role of the Government of Canada with First Nations should look like as the move to self-government continues (e.g., how does the government transition from their current role to one of supporting First Nations governments under the new fiscal relationship and a mutual accountability framework)
- Determine what data the Government of Canada will continue to need for funding and reporting purposes

## **Appendix A – List of Acronyms**

ACS: Aboriginal Children's Survey	FNRHS: First Nations Regional Health Survey
AFN: Assembly of First Nations	FNSI: First Nations Statistical Institute
AFNIGC: Alberta First Nations Information Governance Centre	IIPH: Institute of Indigenous Peoples' Health
AFOA: Aboriginal Financial Officers Association	INAC: Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada
AHF: Aboriginal Healing Foundation	IOG: Institute on Governance
APS: Aboriginal Peoples Survey	IPHRC: Indigenous People's Health Research Centre
CCJS: Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics	ISC: Indigenous Services Canada
CIHI: Canadian Institute for Health Information	ITAB: Indian Taxation Advisory Board
CIHR: Canadian Institutes of Health Research	LFS: Labour Force Survey
CIRNA: Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs	NCR: National Council for Reconciliation
CMHC: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation	NCTR: National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation
CRA: Canada Revenue Agency	NIEDB: National Indigenous Economic Development
CSC: Correctional Service Canada	NSERC: Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada
DFO: Department of Fisheries and Oceans	NWAC: Native Women's Association of Canada
ESDC: Employment and Social Development Canada	OAG: Office of the Auditor General of Canada
FNCS: First Nations Community Survey	OCAP®: Ownership, Control, Access and Possession
FNHMA: First Nations Health Managers Association	PBC: Parole Board of Canada
FNFA: First Nations Finance Authority	PHAC: Public Health Agency of Canada
FNHA: First Nations Health Authority	PMO: Prime Minister's Office
FNTC: First Nations Tax Commission	PS: Public Safety Canada
<i>FNFMA: First Nations Fiscal Management Act</i>	RFNIGC: Regional First Nations Information Governance Centre
FNFMB: First Nations Financial Management Board	SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals
<i>FNFTA: First Nations Financial Transparency Act</i>	SSHRC: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council
<i>FNFSMA: First Nations Fiscal and Statistical Management Act</i>	STC: Statistics Canada
FNIGC: First Nations Information Governance Centre	TRC: Truth and Reconciliation Commission
FNQLHSSC: First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission	UAKN: Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network
FNREEES: First Nations Regional Early Childhood, Education and Employment Survey	UNDESA: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

## **Appendix B – Individuals Interviewed<sup>8</sup>**

Craig Atkinson, Director, Employment and Social Development Canada [former Director Research, FSIN]  
Jane Badets, Assistant Chief Statistician, Social, Health and Labour Statistics, Statistics Canada  
Kim Baird, Strategic Consulting [former Chief of Tsaswassen First Nation]  
Jodi Bruhn, Director, Stratéjuste Consulting  
Harold Calla, Executive Chair, First Nations Financial Management Board  
Harriett Catholique, Director, Dene Nation  
Lisa Chen-Obrist, Senior Evaluation Analyst, Canada Foundation for Innovation  
Keith Conn, A/ADM, First Nations and Inuit Health Branch, Indigenous Services Canada [former Executive Director FNSI]  
Davy Coyle, Associate Director, Government Relations and Communications, Indigenous Services Canada  
Marion Crowe, Executive Director, First Nations Health Managers Association  
Jacques Dalton, Associate, Major Initiatives, Canadian Institutes of Health Research  
Ernie Daniels, President/CEO, First Nations Financial Authority  
Dr. Mike DeGagne, President and Vice Chancellor, Nipissing University  
Mindy Denny, Director, Information Governance and Data Projects, Union of Nova Scotia Indians  
Andrée Desaulniers, Senior Analyst, Information Management Division, Statistics Canada  
Dr. Jonathan Dewar, Executive Director, First Nations Information Governance Centre  
Rene Dion, A/Director, Surveillance, Health Information, Policy and Coordination Unit, First Nations and Inuit Health Branch, Indigenous Services Canada  
Dr. Mark Dockstator, President, First Nations University of Canada  
Tammy Drew, A/Manager, Funding Arrangements, Intergovernmental Relations and Partnerships, Atlantic Region, Indigenous Services Canada [formerly Miawpukek First Nation]  
Heather Dryburgh, A/Director General, Census Subject Matter and Social and Demographics, Statistics Canada  
Christopher Dushenes, Director General, Economic Policy Development Branch, Indigenous Services Canada  
Kevin Fitzgibbons, Executive Director, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada  
Jean-Francois Fortier, Policy Analyst, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada  
Jocelyn Garnett, Advisor, Fiscal Policy, Policy Development – Western Directorate, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs  
Matthew Garrow, Director, Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, Government of Ontario [former Director Operations, FNSI]  
Valerie Gideon, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, First Nations and Inuit Health Branch, Indigenous Services Canada  
Terry Goodtrack, President/CEO, AFOA Canada  
Claudie Gosselin, Senior Policy Advisor, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada  
Dr. Margo Greenwood, Lead, National Collaborating Centre on Aboriginal Health

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<sup>8</sup> A few additional individuals were interviewed who chose not to have their names listed.

Nancy Gros-Louis McHugh, Research Manager, First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission

Neil Guernsey, Senior Advisor, Fiscal Policy, Policy Development – Western Directorate, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs

Bonnie Healy, Chair FNIGC and Operations Manager, Alberta First Nations Information Governance Centre

Carol Hopkins, Executive Director, Thunderbird Partnership Foundation

Linda Howatson-Leo, Director, Information Management Division, Statistics Canada

Manny Jules, Chief Commissioner, First Nations Tax Commission

Mary-Luisa Kapelus, A/Associate Deputy Minister, Indigenous Secretariat, Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation Sector, Natural Resources Canada

Jules Komguer, Senior Policy Analyst, Modern Treaty Implementation Office, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs

Steven Kuski, Economic Statistician, Bureau of Statistics, Saskatchewan Ministry of Finance

Isaac Kwarteng, Economic Statistician, Bureau of Statistics, Saskatchewan Ministry of Finance

Marc Lachance, Director, Social and Aboriginal Statistics, Statistics Canada

Andre Le Dressay, Director, Fiscal Realities Economists

Alfred Linklater, Senior Policy Advisor, Economic Development, Assembly of First Nations

Ryan Mazan, Chief Statistician/Director, Government of Alberta

Gail McDonald, former Executive Director, First Nations Information Governance Centre

Steven Mitchell, Senior Advisor to the President, Canadian Institutes of Health Research

Martin Monkman, Provincial Statistician and Director, Ministry of Technology, Innovation and Citizens' Services, British Columbia Statistics

Ry Moran, Executive Director, National Centre on Truth and Reconciliation

Earl Nowgesic, Assistant Scientific Director, Canadian Institutes of Health Research

Vivian O'Donnell, Data Analyst, Social and Aboriginal Statistics, Statistics Canada [former FNSI employee]

Marie Patry, former Director, Aboriginal Statistics, Statistics Canada

John Paul, Executive Director, Atlantic Policy Congress

Vishni Peeris, Director, Northwest Territories Bureau of Statistics

Gwen Phillips, Director, Governance Transition, Ktunaxa Nation

Hale Ramsey, Director, Economics/Statistics, Bureau of Statistics, Saskatchewan Ministry of Finance

Tim Raybould, President, KaLoNa Group Consulting

Dr. Brenda Restoule, Chairman of the Board, First Peoples Wellness Circle

Bishnu Saha, Director, Yukon Bureau of Statistics

JoLee Sasakamoose, Director, Indigenous Peoples' Health Research Centre, University of Regina

Stephanie Sinclair, Director, First Nations Health and Social Secretariat of Manitoba

Marjolaine Sioui, Executive Director, First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission

Helen Stappers, Data Analyst, Council of Yukon First Nations

Monique Stewart, Director, City of Ottawa

Scott Takenaka, Fiscal Policy, Policy Development – Western Directorate, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs

Allison Van de Ligt, Analyst, Fiscal Policy and Investment Readiness, Indigenous Services Canada

Leane Walsh, Director, Fiscal Policy and Investment Readiness, Indigenous Services Canada

Peigi Wilson, Manager, Federation of Canadian Municipalities

Michael Wisener, A/Director, Manitoba Bureau of Statistics

Nancy Zukewich, Chief, System Engineering Division, Statistics Canada

## **Appendix C – Questions for Key Contacts**

*As part of the new fiscal relationship, the AFN and the Government of Canada are examining whether there is a need for focused First Nations statistical functions. This project includes a description of the current situation, gaps in First Nations data, and what data are required. If it is determined that there is a need for focused First Nations statistical functions, we are examining the best model and approach to implement these functions.*

*As a key partner/stakeholder, this is an opportunity for you to share your perspectives and provide insight on the need for focused First Nations statistical functions and how you believe the data gaps can be filled. Some of the questions may be more relevant to you than others, there is no expectation that you will be able to speak to all of them. Of most interest to us, is your personal experience and expertise.*

### **Current Situation**

1. What types of First Nations data are currently available that you are aware of (about First Nations citizens; on performance/results)?
  - Who provides the data?
  - Who uses the data?
  - How are the data/information currently used?
2. What data/information gaps are you aware of? What type of data/information do you think are needed?
3. What impact do you think these gaps have on:
  - First Nations citizens
  - First Nations governments
  - First Nations organizations
  - Federal/provincial/territorial governments
  - Other stakeholders?

### **Addressing Data Gaps**

4. If the data gaps were filled, what would the information be used for?
  - What issues would the data help to resolve?
5. Do you think there is a need to establish some kind of focused First Nations statistical functions (e.g., one dedicated entity or through a number of organizations)?
  - If yes – why?
  - If no – why not?
  - What are the pros/cons of putting this/these functions in place?
6. [If no] Are there other ways you would suggest filling the data gaps?
7. [If yes] There are many different ways to establish focused First Nations statistical functions. How would you suggest it be set up? Are there models that you think could work?
8. Are there lessons learned from the First Nations Statistical Institute (FNSI)?
  - When the FNSI was created, what did you hope it would accomplish?
  - What do you think were the main reasons that it closed?
  - How were the gaps filled in the absence of the FNSI?
  - Are there aspects of the FNSI that you think worked well and should be replicated?
  - Are there aspects of the FNSI that you think didn't work well and shouldn't be replicated?
9. If focused First Nations statistical functions were established, what do you think should be:
  - The mandate(s)?
  - The main roles?
  - The scope?
  - The governance structure?
  - The data collected?

**Next Steps**

10. If this idea moves forward, what principles do you think should guide the creation of focused First Nations statistical functions?
11. What do you think needs to be in place to ensure focused First Nations statistical functions succeed?
12. What would you suggest should be the next steps in examining the possibility of focused First Nations statistical functions?
13. Are there other people you would suggest I speak with, or documents I should review to more fully examine this idea?
14. Is there anything else you would like to add?



## Appendix D – Examples of Colleges/Universities Conducting Research on Indigenous Peoples

Name	Description
McMaster University Indigenous Research Institute (Ontario)	The Institute will facilitate and promote increased visibility of Indigenous knowledge and methodologies, create space for dialogue between Western research approaches and Indigenous research collaborations, and support both Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers, ethics boards, and decision makers in the area of Indigenous research. <a href="http://miri.mcmaster.ca">[http://miri.mcmaster.ca]</a>
Indigenous Sharing & Learning Centre (ISLC), Laurentian University (Ontario)	The ISLC brings together students, faculty, staff, and the community to enhance Indigenous education, advance understanding, and support the needs and aspirations of Indigenous communities. <a href="https://laurentian.ca/tags/maamwizing-indigenous-research-institute">[https://laurentian.ca/tags/maamwizing-indigenous-research-institute]</a>
Waaakebiness-Bryce Institute for Indigenous Health, University of Toronto (Ontario)	Waaakebiness-Bryce Institute for Indigenous Health is engaged in research, education, and service initiatives to overcome health challenges and evaluate interventions to prevent disease and improve health. <a href="http://www.dlsph.utoronto.ca/institutes/wbihi">[http://www.dlsph.utoronto.ca/institutes/wbihi]</a>
Aboriginal Policy Research Consortium International (APRCi), University of Western Ontario (Ontario)	The Consortium (International) aims to provide leadership and oversight on projects related to research and policy for, by, and about Indigenous peoples worldwide; creating a hub for connecting professionals and communities working on Indigenous issues. The International Indigenous Policy Journal is an open access, peer-reviewed journal that promotes evidence-based policy making, encourages quality research based on partnerships with Indigenous peoples, develops networks of policy researchers and makers, improves Indigenous scholarship, and engenders debate on important policy issues. <a href="https://ir.lib.uwo.ca">[https://ir.lib.uwo.ca]</a>
Manitoba Centre for Health Policy (MCHP) (Manitoba)	MCHP is a collaboration of researchers from the University of Manitoba and planners from Manitoba's Regional Health Authorities and Manitoba Health. MCHP uses de-identified data from government administrative records to conduct linkages among databases, including health, justice and social services. First Nations communities are able to access these data for community planning. <a href="https://umanitoba.ca/faculties/health_sciences/medicine/units/chs/departmental_units/mchp/about.html">[https://umanitoba.ca/faculties/health_sciences/medicine/units/chs/departmental_units/mchp/about.html]</a>
First Nations University of Canada (Saskatchewan)	FNUUniv is a unique Canadian institution that specializes in Indigenous knowledge, providing post-secondary education for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students alike within a culturally supportive environment. <a href="http://fnuniv.ca">[http://fnuniv.ca]</a>
University of Alberta Faculty of Native Studies (Alberta)	Mandate is to produce graduates across the university who have respect for Indigenous knowledges, who are educated about Indigenous histories and contemporary issues, and who can work collaboratively with Indigenous communities and peoples. Responsible for the Aboriginal Policy Studies journal which is an open-access, peer reviewed journal featuring original, scholarly, and policy relevant research on issues relevant to Métis, non-status Indians, and urban Aboriginal peoples in Canada. <a href="https://www.ualberta.ca/native-studies">[https://www.ualberta.ca/native-studies]</a>
Simon Fraser Institute on Indigenous Research (BC)	The Institute promotes research by bringing together the expertise of Indigenous individuals, groups, and organizations with that of the academic community, to engage in work that meets goals and objectives that is specified by and meaningful to both Indigenous and academic individuals and groups. <a href="https://www.sfu.ca/aboriginalpeoples/indigenous-research-institute-.html">[https://www.sfu.ca/aboriginalpeoples/indigenous-research-institute-.html]</a>
Institute of Indigenous Issues & Perspectives, Trinity Western University (BC)	The Institute provides a forum for greater understanding of a broad range of diversity issues pertaining to Indigenous peoples in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, three countries with similar colonial backgrounds, issues and Aboriginal policies applied in different ways. <a href="https://www.twu.ca/research/institutes-and-centres/university-institutes/institute-indigenous-issues-and-perspectives">[https://www.twu.ca/research/institutes-and-centres/university-institutes/institute-indigenous-issues-and-perspectives]</a>
Centre for Indigenous Research & Community-led Engagement, University of Victoria (BC)	The Centre is dedicated to promoting and engaging in research in partnership with Indigenous Peoples to improve their well-being. The International Journal of Indigenous Health is published bi-annually by the Aboriginal Health Research Networks Secretariat at the University of Victoria. This peer-reviewed online open-access journal was established to advance knowledge and understanding to improve Indigenous health. The journal seeks to bring knowledge from diverse intellectual traditions together with a focus on culturally diverse Indigenous voices, methodologies and epistemology. <a href="https://www.uvic.ca/research/centres/circle">[https://www.uvic.ca/research/centres/circle]</a>
Northern Aboriginal Research &	NARDA serves as a central, common resource for use in support of faculty research and development with First Nations in the area of land use and management. It also provides an

Development Alliance (NARDA), University of Northern British Columbia (BC)	opportunity for UNBC researchers to work with First Nations to meet their needs for research, co-ordination, capacity building, fund raising, and extension. [ <a href="https://www.unbc.ca/nres-institute/northern-aboriginal-research-development-alliance">https://www.unbc.ca/nres-institute/northern-aboriginal-research-development-alliance</a> ]
National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health (NCCAH), University of Northern British Columbia (BC)	The National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health (NCCAH) is a national Aboriginal organization established in 2005 by the Government of Canada and funded through PHAC to support First Nations, Inuit, and Métis public health renewal and health equity through knowledge translation and exchange. [ <a href="https://www.cnsa-nccah.ca">https://www.cnsa-nccah.ca</a> ]
Aurora Research Institute (NWT)	Aurora Research Institute (ARI) is the research division of Aurora College, with a mandate to improve the quality of life for NWT residents by applying scientific, technological and indigenous knowledge to solve northern problems and advance social and economic goals. There are three research offices: Western Arctic Research Centre in Inuvik, South Slave Research Centre in Fort Smith, and North Slave Research Centre in Yellowknife. [ <a href="http://nwtresearch.com">http://nwtresearch.com</a> ]
Institute of Indigenous Self-Determination, Yukon College (Yukon)	Through nationally-recognized Indigenous initiatives and strong partnerships with local First Nations, the Institute emphasizes northern solutions to northern problems. Taking great strides towards developing research and innovation, in partnership with Yukon First Nations. [ <a href="https://www.yukoncollege.yk.ca/programs/centres-institutes/Institute-of-Indigenous-self-determination">https://www.yukoncollege.yk.ca/programs/centres-institutes/Institute-of-Indigenous-self-determination</a> ]

## Appendix E – Examples of Data

### Census Data

Data Type	Data Source	Description	Population	Frequency
Census of the Population (1,2)	STC	Collects data about the population of Canada – people, households & their demographic & socio-economic characteristics. Subjects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aboriginal peoples</li> <li>• Education, training &amp; learning</li> <li>• Ethnic diversity &amp; immigration</li> <li>• Families, households &amp; housing</li> <li>• Income, pensions, spending &amp; wealth</li> <li>• Labour</li> <li>• Languages</li> <li>• Population &amp; demography</li> <li>• Population estimates &amp; projections</li> <li>• Society &amp; community</li> </ul>	All Canadians, including Indigenous peoples living on- & off-reserve (distributed to 100% of population). Includes Aboriginal Group (First Nations, Métis, Inuit); Aboriginal Identity (since 1986 – First Nations registered/non-registered, Métis, Inuit); Aboriginal Group; Membership in First Nation or Indian Band; Aboriginal Ancestry	Since 1871 – every 5 years
National Household Survey (NHS) (2)	STC	Information previously collected by mandatory long-form census collected on voluntary basis – demographic, social & economic characteristics	All Canadians, including Indigenous peoples living on- & off-reserves (distributed to 33% of population)	Since 2011 – every 5 years
Census (3)	NWT	Conducts Census of NWT population on off-year of the Canadian Census of Population (able to provide community-level data every 2-3 years)	All people in the NWT, including Indigenous peoples	Every 5 years (off years of Canadian Census)

Sources: (1) Statistics Canada (2017b); (2) Statistics Canada (2014a); (3) NWT Bureau of Statistics (2018)

### National Survey Data

Data Type	Data Source	Description	Population	Frequency
Labour Force Survey (LFS) (1)	STC	Employment & industry statistics	Non-institutionalized Canadian population aged 15 & older. Not collected on reserve or in remote areas	1945-1952 – quarterly Since 1952 – monthly
Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS) (2) <sup>9</sup>	STC	Social & economic conditions	First Nations people living off reserve, Métis & Inuit, aged 15 & over	Since 2006 – every 5 years
First Nations Regional Early Childhood, Education & Employment Survey (FNREEES) (3)	FNIGC	Information on early childhood education, education, employment, & labour	First Nations people living on-reserve & in northern First Nations communities	2013-2015
First Nations Regional Health Survey (FNRHS) (4)	FNIGC	Information on Western & traditional understandings of health & well-being	On-reserve & northern First Nations communities	Pilot 1997 2002-03
First Nations	FNIGC	12 themes: external environment;	Some First Nations on	2005

<sup>9</sup> Nunavut Inuit Labour Force Analysis (NILFA) is a supplement to the APS.

Community Survey (FNCS) (5)		shelter & infrastructure; housing; food & nutrition; employment & economic development; early childhood development; education; justice & safety; health services; social services; First Nations identity; First Nations governance	reserve	2015
Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) (6)	STC	Information on health status, health care utilization & health determinants	Canadians aged 12 & over. Not collected on reserve	Since 2001 – every 2 years  Since 2007 – annually
General Social Survey (GSS) (7) <sup>10</sup>	STC	Information on social trends in order to monitor changes in the living conditions & well being of Canadians over time; & to provide information on specific social policy issues of current or emerging interest	Canadians 15 & older living in the 10 provinces.	Since 1985 – every 5 years
Aboriginal Children's Survey (ACS) (8)	STC	Early childhood development & social & living conditions	First Nations children 0-5 years of age living off reserve, Métis, Inuit	2006 – one-time post-censal survey
Canadian Survey on Disability (9)	STC	Information about Canadian adults whose daily activities are limited because of a long-term condition or health-related problem	Adults 15 & older living in private dwellings in the 10 provinces & 3 territories. Not collected on reserve; excludes people living in collective dwellings	Since 1986 – every 5 years
Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) (10)	OECD/ STC	Measures level & distribution of skills among adult population, & utilization of skills in different contexts	Conducted in 24 countries – Canadian sample included Aboriginal & non-Aboriginal populations living off reserve. Statistics at national level & some selected provinces	2012 one-time
Native Wellness Assessment™ (NWATM) (11)	Thunderbird Partnership Foundation	Measures effect of cultural interventions on a person's wellness, from whole person & strengths-based perspective.	First Nations clients with substance abuse or mental health issues	2015

Sources: (1) Statistics Canada (2018f); (2) Statistics Canada (2017c); (3) FNIGC (2016); (4) FNIGC (2018a); (5) FNIGC (2017); (6) Statistics Canada (2016a); (7) Statistics Canada (2018c); (8) Statistics Canada (2007); (9) Statistics Canada (2012); (10) Statistics Canada (2017f); (11); Thunderbird Partnership Foundation (2018)

### **Administrative Data from Provincial/Territorial Departments**

Data Type	Data Source	Description	Population	Frequency
Indian Registry System (IRS) (1) <sup>11</sup>	ISC	Names of all Status Indians & information on dates of birth, death, marriage, divorce, transfer from one First Nation to another	Registered Indians	Ongoing
Band Governance Management System (BGMS) (1)	ISC	Records relating to band council elections, election appeals, composition of band councils, listing of band by-laws & appointment of Justices of the Peace under the <i>Indian Act</i>	Registered Indians	

<sup>10</sup> Other Statistics Canada surveys may include some information on Indigenous people living off reserve – see list <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/survey/list>.

<sup>11</sup> See CIRNA/ISC Reporting Guide for additional information on CIRNA/ISC administrative databases - <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1385559716700/1385559776777>.

## Strengthening the Availability of First Nations Data

Grants & Contributions Information Management System (GCIMS) (1)	ISC	Transfer management system that automates transfer payment business processes, manages funding agreement information & provides on-line access for First Nations & other funding recipients	Registered Indians	Complete dataset from 2007 (select historical data from 2001-02)
Indian Land Registration System (ILRS) (1)	ISC	Web-based system to maintain land register pursuant to <i>Indian Act</i> ; examine, register & maintain documents relating to interest in Indian lands; provide service to First Nations, regions & districts in making available copies of records	Registered Indians	
National Additions to Reserve Tracking System (NATS) (1)	ISC	Tracks additions to reserve submissions as they progress from regions to HQ in order to receive confirmation via Ministerial Order or Order-in-Council	Registered Indians	From 2005
Integrated Capital Management System (ICMS) (1)	ISC	Tracks assets at First Nation sites; tracks project funding & community inventories (e.g., housing, municipal-type service agreements)	Registered Indians	
Specific Claims Database (SCDB) (1)	ISC	Records related to claims-related research policy & negotiation positions, value & compensation related assessments & studies, correspondence, briefing notes, presentations, legal opinions, statistics, final agreements & guidelines	Registered Indians	
Education Information System (EIS) (1)	ISC	Online data capture & information management system containing current & historical information relating to ISC's education funding activities & programs	First Nations & Inuit elementary/secondary & post-secondary students	
First Nations Child & Family Services Information Management System (FNCFS-IMS) (1)	ISC	Collects child & family services data to ensure compliance, track business workflow, report results, provide program users with capability to perform ad-hoc queries, perform ad-hoc reporting, & provide performance indicators & comparability	On-reserve First Nations	Since 2007
Community-based Report Template (CBRT) (2)	ISC – FNIHB	Collects health program information from entities that have contribution agreements with FNIHB. Covers: Healthy Child Development; Healthy Living; Mental Wellness; Communicable Disease Control; Home & Community Care; Clinical & Client Care	On-reserve First Nations	2008
Aboriginal Skills & Employment Training Strategy (ASETS) (3)	ESDC	Designed to increase the number of Indigenous peoples integrated into the labour force through contribution agreements to Indigenous organizations	First Nations Inuit, Métis, status & non-status Indigenous peoples living off reserve	Since 2010
Skills & Partnership Fund (SPF) (4)	ESDC	Contribution program that funds short-term projects contributing to skills development and training of Indigenous peoples	First Nations Inuit, Métis, status & non-status Indigenous peoples living off reserve	Since 2010
Aboriginal Fisheries	DFO	Information from contribution agreements related to Aboriginal food,	Aboriginal groups	Since 1992

## Strengthening the Availability of First Nations Data

Strategy (AFS) (5)		social & ceremonial fisheries & commercial fisheries		
Aboriginal Aquatic Resource & Oceans Management (AAROM) (5)	DFO	Information from contribution agreements related to aquatic resource & oceans management activities, including governance, undertaken by Aboriginal aggregate bodies	Aboriginal groups	Since 2004-05
Business Register (BR) (6)	STC	Central repository of baseline information on businesses & institutions operating in Canada	All businesses in Canada with corporate income tax, employer payroll deduction remittance, GST/HST, T5013 partnership, or registered charities accounts	Available from 2000
Canadian Vital Statistics System (7)	STC & provinces/territories	Information on births, deaths & marriages	Aboriginal	Since 1921
Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative (ADI) (8)	PHAC	Goal is to reduce type 2 diabetes among Indigenous people by supporting health promotion & primary prevention activities & services delivered by trained community diabetes workers & health service providers	First Nations & Inuit communities	Since 1999
Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Survey (9)	STC - CCJS	Measures the incidence of crime in Canadian society and its characteristics (aggregate & incident-based surveys)	Only crimes reported to the police; some information on reserves; there is an Aboriginal indicator	Since 1962 V2 - 1988
Homicide Survey (10)	STC - CCJS	Police-reported data on the characteristics of all murder incidents, victims and accused persons	There is an Aboriginal indicator	Since 1961
Adult Corrections Survey (11)	STC - CCJS	Data on the delivery of adult correctional services from provincial/territorial & federal correctional systems	Includes Indigenous adults	Since 2000
Offender Management System (12)	CSC/PBC	Information on federal offenders throughout their sentences - system gathers, stores & retrieves information required for tracking offenders & making decisions concerning their cases	First Nations, Inuit, Métis	Since 1990s
First Nations Policing Program (13)	Public Safety Canada	Federal contribution program that supports provision of professional, dedicated & responsive policing services in First Nation & Inuit communities	First Nation & Inuit communities	Since 1991

Sources: (1) Van de Ligt (2017); (2) HC (2017); (3) ESDC (2017a); (4) ESDC (2017b); (5) DFO (2018); (6) STC (2018b); (7) STC (2014b); (8) PHAC (2011); (9) STC (2017i); (10) STC (2017e); (11) STC (2018a); (12) CSC (2013); (13) Public Safety Canada (2017)

## **Administrative Data from Other Sources**

<b>Data Type</b>	<b>Data Source</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Provincial/ territorial	Provinces & Territories	Administrative data collected as part of program operations	Some data include Indigenous identifiers, but much does not	Ongoing
Financial (1)	FNTC	Data from financial audits of First Nations; reports provided to the federal government in fulfillment of transfer agreements	On reserve	Ongoing
Financial (2)	FNFA	First Nations share information with the FNFA about businesses they operate	First Nations businesses	Ongoing
Addictions Management Information System (AMIS) (3)	Thunderbird Partnership Foundation / Health Canada	National case management database - collects evidence that can be used to inform client care, demonstrate strengths of the National Native Alcohol & Drug Abuse Program & the Youth Substance Abuse Program, and support research initiatives.	First Nations clients	Since 2014

Sources: (1) FNTC (2018); (2) FNFA (2018); (3) Thunderbird Partnership Foundation (2018)

## **Data Linkages**

<b>Data Type</b>	<b>Data Source</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Social Data Linkage Environment (SLDE) (1)	STC	Approved data linkages <a href="http://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/record/su&lt;br/&gt;mm">http://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/record/su mm</a>	First Nations	Since 2000
Synergy in Action (SIA) (2)	FNHIB/ISC	Currently connects to over 50 sources of data and organizes them into a data warehouse	First Nations on reserve	Since 2012
First Nations Client File (3)	FNHA	Links Indian Registry and British Columbia health database	On-reserve First Nations in British Columbia	Since 2013
Unama'ki Client Registry (4)	Tui'kn Partnership	Links registry of Unama'ki population of Nova Scotia with provincial health data sources	First Nations in Eskasoni, Membertou, Potlotek, Wagmatcook & Waycobah	Since 2006
Common Surveillance Plan (5)	FNQLHSSC	Combines Census, health surveys & various administrative databases held by the Government of Quebec	First Nations in Quebec	Since 2012
Manitoba Population Research Data Repository (6)	MCHP at University of Manitoba	Links data from government administrative records	All Manitobans, including Indigenous peoples	Unknown

Sources: (1) Statistics Canada (2018b); (2) ISC (2018d); (3) First Nations Health Society (2010); (4) Tui'kn Partnership (2018); (5) FNQLHSSC (2018); (6) University of Manitoba (2017)



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