

Indigenous Contributions to the Manitoba Economy

JANUARY 2019



Project Research Team

Bill Ashton, *Rural Development Institute*
Aimee Coueslan, *Rural Development Institute*
Clyde Flett, *Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.*
Gabriela Jimenez, *Southern Chiefs' Organization*
Stephen Johnson, *SJ Research Services Inc.*
Lori Zimmerman, *Rural Development Institute*

With special thanks to former research team members Ariel Bryant and Simon Boissoneault of RDI, as well as graphic designer Alida Grelowski.

Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO). Incorporated in 1981, MKO is a non-profit, political advocacy organization that provides a collective voice on issues of inherent, Treaty, aboriginal and human rights for the citizens of the sovereign First Nations we represent. The MKO First Nations are signatory to Treaties 4, 5, 6 and 10. Its mandate is provided by the MKO Chiefs in General Assembly. More at <http://mkonation.com/about-us/>

Southern Chiefs' Organization (SCO). Incorporated in 1999, SCO represents 34 southern First Nation communities in Manitoba. Its mission is to establish an independent political forum to protect, preserve, promote, and enhance First Nations peoples' inherent rights, languages, customs, and traditions through the application and implementation of the spirit and intent of the Treaty-making process. More at <http://scoinc.mb.ca/about/>

Rural Development Institute, Brandon University (RDI). Established in 1989, RDI is an academic research centre and a leading source of information on issues affecting rural communities in Western Canada and elsewhere. RDI functions as a not-for-profit research and development organization designed to promote, facilitate, coordinate, initiate and conduct multi-disciplinary academic and applied research on rural issues. More at <https://www.brandonu.ca/rdi/>

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Head Office
Swan Lake First Nation Unit 2 – 4820 Portage Avenue, Headingley, Manitoba R4H 1C8

Winnipeg Sub-Office
1572 Dublin Avenue Winnipeg, Manitoba R3E 0L4
www.scoinc.mb.ca
Phone: (204) 946-1869 Fax: (204) 946-1871 Toll Free: 1-866-876-9701

November 27th, 2018

RE: Letter from Southern Chiefs' Organization

As Grand Chief of Southern Chiefs' Organization (SCO), which represents 34 First Nations in Southern Manitoba, I am honoured to present the final report of the Indigenous Economic Contributions to Manitoba. For the first time, the impact of First Nations Economy in Manitoba has been calculated and the urban reserves in this province have been profiled.

We are confident that the results of this research will contribute to understand, promote and enhance Indigenous economic performance, enterprise growth and business partnerships. This is one more step in our efforts on collaborative leadership and governance, which SCO already started by joining the Winnipeg Metropolitan Region working group for the Collaborative Leadership Initiative (CLI).

The CLI is an engagement process to enhance relationships and decision making for growth, stewardship and governance. Chiefs, Mayors and Reeves get together in quarterly sessions to discuss effective strategies and partnerships to address social, economic and environmental challenges. All these initiatives and projects will progressively lead our communities to sustained prosperity and economic development.



We are proud of having played a key role in the completion of this first macro analysis and we look forward to continuing measuring and reporting the impacts of our economies to the broader provincial and national wealth.

In pursuit of balance,

Ogema-Makwa
Jerry Daniels
Grand Chief

"Representing Anishinaabe and Dakota First Nations in Southern Manitoba"



Manitoba Keewatinowí Okimakanak Inc.

Head Office

Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation
Nelson House, Manitoba
R0B 1A0

www.mkonation.com

Thompson Sub-Office

206-55 Selkirk Avenue
Thompson, Manitoba
R8N 0M5

Winnipeg Sub-Office

Suite 1601-275 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3B 2B3

Office of Grand Chief Garrison Settee

November 29, 2018

Message from Grand Chief Settee

On behalf of the MKO First Nations, I am pleased to share the outcomes of this important research project on the Indigenous contributions to the overall economy in Manitoba. By partnering with the Southern Chiefs' Organization and the Rural Development Institute at Brandon University, the findings of this project looked at collecting publicly available data on First Nations economic activities, First Nations' information related to employment, expenditures at the band, business, and household levels, investments in First Nation infrastructure and financial support to Indigenous communities. The research report highlighted.

- The importance of on-reserve infrastructure investment to MKO First Nations' ability to participate in the wider economy, and;
- How expansion of MKO urban economic development zones is critical to community well being and prosperity for Manitoba in general.

Our aim was to help frame discussions and initiatives by providing baseline for Indigenous contributions to the overall economy, labour force data and future trends that can be used for capacity building and investment planning. I am optimistic for the future as our First Nations utilize the economic analysis contained in this report when they meet with their counterparts within the municipal, provincial and federal governments to discuss our equal and full participation within the economies of Manitoba and Canada.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge our lead researcher Mr. Clyde Flett. I would further like to thank the MKO First Nations who participated, and who shared their experiences through guided discussions to profile the Urban Reserves in Manitoba and across Canada as an economic development tool that benefits all parties involved. I would like to thank our federal and provincial partners who provided the financial support for this research project. Thank you as well to our southern First Nations partners for their contributions. And, finally, thank you to the academic staff and researchers who developed the research parameters and who compiled the report. Ekosani.

Sincerely,

Grand Chief Garrison Settee
Manitoba Keewatinowí Okimakanak Inc.



September 23, 2018

RE: Letter of Support and Acknowledgement

Brandon University acknowledges our campuses on Treaty 1 and Treaty 2 territories, on the traditional homelands of the Dakota, Anishanabek, Oji-Cree, Cree, and Metis peoples. We acknowledge and respect the treaties, history, land, and the people of this area. Brandon University and the Rural Development Institute are honored to have worked on The *Indigenous Economy Contributions to Manitoba* project led by the partnership of Southern Chiefs' Organization Incorporated and Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak.

Brandon University is proud to be sharing its expertise in Indigenous research. In 1975, Brandon University was the first university in western Canada, and only the second in Canada, to establish a Native Studies Department. We publish the highly recognized Canadian Journal of Native Studies and are home to the Department of Visual and Aboriginal Art. As a founding partner, we contributed to the Brandon Urban Aboriginal Peoples' Council in 2010. In 2015, Brandon University signed the Manitoba Indigenous Education Blueprint, which builds on the longstanding commitment demonstrated in Brandon University's Program for the Education of Native Teachers. Above all, Brandon University recognizes the scholarly importance of Indigenous cultures and Indigenous knowledge and we recognize the value of different ways of knowing.

Brandon University is proud to have been involved in this project and the outcomes resulting in the creation of this report. We hope that it leads to a greater recognition in the province of the importance of Indigenous peoples contributions, not only to the culture and spirit of Manitoba but also to the advancement of its economy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Meir Serfaty', written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Meir Serfaty

Acting Vice-President (Academic & Provost)



OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT (ACADEMIC & PROVOST)

270 18th Street, Brandon Manitoba, Canada R7A 6A9 204.727.9712 VPA@BrandonU.ca

BrandonU.ca

Acknowledgements

The authors wish to extend their appreciation and thanks to the First Nations communities that supported this research project by participating in interviews for the urban reserve profiles. We also wish to thank the steering committee for their support, guidance, and collaboration in the creation of all aspects of this project, including this report. Finally, we appreciate the comments from André LeDressay and Jason Reeves, Tulo Centre of Indigenous Economics, regarding the macroeconomic analyses.

Steering Committee Members

Ashton, Bill, *Rural Development Institute*

Ferlaino, Caterina, *Manitoba Priorities and Planning Secretariat*

Forbes, Nina, *Indigenous Services Canada*

Kaita, Adara, *Manitoba Indigenous and Northern Relations*

Lynxleg, Kelvin, *Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.*

Mallett, Curtis, *Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.*

McIntyre, Leona, *Manitoba Growth, Enterprise and Trade*

Mercer, Jolene, *Southern Chiefs' Organization Inc.*

Pearson, Megan, *Indigenous Services Canada*

Rogan, Alison, *Manitoba Indigenous and Northern Relations*

Schott, Jana, *Manitoba Growth, Enterprise and Trade*

Sinclair, Onekanew Christian, *OCN and Look North*

Sinclair, Shelley, *Opaskwayak Cree Nation*

Special thanks for funding and invaluable guidance for this project to Indigenous Services Canada and the Government of Manitoba.



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Chapter 1:

Unlocking Success

Indigenous Contributions to the
Manitoba Economy



» To further develop research capacity, a staff member from SCO and MKO joined RDI's research team.

Introduction

The Southern Chiefs' Organization Inc. (SCO) and Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. (MKO) have partnered with Brandon University's Rural Development Institute (RDI) to research and document Indigenous economic contributions to the broader Manitoba economy.

RDI acknowledges that Brandon University has campuses located on Treaty 1 and Treaty 2 territories. These campuses are in Manitoba, on the traditional homelands of the Dakota, Anishinabek, Métis, Cree, Anishinew, and Dené peoples.

This is the first Rural Development Institute project to benefit from the First Nations principles of Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP®).¹ The OCAP principles and the principles set out by the Tri-Council Policy Statement² set a standard for research with Indigenous people and establish how related data should be collected, protected, used, and shared. With an aim to promote collaborative research by including Indigenous perspectives, a staff member from SCO and MKO joined RDI's researchers for this project. To hone our knowledge and skills, the research team participated in five days of training about research ethics and Indigenous people.³ In a modest way, we hope this report demonstrates a commitment to enhance research methods and sharing knowledge, while acknowledging a broader economic framework used in this project has colonial roots.

This applied research project occurs at a time of reconciliation. Replacing old development paradigms in favour of ones highlighting the economic, social, and cultural development of communities is becoming the Indigenous approach. New economic paradigms seek to highlight the holistic development of Indigenous people and communities. In these paradigms, it is important to continually improve financial and organizational capacity and to educate all sectors. This new approach also means engaging with the larger Manitoba community to promote meaningful consultation, make access to economic opportunities more equitable, and share Indigenous history for intercultural competency. Such an emphasis also highlights the importance of increasing economic

1 OCAP® is a registered trademark of the First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC). See First Nations Information and Governance Centre. (2018).

2 RDI also complies with the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, otherwise known as TCPS 2 (2014). Chapter 9 of the TCPS 2 covers research with the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples of Canada.

3 The training course was the First Nations Research Ethics Knowledge Exchange into Action (KEA), Summer Institute 2018, which was co-hosted by the First Nations Health and Social Secretariat of Manitoba and The University of Winnipeg. University of Winnipeg, Winnipeg, MB. May 1-5, 2018.

self-sufficiency as a means of greater self-determination.

Look North was initiated by the Manitoba government to help unlock the tremendous economic potential in the north. It is a movement by northerners, for northerners to develop economic opportunities for generations to come. There have been many discussions related to the Look North initiative.⁴ During these discussions and other meetings, it became apparent to Onekanew Christian Sinclair, co-chair of Look North with Mr. Chuck Davidson, that what was missing was information on the contributions of Indigenous people to the Manitoba economy. This knowledge gap became evident with the release of a 2016 report titled “Indigenous economic performance in Atlantic Canada.”⁵ A site visit by RDI to the offices and leaders of the Atlantic Policy Congress led to a better understanding of their approach and analysis.⁶ Back in Manitoba, discussions continued with representatives from First Nations, such as Opaskwayak Cree Nation; Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. (MKO); Southern Chiefs’ Organization Inc. (SCO); and the provincial and federal governments. Those around the table also invited other Indigenous organizations, such as the Manitoba Métis Federation. Brandon University’s Rural Development Institute (RDI) was asked to listen in and prepare a proposal. SCO and MKO submitted the proposal for funding to Indigenous Services Canada and the Government of Manitoba. With an agreement in place, RDI created a research design to estimate the Indigenous contributions to Manitoba’s economy, based on primary and secondary objectives.

Primary Objective

- To quantify spending amounts by Indigenous and First Nations people in Manitoba in order to calculate their contributions to the provincial economy.

Secondary Objectives

- To examine existing urban reserves⁷ in Manitoba, which are growing in importance as a revenue source for First Nations; and

⁴ For more information, see the Look North Economic Task Force’s Look North Report and Action Plan for Manitoba’s Northern Economy (2017, October) at https://www.gov.mb.ca/asset_library/en/looknorth/look-north-report.pdf

⁵ Group ATN Consulting Inc. (2016).

⁶ J. Paul, executive director of the Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs, Dartmouth, NS. Personal communication. (2018).

⁷ At the request of First Nations leaders, this report uses the term “urban reserves” in place of less-clear alternatives, such as “indigenous economic development zones.” “Urban reserves” makes it clear that we are only referring to reserve land, as opposed to land owned by First Nation bands. See the introduction to Chapter 4.

» *A well-established historical Indigenous economy that remains active today.*

- To create projections of Indigenous population and labour force.

Responding to these objectives means providing new knowledge about both Indigenous contributions to the Manitoba economy and urban reserves. Such a study can also be used, at a later date, as a benchmark to detect evidence or metrics of economic development. Yet what makes this project possible is the existence of a well-established historical Indigenous economy that remains active today.

First Nations and Inuit peoples had established trade networks and other hallmarks of market economies in North America well before the arrival of Europeans.⁸ European settlers established their own economies in North America, which merged with those of the First Nations during the fur trade in what became Manitoba. The fur trade, which depended on First Nations and Métis hunters and traders, is the historical basis of the Manitoba economy. British, French, and then Canadian policies established the new post-contact colonial economic system. To this day, Indigenous people are economically contributing to their own communities, as well as others. Governments, businesses, and society are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of First Nations' communities as one after another establishes own-source revenues. More and more, urban reserves are proving to be pivotal for generating own-source revenues. All the while, Indigenous people across Canada are successfully responding to new and changing economic conditions and emerging opportunities, while leveraging partnerships to achieve economic development. Entrepreneurs are launching new ventures. Existing businesses are growing as Indigenous business leaders build corporate structures that expand with their success. These and other actions are making a difference for Indigenous people and positively impacting nearby communities.

Indigenous leaders are increasingly embracing and expressing the perspective that success in economic development requires replacing the current economic development approach.⁹ All too often, the current approach involves others imposing a development agenda. Here development is framed in purely economic terms such as more jobs, higher educational attainment, and increased income levels. However, for many Indigenous leaders and communities, a more holistic approach is preferred—an approach in which the primary value of economic development is in providing a means to reinvest in the cultural life and social services of the community for the benefit of all.¹⁰ An Indigenous-

⁸ Le Dressay, A., Levallee, N., & Reeves, J. (2010).

⁹ Disney, J. (2011).

¹⁰ Orr, J. (2013).

designed approach to economic development is emerging that emphasizes community success over individual success and improving the lives of everyone over enabling economic disparity. This approach encompasses an outlook that is inclusive of community and aligns with Indigenous cultures.

In many ways, this Indigenous-designed approach to economic development is founded in the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development.¹¹ This well-recognized project identifies four key factors that unlock success: “self-rule; capable institutions of self-governance; culturally appropriate approaches; and strategic orientation.”¹² These building blocks reflect the lived experiences of leaders in 25 First Nations communities across Canada.¹³ These leaders placed importance on six actions to increase economic development success for Indigenous people:

- land-use planning,
- sound financial management,
- developing own-source revenues to reinvest in the community,
- building on their heritage and traditions,
- enrolling in available opt-in legislation for increased land management or property taxation powers, and
- pursuing partnerships with investors and municipalities.¹⁴

Some of those leaders also described the burden created by some of the *Indian Act* provisions. They spoke of the challenges of acquiring federal approval when taking advantage of opportunities and initiating projects. In some situations, proposals could be hampered, and if one were to do an analysis, a small fine might be seen as preferable to spending years in the approval process.¹⁵ Some leaders described improving levels of community capacity¹⁶ and having access to a beneficial geographic location as the foundations for their success:¹⁷ Location matters for First Nations economic development, as it does for many enterprises. Meanwhile, other leaders prioritized governance, leadership, and control over local decision-making in their pursuit of Indigenous economic development.¹⁸

*An Indigenous-
designed approach
to economic
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enabling economic
disparity.*

.....

*“Self-rule; capable
institutions of
self-governance;
culturally appropriate
approaches; and
strategic orientation.”*

11 The Harvard Project, founded in 1987, conducts research, supports education, and administers a national tribal government awards program. See <https://hpaied.org/>

12 Curry, J. & Donker, H. (2011). (p. 66).

13 Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC). (2013).

14 AANDC. (2013). (p. 5).

15 AANDC. (2013). (pp. 16-17).

16 AANDC. (2013). (pp. 21-22).

17 AANDC. (2013). (p. 24).

18 AANDC. (2013). (pp. 16-17).

» *Economically speaking, this growing cadre of young Indigenous people across Manitoba represents a supply of new workers, entrepreneurs, and professionals.*

Even highly successful Indigenous leaders experience significant challenges when pursuing economic success. While timeliness can be a concern, so can a limitation in the Indian Act which prevents full participation of First Nations in the broader economy.¹⁹ Today's federal government is calling for a number of adjustments to underlying administration, including speeding up the processing of outstanding TLE (Treaty Land Entitlement) and ATR (Additions To Reserve) cases. The TLE settlement agreements are negotiated between First Nations and the Government of Canada in order to fulfill outstanding treaty obligations regarding the provision of reserve land. Only through the ATR process can land purchased or selected through a TLE transaction become reserve land. The TLE file in Manitoba includes 29 First Nations claiming 1.4 million acres, with 574,773 acres (41%) converted to reserve by March 1, 2015.²⁰

The lack of infrastructure on reserves is another barrier to further economic success. Roads, water, wastewater treatment, and fibre optic connectivity, among other aspects of infrastructure, are critical components of economic development. They determine the ability of communities to attract investment and labour and take advantage of local and regional opportunities. The infrastructure gap continues to significantly and directly impede efforts to enhance the quality of life on reserve and the ability of First Nations to achieve their full potential—economically, socially, and culturally.²¹

A young and growing Indigenous population represents an opportunity for economic development in Canada, and even more so in Manitoba. Economically speaking, this growing cadre of young Indigenous people across Manitoba represents a supply of new workers, entrepreneurs, and professionals. They are key to the further advancement of Indigenous people. Realizing this potential requires first addressing challenges. The First Nations' path to greater economic participation, according to the National Aboriginal Economic Development Board (NAEDB), involves raising rates of employment, while improving education and training and increasing average income among First Nations.²²

The NAEDB study presents the impacts for Manitoba if gaps were closed and First Nations people had the same opportunities as the province as a whole:

19 National Aboriginal Economic Development Board (NAEDB). (2013).

20 Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada. (2017).

21 NAEDB. (2016).

22 Fiscal Realities Economists. (2016).

- \$729 million in additional income earned by more than 81,000 First Nations workers due to an on-par average employment income,
- \$957 million in additional income earned by 22,548 newly employed First Nations people due to an on-par employment rate and employment income, and
- \$2.8 billion in increased annual provincial GDP due to improved productivity.

Already, Indigenous leaders are working collectively toward greater Indigenous participation in today's economy and the future economy by engaging individuals and communities. Leaders are often found working collectively to generate own-source revenues and reinvest in their peoples' well-being. Providing more training and increased employment opportunities means that individuals are better able to get the jobs they want. Indigenous businesses and community leaders know that increased opportunities are coupled with improved self-confidence, greater motivation, and better mental health, all of which resonate outward through the community to inspire others.²³ Broader successes are seeing business and cultural developments increasingly aligned with economic interests between Indigenous people and the broader regional business communities.²⁴

There are already signs of success. The NAECB lists shipbuilding contracts in Nova Scotia and the fourth largest mall in British Columbia, built on Tsawwassen First Nation land.^{25 26} In Manitoba, First Nations are adding to their economic capabilities with land purchases and urban reserves. The Indigenous Accord in the City of Thompson is one example where First Nations are central to economic development and social, cultural, and educational achievements.²⁷ Gambler First Nation and the City of Brandon undertook a multi-dimensional consultation with First Nations organizations and others as a precursor to a joint Municipal Services Agreement. This consultation resulted in an economic strategy and actions involving pre-employment skills, employment considerations, affordable housing, cultural awareness for employers, education opportunities, and child care.²⁸ Still more efforts are called for so that First Nations can participate fully in the regional economy; otherwise, the valuable potential for partnerships

Leaders are often found working collectively to generate own-source revenues and reinvest in their peoples' well-being. <<

²³ Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business. (2016).

²⁴ The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2018). (pp. 14-15)

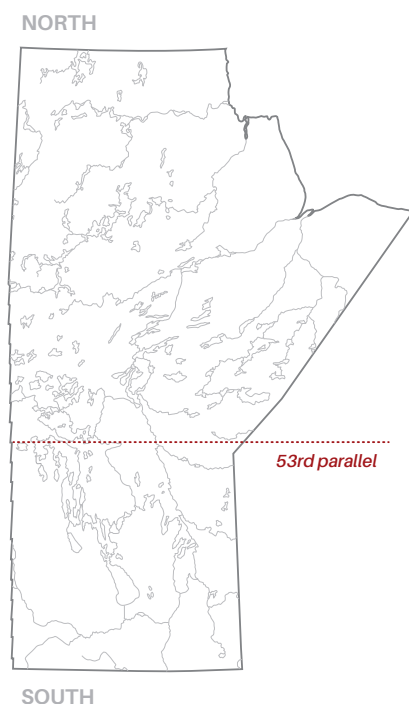
²⁵ Louie, C., & Madahbee, D. (2015).

²⁶ Wikipedia. (2018).

²⁷ The City of Thompson's Aboriginal Accord was signed in 2009. The Accord plus progress reports are available at <http://www.thompson.ca/p/thompson-aboriginal-accord>

²⁸ Brandon Urban Aboriginal Peoples' Council. (2015).

» North and South Geographic areas



and further economic and business development may be left unrealized. The above activities signal that First Nations' prosperity is increasingly interconnected with the overall prosperity of Manitoba.

In short, a new context for economic development by Indigenous people and for Indigenous people at the national, provincial, and local levels is emerging. Equally important, many First Nations are actively reaching out well beyond their reserves, creating businesses and employment, and reinvesting in their reserves. They are also generating benefits for municipalities, communities, and governments. While this research report examines the Indigenous and First Nations economy in Manitoba, it is easy to see that it is a part of a much larger context of Indigenous economic development Canada-wide.²⁹

For this project, steering committee meetings were invaluable for providing direction, comments, and resources. This report has the following characteristics and focus:

- The economic impact study portion of this project best fits into the macro-analysis category, leaving more detailed questions about specific Indigenous or First Nations groups to another study, if desired.
- Indigenous peoples in northern and southern Manitoba are the focus, but there is an emphasis on First Nations in the last three chapters.
- With MKO and SCO as project sponsors, this report focuses on the geographic areas of North and South wherever possible. These two areas roughly correspond to the areas north and south of the 53rd parallel, which is the line the Manitoba government uses to distinguish between the two regions. These areas are also roughly consistent with the organizational boundaries of SCO and MKO. First Nations unaffiliated with SCO or MKO and other independent First Nations, Métis, and Inuit are also included in the data for both North and South.

²⁹ The context of First Nations economic development also includes the professionalization of economic developers, in part signaled by a national organization, the Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers (CANDO). RDI has been a member for several years. For the CANDO economic development toolkit see <http://www.sauder.ubc.ca/Programs/Chnook/Students/~media/Files/Chnook/ICAB.ashx>

- Where possible, this project reports on First Nations populations on and off reserve.

NORTH

79% of
First Nations
live **ON Reserve**
(37,425)☒

21% of
First Nations
live **OFF Reserve**
(10,090)☒

SOUTH

31% of
First Nations
live **ON Reserve**
(25,700)☒

69% of
First Nations
live **OFF Reserve**
(57,295)☒

This report has research limitations caused by information that was unavailable. <<

- Analyses in this report are based on 2016 data, which is the most recent data from Statistics Canada and other sources. Updated data will be available after the 2021 census.
- Many data sources were accessed; however, similar to other studies, this report has research limitations caused by information that was unavailable. As a result, we had to incorporate estimates in the economic analyses in Chapters 2 and 3, including for example, estimates relating to northern First Nations' traditional lifestyles and higher cost of living. Where relevant, we provide details on how estimates were calculated. In addition, this project uses conservative numbers when estimating. This results in an underestimation of certain figures, such as numbers of Indigenous businesses.

What is unique about this applied research project?

- estimates on spending by Indigenous and First Nations people in Manitoba
- profiles of urban reserves in Manitoba
- knowledge sharing among the researchers

There are three aspects making this a unique research project. First and most important, there are now estimates on spending by Indigenous and First Nations people in Manitoba and the resulting impact on the economy. These contributions are possible by building on the strong Indigenous economy that existed pre-contact. Second, this project profiles urban reserves in Manitoba. The third unique aspect is the knowledge-sharing process among the researchers. Discussions resulting from interviews with the First Nations' representatives about their urban reserves created a learning opportunity among the SCO and MKO researchers and those at the Rural Development Institute. Each of these aspects has resulted in making this a unique applied research project.

Three major topics form this report. First is the economic analysis of Indigenous (Chapter 2) and First Nations' (Chapter 3) spending and the related impact on the Manitoba economy. Second, the urban reserve profiles in Chapter 4 are based on interviews with First Nations representatives most familiar with operations and future plans. These three chapters make up the majority of the report. In the third part, Chapter 5, the research team looks forward by presenting population and labour-force projections to 2026 for key variables directly affecting the trajectory of the Manitoba economy. Each chapter is self-contained, meaning relevant materials, references, and appendices are included. Readers may review the entire report or turn directly to the chapter of most interest to them.

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