

FIRST NATIONS STATISTICAL INSTITUTE



ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN



PROVIDING RELEVANT AND RELIABLE STATISTICS TO SUPPORT FIRST NATIONS' INITIATIVES

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First Nations Statistical Institute
289 Ted Commanda Drive
Garden Village, ON P2B 3K2

Inquiries: (705) 493-8311
email: info@fnsi-ispn.com

www.fnsi-ispn.com

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The First Nations Statistical Institute's Environmental Scan was carried out by Laurel Lemchuk-Favel and Zaida Rahaman of FAV COM in the Fall of 2010. Overall, 43 First Nations and Aboriginal organizations, federal government departments and agencies, and provincial and territorial bureaus of statistics participated through telephone interviews, in-person interviews or by providing written responses. The opinions/findings expressed in this report are a summary of these responses and do not necessarily represent the views of the First Nations Statistical Institute.

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Executive Summary

In the Fall of 2010, the First Nations Statistical Institute (FNSI) initiated an “Environmental Scan of the Present State of First Nations Statistics in Canada.” Discussions were held with FNSI’s stakeholders, including First Nations and Aboriginal organizations, federal departments and agencies, and provincial/territorial bureaus of statistics. Forty-three respondents participated in the scan through telephone interviews, in-person interviews, and written questionnaires. The findings, summarized below and expanded upon in the body of this document, are being used by FNSI to inform development of its program agenda.

Findings

The Environmental Scan provided a broad overview of the way that organizations and/or governments are using First Nations statistics. Through the discussions, it became clear that First Nations statistical data represents a foundational element for the advancement of mandates, and for supporting the diverse activities of all stakeholder groups. These activities include monitoring changes over time, supporting policy development, program planning, advocacy work, accountability, funding allocations, and knowledge transfer activities.

A wide range of issues, problems and concerns related to the use of existing sources of First Nations data were enumerated by respondents. An asterisk (*) indicates those issues that were specific to First Nations/Aboriginal organizations. These included the following:

- Lack of statistical capacity and access to data;*
- Control of data and analysis;*
- Problems with making comparisons;*
- Lack or inconsistent use of Aboriginal identifiers;
- Data coverage;
- Lack of standardization/consistency in definitions of important indicators;
- Data quality issues;
- Data timeliness;
- Access to data;
- Lack of record linkages;
- Lack of consultation and data sharing across departments, jurisdictions and communities; and
- Concerns related to the changes to the census.

The discussions also brought to light existing data gaps in many sectors; for instance, in the areas of health, economic development, migration, labour force, education, financial data, justice, communications technologies, and language and culture.

“ There was an expectation that FNSI can make a positive difference for communities... ”

Respondents also explained the challenges, issues or barriers to the collection of new data. Capacity and financial constraints are faced by many First Nations and/or Aboriginal organizations, as well as scepticism and reluctance on the part of many communities to participate in data collection activities due to previous negative experiences with research and analysis. Federal departments and agencies identified challenges associated with privacy issues, conducting consultations, costs of data collection activities, and conducting data collection activities for small geographic areas and/or small populations.

Respondents discussed their own expectations of FNSI. Generally, there was an expectation that FNSI can make a positive difference for communities, government departments, and statistical bureaus with regards to First Nations statistical data.

Specific needs and expectations shared by First Nations and/or Aboriginal organizations regarding how FNSI could assist organizations and communities included: becoming a data clearinghouse with objectives of improving accessibility, timeliness and reliability of First Nations statistical data; building partnerships; providing data gap analysis and addressing these gaps; and providing and/or facilitating capacity development initiatives for communities.

Expectations among federal departments and/or agencies and of provincial and/or territorial bureaus of statistics included: taking the lead in creating standards in data collection, management and dissemination including clear definitions of First Nations and strong methodologies; focusing on supporting the *First Nations Fiscal and Statistical Management Act* (FNFSMA) sister institutions; and acting in a liaison capacity between federal, provincial and territorial government bodies and First Nations communities.

Respondents also shared many innovative ways that address challenges with regard to First Nations statistics. Descriptions of these initiatives and projects are included throughout the findings.

Background: First Nations Statistical Institute

Development of FNSI's Program Agenda

Community infrastructure is fundamental to economic growth and the quality of community life. Many First Nations are unable to adequately finance infrastructure due to current legislative and institutional frameworks, in which prohibitive transaction costs, processing times and interest rates limit First Nations from borrowing funds. In support of the economic development of First Nations in Canada, the First Nations Fiscal Institutions Initiative (FNFII) established four “sister” organizations,¹ operated by and for First Nations, under the *First Nations Fiscal and Statistical Management Act* (FNFSMA; 2005). The First Nations Statistical Institute was one of these organizations, whose purpose under the FNFSMA was to support the work of its sister institutions by providing accurate and reliable information and data to support First Nations economic development through the creation of a First Nations bond financing regime.

It is recognized that community wellness has a reciprocal relationship with economic development; it is also related to a variety of interconnected economic, psychosocial, cultural, environmental, and political factors that may differ across communities.^{2,3,4} Reflecting a holistic view of community well-being, FNSI's mandate serves the broader role of assisting First Nations in meeting their respective data and statistical needs necessary for planning and the development of policies that promote community wellness. This work will also involve increasing capacity among First Nations to gather, analyze and apply statistics in evidence-based decision-making processes.

As part of its program agenda development process, in 2010, FNSI commissioned an environmental scan of the present state of First Nations statistics within Canada. Through discussions with key stakeholders, the scan explored the roles that First Nations statistics play in the work of stakeholders; data needs or gaps; and the barriers or issues related to these gaps. Expectations regarding how FNSI can assist First Nations in meeting their data needs and its potential contributions to First Nations statistics in Canada were also explored. The current document presents a summary of the findings of the environmental scan being used by FNSI to inform the development of their program agenda.

1 See Appendix A for information on FNFSMA sister institutions.

2 Suhrcke, M., McKee, M., & Rocco, L. 2007. Health investment benefits economic development. *The Lancet*, 370 (9597), 1467-1486.

3 McCormick, R.M. 2009. All My Relations. In Canadian Institute for Health Information (Ed.), *Mentally Healthy Communities: Aboriginal Perspectives* (pp. 3-8). Ottawa, Ontario: Canadian Institute for Health Information.

4 Ryan-Nicholls, K.D. & Racher, F.E. 2004. Investigating the health of rural communities: Toward framework development. *Rural and Remote Health*, 4(online)-244, 1-10.

FNSI Scan: Present State of First Nations Statistics

Introduction and Methods

In order to gain a sound understanding of the present state of First Nations statistics to inform the development of an effective program agenda, FNSI commissioned an environmental scan among FNSI stakeholders. Aboriginal organizations and First Nations (46%; n=20), federal departments and agencies (26%; n=11), and provincial and territorial bureaus of statistics (28%; n=12) were surveyed through in-person or phone interviews and written questionnaires (see Appendix for complete list of scan respondents). The scan's questionnaire generally explored the potential role of FNSI in relation to existing government data sources, as well as data acquisition, management, analysis, and dissemination. Respondents were asked about their mandates, the use and importance of First Nations statistics in their work, as well as data needs and gaps, and their associated barriers. Finally, expectations related to FNSI in supporting the work of its sister organizations and the data and statistical needs of First Nations were explored.⁵

Description of Stakeholder Respondents

Aboriginal Organizations and First Nations

Aboriginal organizations represented in the scan ranged from those with small secretariats to highly visible institutions with ambitious agendas. Specific activities carried out by organizations included: focusing on vulnerable populations, supporting bilateral and trilateral processes, disseminating health and socioeconomic data, increasing Aboriginal participation in the economy, improving financial and management practices, advancing the development of a health infrastructure, advocating and facilitating program and policy development, supporting the success of individuals, supporting effective governance, or otherwise building capacity in communities. Irrespective of whether their mandate was knowledge translation, advocacy or service delivery, all were contributing to improved quality of life and the advancement of self-determination and self-reliance of First Nation communities.

⁵ As there are various interpretations of the term "First Nations", and First Nations data is often combined with other Aboriginal groups, this scan invited discussion of First Nations and Aboriginal data holdings.

Representation by First Nation communities was limited, as only one First Nation (Ktunaxa Nation), and an organization representing First Nations in Yukon (Yukon First Nations Statistical Agency), responded to the request for participation. The reasons for this non-participation were not probed, but could conceivably include mistrust in the scan process, inadequate initial communication, lack of knowledge of FNSI, competing demands for time and higher priorities, and the small number of communities which were approached to participate.

“Some departments represented in the scan have a duty to report on First Nations as part of their plans and priorities...”

Federal Departments and Agencies

The national mandate with which federal departments are charged by definition includes First Nations people. Some departments represented in the scan have a duty to report on First Nations as part of their plans and priorities and to assist in understanding the health and socioeconomic condition of communities (e.g., Health Canada, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, AANDC). Others did not have First Nations specified into their mandate, but had directorates/sectors that deal with Aboriginal populations (e.g., mining, corrections) and may target socioeconomic impacts and closing outcome gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations.

Provincial and Territorial Bureaus of Statistics

First Nations did not explicitly appear in provincial/territorial statistical agency mandates, with the exception of one province where a statistical mandate has been transferred to an Aboriginal unit in a ministry of Aboriginal affairs (Aboriginal centralization model). Bureaus varied in their design and approach to First Nations statistics and in their jurisdictions' data needs, including First Nations statistics. Three general provincial/territorial models were described:

- Decentralization (or distributed capacity model): a central agency consolidates statistics obtained from departments which have their own statistical capacity and may or may not have Aboriginal identifiable statistics (e.g., Alberta Office of Statistics and Information).
- Centralization or Semi-Centralization: a bureau of statistics services data collection/analysis needs of provincial ministries. The bureau's mandate relates to First Nations indirectly when a provincial ministry or unit is mandated in Aboriginal affairs (e.g., BC bureau of statistics).
- Aboriginal Centralization: the government may mandate a specific Aboriginal statistical unit to report on the provinces' strategies directed to the Aboriginal population (e.g., Performance Measures and Data Unit in the Ontario Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs).

Results

The role of First Nations statistics among stakeholders

The scan revealed that First Nations statistical data is a central and foundational element for the advancement of mandates and for the support of the diverse activities of all stakeholder groups.

First Nations and Aboriginal Organizations

- Baseline data is used to assess how organizations can best advance their mandate (e.g., demographics of Aboriginal women in Canada, the Aboriginal economy, community health, education system). From baseline data, trend analysis can be initiated, allowing communities to make comparisons and gauge improvements.
- Existing First Nations data is repackaged by some of the organizations as part of knowledge translation and dissemination activities. Organizations strive to do this in ways that are trusted, culturally appropriate and not misleading, and that support policy development, program planning, and capacity building.
- Statistics are used for advocacy activities, whether direct or indirect (by supplying information to others for advocacy) which relies on facts to support the changes being promoted.
- Statistical data is used to provide rationales for project funding requests that are evidence-based and not merely anecdotal.
- The most commonly accessed data sources were the census and post-censal surveys (the Aboriginal Peoples Survey [APS] and Aboriginal Children's Survey [ACS]), as well as the First Nations Regional Longitudinal Health Survey (RHS).

Federal Departments and Agencies

- Most departments do not collect or hold original data with respect to Aboriginal populations, as Statistics Canada is the federal agency with a broad mandate to collect, compile, analyze and disseminate information, and is relied on heavily by departments as a source of First Nations or Aboriginal statistical data.
- A primary function of federally-held data is to provide accountability and support funding allocations. In some cases, data collection from communities does not fulfill a mandate, but is a requirement that feeds into the federal accountability framework and ensures due diligence of departments. An inventory of Aboriginal data holdings conducted in 2007 detailed approximately 200 spread throughout federal departments/agencies, including a wide range of administrative information collected, but not necessarily available to First Nations.⁶ The available data is largely administrative and it is often difficult to make linkages with outcome measures such as community socioeconomic improvements.
- The census has provided a great diversity of data on First Nations and much of it would remain underutilized, if not for the efforts of federal government departments in analyzing data from the census, the APS, and the ACS. For example, Natural Resources Canada used census and APS data to develop a statistical profile of Aboriginal participation in the mining sector.
- Though statistical data is needed to support performance measurement and accountability, in today's privacy sensitive environment, it is very difficult for a government department, other than Statistics Canada or AANDC (which requires data for their community programs), to initiate new data collection mechanisms that would identify individual First Nations respondents.

Provincial and Territorial Bureaus of Statistics

- Provinces/territories have immediate needs for First Nations statistical data, particularly in provinces where First Nations are a significant percentage of the population.
- Depending on whether an identifying question is asked in administrative data collected, First Nations may be invisible in provincial/territorial statistics. Therefore, provinces/territories also rely heavily on Statistics Canada data, and purchase this data to conduct their own analyses. The limitations to census data are recognized, but it is currently the best information for basic demographics and community profiles, and in some instances the only source.

“Provinces/territories have immediate needs for First Nations statistical data...”

- As outlined in the descriptions of the different provincial/territorial approaches to First Nations statistical data, different provinces and ministries are involved in the collection, analysis, interpretation, and dissemination of information to different degrees. Common activities related to the use of First Nations data include: developing and consolidating official statistics and key government information; developing a common set of data quality standards and statistical policies/procedures in collaboration with partners, stakeholders and ministries; and promotion of the use of official statistics and key government information to support policy and decision-making. Some are also involved in data collection activities, in improving existing data collection activities, and in supporting communities with their data needs.

6 FAV COM. 2007. Inventory of Federal, Provincial and Territorial Aboriginal Data Holdings. Ottawa: AFN.

Issues, problems, and concerns related to the use of existing data sources

Issues Raised by and Specific to First Nations and Aboriginal Organizations

Lack of statistical capacity and access to data

- There is a need for capacity development in understanding and identifying data requirements, and how data supports effective, functioning First Nations government. The capacity of organizations to conduct statistical analyses ranged from none to limited in-house capacity.
- For persons not trained in statistical analysis, data may not be easy to locate, may appear in small pieces (e.g., research articles), or the data needed simply does not exist. Finding or understanding a comprehensive picture in disparate data becomes challenging.
- For most, limited funding impedes the ability to build a sustainable internal capacity and limits opportunities to hire external assistance for data related needs.

Control over data and analysis

- Respondents indicated that privacy of data and its ownership remains a significant issue in communities, many of whom have adopted Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP) principles of collective ownership of information, control over research and information, management of access to data, and physical possession of data.⁷ Despite the fact that many communities have embraced OCAP principles, First Nations data is primarily collected, interpreted and disseminated by non-Aboriginal organizations, and may not be trusted by Aboriginal peoples.

Problems with making comparisons

- First Nations are included in discussions on well-being indices and their health is routinely compared to other populations (e.g., Canadian indices of well-being); however, a lack of First Nations data sometimes makes such comparisons problematic. For example, a recent analysis shared with the scan looked at the current ability to monitor health outcome indicators among First Nation populations at the national level using a proposed World Health Organization national health equity surveillance system.⁸ Two of the basic health indicators, infant and adult mortality, were evaluated as not available and limited in quality.

“The capacity of organizations to conduct statistical analyses ranged from none to limited in house capacity.”

- On the other hand, comparisons with other populations may not be accurate or relevant due to the diversity of values and concepts of well-being among First Nations, therefore communities should be able to decide how their data is presented. For example, some communities may reject Western definitions and classifications embedded in government data holdings.

⁷ The principles of OCAP (ownership, control, access and possession) are intended to ensure that First Nations control data collection processes in their communities and make decisions regarding why, how, and by whom information is used. (First Nations Information Governance Centre 2010, <http://www.rhs-ers.ca/node/2>)

⁸ De Rubeis and Pennock. 2009. Monitoring the health status of First Nations in Canada: where do we stand? Poster presentation to the Canadian Public Health Association.

Data Solutions by Scan Respondents

Provincial/territorial bureaus shared innovative solutions to respond to the need to understand the complexities of the socio-economic environment on First Nations community health. For example, the Yukon Bureau of Statistics has initiated work to acquire new data to assess the impact of western development and economy on the social fabric of communities including homelessness, addictions, family breakdown, and community services, both formal and informal, that support First Nations persons and communities. The Bureau has developed the Whitehorse Housing Adequacy Survey and the Survey of Social Inclusion. Both survey reports are in progress and include responses from First Nations. The available responses for many questions are extensive and applicable to life in Yukon communities, including social networks, food security and material deprivation, community safety and discrimination.

Issues Raised by and Relevant to all

Stakeholder Respondents

Lack of or inconsistent use of Aboriginal identifiers

- Differing definitions or non-standard collections of Aboriginal identifiers at federal, provincial/territorial and local levels can cause disputes as to who is considered First Nations or Aboriginal. Various definitions are used and include being Status Indian (e.g., AANDC), having Aboriginal ancestry (e.g., BC ministry of education), self-identification as First Nations, Métis or Inuit (e.g., Labour Force Survey), or a combination of indicators (e.g., Census of Canada). It was pointed out that Aboriginal identifiers do not exist on major Health Canada, Statistics Canada and Canadian Institute for Health Information databases such as vital statistics, Canadian cancer registry and the hospital discharge abstract database. In addition, communities may have their own ways to classify themselves and their members (e.g., by individual community, by beneficiary in a land claim agreement, by regional or linguistic group).
- As many of this data is obtained from provincial and territorial vital statistics registrars, differing definitions or non-standard collections of Aboriginal identifiers across provinces and within provincial jurisdictions, contribute to this issue. First Nations may be invisible in provincial and territorial statistics, depending on whether an identifier question is asked among the administrative data collected by provincial or territorial programs and services.

Data coverage

- First Nation people living on-reserve are not represented in various data sources, including Statistics Canada surveys such as the Canadian Community Health Survey, the National Population Health Survey, the General Social Survey and Labour Force Survey.
- Issues related to a lack of or inconsistent use of Aboriginal identifiers (discussed above) impact data coverage of various Aboriginal groups (e.g., non-status or off-reserve First Nation individuals are often excluded in First Nations data; options to identify as Métis are very rare).

Lack of standardization or consistency in definitions of important demographic indicators

- Differing or ambiguous definitions of important demographic indicators contribute to problems with the use of existing data. Examples discussed included:
 - Age categories of children and youth are often not standardized across surveys and administrative holdings, limiting its meaningfulness for targeted interventions.
 - Socioeconomic data is often not separated by sex and can obscure very real differences in life experiences between women and men.
 - Remoteness categorization of communities by the federal government, where communities can be similarly located but have different remoteness designations, has implications on the level of funding communities receive.

Data quality issues

- Issues stemming from inconsistent definitions of Aboriginal identity contributed to concerns regarding incomplete representation of the First Nations population. For example, when self-identification of Aboriginal identity is used, many may choose to not self-identify. When Indian Status is used, non-status and many off-reserve First Nations are excluded.
- Mobility/migration of the First Nations population between cities, rural areas and between federal and provincial jurisdictions can contribute to incomplete/inaccurate representations of the First Nations population and gaps in administrative data holdings. For example, those who transiently migrate from living on-reserve to towns/cities (referred to as the “shadow population”) may inflate the size of towns and cities by an appreciable margin, but may not be recorded in census numbers. For example, one-third of Yukon First Nations people live outside of Yukon, making it very hard to have accurate statistics.
- The census is the largest source of population and socioeconomic data on Aboriginal people in Canada, however, some communities choose not to be enumerated. This non-participation is not evenly spread across Canada and limits the availability of socioeconomic and health indicators in these communities and the accuracy of national statistics. For example, in 2006, 22 communities chose not to be enumerated, most of which were from Ontario (totaling 15,392 in population), Quebec (16,600), and to a smaller extent from Alberta (7,271).⁹
- Small sample sizes from the First Nations population or from specific communities, resulted in concerns related to data quality. For example, some Statistics Canada surveys, such as the Canadian Community Health Survey, the General Social Survey and Labour Force Survey, can only produce reliable information for First Nations living off-reserve at the national level.

- Concerns were raised about tools used by federal departments to collect and store data (e.g., inappropriate or outdated), and regarding the lack of controls to ensure information is correct.
- Limitations inherent in administrative program data contributed to concerns regarding data accuracy. Under-reporting can be an issue with some Aboriginal health data. As an example, in isolated communities, illnesses may be under-reported as community nursing health services are not linked into provincial health administration systems. It was also noted that statistics regarding the number of persons requiring services would be a more relevant statistic compared to the numbers of persons receiving services, which is currently collected.

Data timeliness

- Timeliness of data was noted as an issue, particularly in the environment of quinquennial censuses and lengthy census analysis timelines of Statistics Canada. Data timeliness is an acute consideration for the FNFSMA organizations seeking bond ratings for communities, as financial credit rating agencies require financial data to be no more than a year old. Inter-censal numbers, particularly accurate population counts are required by provincial ministries delivering programs and their absence is a pivotal gap, especially Aboriginal population data at the regional level. First Nations are younger, growing faster and more geographically diverse compared to the general population. These differences must be captured and understood for effective program planning and implementation.
- Methodological issues regarding collecting data make interpretation questionable in some cases. (e.g., identifying cohorts too late in education graduation rates misses drop-outs in earlier grades).
- Late notification of births and/or deaths in AANDC’s Indian Register was noted as a constant challenge.

⁹ <http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/ref/notes/aboriginal-autochtones-eng.cfm>

Access to data

- Existing data sources can be inaccessible due to governmental legislation or institutional guidelines that exist to protect privacy in cases where populations from which the prevalence of an indicator of interest is small (e.g., small communities), or when the number of people within a sub-group is small (e.g., First Nations, Métis, Inuit). For example, privacy protection is needed when collecting data regarding the number of children with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder in a small community, in which numbers could be linked to individuals. In some cases, surveys are simply not conducted, such as the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics, which is not conducted north of 60 for this reason.
- Protection of privacy is also often achieved through the release of aggregated data, in which cells from different sub-groups are combined to reduce the risk of identifying individuals or communities (e.g., data from several communities are combined). Although privacy protection is important, inherent limitations of aggregated data include potentially misleading totals or trends within subgroups. While preserving privacy is important, the inconsistent ability to disaggregate data by regional, community and urban breakdowns is an issue when First Nations wish to create their own aggregations and analyses that are relevant to their needs. For example, sample sizes in the territories may be adequate for comparisons of the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations, but are often too small to separate out First Nations. The survey burden of increasing the Aboriginal sample size to the point of surveying literally all Aboriginal persons monthly is judged to be too great in cost and effort just to obtain a First Nations-specific unemployed rate or other indicator. Such statistics have important program and policy implications so there is a need for a safe way to present this data.
- Suppression of data is another commonly used method to protect privacy in which counts from individual cells are not released. If data is suppressed, this can mean that communities are unable to obtain their own data. The challenge is to find an accurate way to forecast small community populations and to provide meaningful data for community programs and services.
- Provincial ministries do not necessarily share data on Aboriginality with each other. For example, in one province, self-identification of an Aboriginal person will not carry over from public to post secondary schools, or from one college to another.
- There is need for existing practical data (largely gathered by AANDC) to be analyzed and returned to communities, including operations data such as water and waste water assessment data. Another example is the statistics on chronic diseases which are reported by communities to Health Canada, but not returned in an analyzed format. Community reporting requirements of federal departments are typically sent to regional offices, but are often not shared with First Nations. This raw data is often paper-based (making analysis labour intensive) and can be kept at this level and it is either not sent on to headquarters or a summary is provided. A national picture of this information may not be possible, nor is any feedback or comparative data provided back to communities to enable self-evaluations for policy and program planning.
- It was noted that provincial departments can no longer access custom analyses from Statistics Canada's tax filer data due to concerns with confidentiality. This has resulted in the loss of information on low income and socially disadvantaged families that is required by ministries, including child and family services.

- In some cases, Aboriginal institutions (e.g., post secondary colleges) may not share information or analyses with the province which operates similar programs. In another illustration, contract providers or non-governmental organizations associated with a provincial program may choose not to request voluntary self-identification even though the program itself collects this information.

Lack of record linkages

- Record linkages between AANDC’s Indian Register and provincial/territorial data provides a potentially practical and effective way to use existing data sources. However, past privacy issues and a lack of trust for government bodies by First Nations has been a barrier to using this methodology to identify First Nations people in administrative data. In addition, the inconsistent use of First Nations/Aboriginal identifiers in provincial ministries also poses an obstacle in this regard and can have significant consequences. For example, the territorial governments’ administrative and survey data holdings include information on a large number of First Nations individuals due to the high percentage of First Nations populations in the Northwest Territories and Yukon. However, in Yukon administrative data, these individuals may not be identifiable as First Nations, as Registered Indian status is not a requirement on government health cards, nor are databases vetted and cross- linked to AANDC or a First Nations membership list. An example of the potential impact of having an accurate population number can be seen in Yukon education, where Aboriginal self-identification is voluntary. If a Yukon First Nation decides to include education under their land claim agreements, the inaccurate estimates of the number of First Nations children in territorial schools will be influential in determining resources.

Lack of consultation and data sharing across departments, jurisdictions, and communities

- Most of the responding federal departments look sporadically at First Nations or Aboriginal data needs and gaps, and may do so on a sector or directorate level, instead of relying on an overall initiative blanketing the entire department. In a couple of instances, respondents indicated that data gaps are peppered throughout all program activities in a department.
- The majority of provincial/territorial respondents were unable to provide a list of databases in their government holdings which contain identifiable First Nations or Aboriginal data, as no such initiative had been undertaken to list databases.

“Lack of trust of government bodies by First Nations has been a barrier...”

- Personal information is protected by various pieces of privacy legislation and transfer of any individual level information across jurisdictions or with other organizations must comply with these laws.¹⁰ While serving an important purpose, these laws contribute to the complexity of negotiating data sharing agreements involving First Nations information and impedes data sharing opportunities between government departments and jurisdictions. For example, federal departments generally have clauses in their legislation governing the collection of administrative information under their own authorities and their responsibilities regarding data sharing and secondary uses. A common stipulation is that data in the department cannot be used for other than that it is intended. This effectively limits access by other departments.¹¹

¹⁰ Federal laws relating to privacy of data include: the *Privacy Act*, the *Access to Information Act*, the *Archives Act*, the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, and the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act*. Provincial and territorial laws often mirror federal laws, but may differ and apply differently to First Nations across provinces/territories.

¹¹ Ward, E. February 13, 2007. Presentation at the FNIHB Integrated Public Health Surveillance and Information Meeting. Health Canada (FNIHB).

Concerns related to changes to the Canadian Census

- The main sources of statistical data on First Nations are the census and the post-censal Aboriginal Peoples Survey and the Aboriginal Children's Survey. There is concern that changes to the Canadian census, whereby the mandatory long form census is being replaced by a voluntary National Household Survey (NHS), will compromise the quality and representativeness of these data. For example, it was predicted that particular First Nation subgroups (e.g., those with low socioeconomic status) may be less likely to participate, thereby skewing the data, or that an overall decrease in Aboriginal respondents will result in suppression of Aboriginal data. The short form census is mandatory, but the Aboriginal identifier questions are on the voluntary NHS. Basic Aboriginal population data may not have the statistical rigour to be released for smaller geographic areas. Finally, with the disconnect between the NHS and previous censuses, using NHS data to measure recent demographic trends in communities will not be possible. Communities are making strides in economic development and self-determination and evaluation of the effects of these initiatives will need to recalibrate with 2011 as a base year.

Data Solutions by Scan Respondents Using Community-level Data

A solution provided by the Yukon Bureau of Statistics to overcome issues of community level suppression of data was to purchase custom census runs from Statistics Canada for special geographic areas.

A requirement that the Yukon Government contribute socioeconomic information to explore impacts of new commercial or other developments (environmental impact analysis) led to the development of the Socioeconomic Web Portal. This portal is a collection of community-specific statistics relating to the social and economic setting of Yukon communities, drawn from a variety of sources, including Statistics Canada, Yukon Bureau of Statistics and Yukon government departments. These statistics include population and community (e.g., population estimates, Aboriginal population, dwelling characteristics, crime), economic (e.g., income and labour force characteristics, community special price index, fuel prices, building permits, businesses and employees) and education indicators.¹²

The need for self-identification in provincial departments has led the British Columbia government to develop an administrative standard for Aboriginal data, in collaboration with Aboriginal groups. BC Stats worked with the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation to create a standard template for collecting Aboriginal identity information on government clients. The data standard has adopted the Statistics Canada Aboriginal identity nomenclature (i.e., self-identification as First Nations, Métis or Inuit) with optional elements to distinguish between status/non-status First Nations, and those living on and off reserve. Each ministry has disseminated its own communication about why the data is important. Once the standard is adopted, it is estimated to take eight to ten years to fully capture the Aboriginal data. OCAP was not an issue, as the data captured in the BC government will be only from persons who are receiving services. This standard will result in output or process measures and it is hoped that this Aboriginal data may stimulate the development of program and service outcomes.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Bureau of Statistics developed a “Community Accounts” portal, which organizes data into a system of accounts that highlights the interconnectedness of the determinants of well-being. It includes data in eight domains (health; demographics; community safety and social vitality; society, culture, politics and justice; education, literacy, skills and training; employment and working conditions; income, consumption and leisure; and social relationships). A second layer of five domains addresses the economy (production; eco-system; natural resource capital; knowledge capital; and infrastructure and production capital). Many data sources have been tapped for this extensive foray into non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal community well-being and links are included to external expertise when federal or provincial data sources are not available.¹³

In a few cases, provinces/territories have participated in Statistic Canada’s Aboriginal Community Data Initiative, which provides Aboriginal communities with data for planning and understanding the demographics of their community and the population in surrounding areas. These profiles focus on socioeconomic conditions including population, children and families, Aboriginal language, education, labour force participation, industry, occupation and work activity, earnings and total income, at the community level.

¹² <http://sewp.gov.yk.ca>

¹³ www.communityaccounts.ca

Data Solutions by Scan Respondents Information sharing across jurisdictions

The provision of guidelines on information sharing across jurisdictions is the focus of the Pan Canadian Health Information Privacy and Confidentiality Framework, developed by Health Canada and endorsed by the federal/provincial/territorial Conferences of Deputy Ministers of Health. This framework is directed to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of health information while enabling the flow of information to support effective health care, the management of the health system and an interoperable health record. It is aligned with privacy legislation¹⁴ and serves as a guide rather than a prescription as individual governments have ultimate authority in this respect. It aims to serve as a mechanism to achieve more consistent privacy provisions when personal health information is disclosed or transferred between jurisdictions.¹⁵ It introduces the concept of implied consent for information crossing jurisdictions in which an individual's consent to collect, use or disclose their information for the purposes of providing health care is implied, unless consent is explicitly withheld or withdrawn.¹⁶ This has set a precedent and provinces/territories have accommodated sharing of personal information without the expressed consent of the individual.

A memorandum of understanding between a provincial/territorial government, AANDC and First Nations leadership resulted in the development of a data sharing protocol on education data. Aboriginal students will self-identify as one of three groups (First Nations, Métis or Inuit) on school registration forms. Schools will be provided data on education achievement and attainment and aggregated Aboriginal statistics will be prepared on a jurisdiction-wide level.

Data gaps identified by stakeholders

Due to suppression or aggregation of statistics from existing data sources, or because the data simply does not exist, stakeholders identified numerous statistical gaps that need to be addressed in order to meet their needs and goals.

Aboriginal Organizations and First Nations

Aboriginal organizations and First Nations had a wide variety of data needs, a reflection of the diversity of the organizations who participated in the scan. Needs ranged from the specific to the broad, with the most cited data gaps being accurate and up-to-date population data, population projections including migration patterns, and data on the labour force. Communities are looking 'outside the box' and critically evaluating their information needs and designing processes to create or collect this data. The information needs included support for language preservation (e.g., collecting names in the traditional language), managing resources (e.g., designing spatial data that captures sacred lands and harvesting sites) and self-sufficiency

(e.g., understanding social needs of all parts of a community as part of an economic strategy). The data gaps at a community level were much greater because governance covers many areas and the data required for governance may not exist, particularly if communities reject the Western definitions and classifications within government data holdings.

As organizations operate at the macro level, they are interested in assessing the overall structures required for positive system change. Some program oriented organizations want to collect data on types of services and the corresponding cultural or conventional theoretical approaches used to address health conditions. Some want the ability to follow this data longitudinally, to enable communities to respond to shifts in the environment. An example provided was a recent loss of skilled professionals in a health service sector identified by a repeated measures survey. The data suggested that even though highly qualified persons are being recruited they are not retained in the First Nations health care system for reasons yet to be elucidated.

14 Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms; *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act*

15 Health and the Information Highway Division. 2005. Pan-Canadian Health Information Privacy and Confidentiality Framework. Ottawa: Health Canada.

16 <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hcs-sss/pubs/ehealth-esante/2005-pancanad-priv/index-eng.php#concepts>

Specific statistical data gaps and needs reported comprised the following:

- Population data: population projections; number of persons requiring services on-reserve; linkages with provincial/territorial vital statistics; housing
- Health: social determinants of health; provincial/territorial health administrative data; diabetes; substance abuse prevalence/patterns of abuse
- Migration: on-and-off-reserve; by location of reserve; migration for reserves bordering the US
- Labour force and economic development: number of workers in various occupations on-reserve and their employment characteristics; years at different employment levels; entrepreneurial characteristics; band administration human resources; employment profile in the mining/commercial sector; current and prospective representation of youth in the labour pool; professional workforce development and retention; longitudinal surveys of staff satisfaction and core competency; resource sector (e.g., fisheries)
- Education: years to attain education; high school graduation rates on-reserve
- Financial data: assets; mortgage debt; First Nation businesses and economy
- Baselines of social demographics on Aboriginal women by geography
- Justice indicators (e.g., crime rates among adults who were linked to the child welfare system)
- Overall structures for system change (e.g., funding structures across federal/provincial jurisdictions)
- Surveys to understand underlying attitudes in education, employment and socioeconomics
- Communications (e.g., internet access)
- Program evaluation indicators and community change after an intervention (e.g., changes associated with a program intervention or after a new form of governance has been implemented); cost of doing nothing (e.g., health care costs associated with not addressing the social determinants of health)
- Inclusiveness of all Aboriginal groups in statistical data

Federal Departments and Agencies & Provincial and Territorial Bureaus of Statistics

Similar data gaps noted by Aboriginal organizations and First Nations were heard from respondents from federal departments, agencies and provincial/territorial bureaus of statistics. The need for First Nations data within various domains was identified by federal departments and the needs of provincial/territorial respondents included socioeconomic data to support First Nations self-government processes and economic initiatives. Educational attainment repeatedly arose as a priority issue within provincial/territorial governments, as data to support evidence-based policy development was reported to be largely missing for First Nation schools operating outside of the federal system.

The gaps identified by federal departments/agencies are listed below, and those echoed by provincial/territorial bodies are denoted by an asterisk (*):

- Economic development*: Aboriginal household wealth; numbers of Aboriginal businesses; on-reserve Labour Force Survey; financial security on-and-off-reserve (increase sample size); number of incorporated businesses (community owned); own source revenue; income in relation to education, literacy, disability, age;

- Employment: types (e.g., full/part-time); union membership; required skill sets, education, literacy; disabilities; unemployment (e.g., reasons); overtime; job satisfaction; opportunity for promotion; volunteerism; upgrading; long distance training; desired career paths
- Education*: barriers; literacy; relations between literacy levels among parents and children; community involvement; relations between education level and desire for learning
- Health/social*: preventative and wellness measures (as opposed to disease and illness outcomes); vital statistics at provincial/territorial levels to allow the calculation of life expectancy; linkages to identify First Nations data within provincial/territorial information; improved data gathering, monitoring and dissemination of main health issues
- Justice: address problems related to data quality within the justice system (e.g., Aboriginal involvement in corrections is collected only when the person has been incarcerated; lack of Aboriginal self-identification at initial interaction with the justice system can result in under-funding for programs such as Native court worker programs; work to provide services or address gaps must be free of racial profiling)
- Language/culture: prevalence of fluent speakers in Aboriginal languages (available data captured by Statistics Canada are suppressed because of low numbers of speakers); mechanisms for learning languages used in communities
- Program evaluation: qualitative data to support renewal of Aboriginal programming
- Gaps in Statistics Canada data: inter-censal numbers, particularly accurate population counts are required by provincial ministries delivering programs

Issues or barriers related to the collection of new data

In addition to addressing problems associated with existing data sources, an obvious way to address data gaps is to collect new data. However, respondents from Aboriginal organizations, First Nations and federal departments/agencies, discussed various issues and barriers that render the collection of new data difficult. Barriers related to the collection of new data were not raised by provincial/territorial bureaus of statistics, possibly because some have found ways to engage in data collection activities, whereas others have not made efforts in this regard.

“After years of misleading or inappropriate analysis of their data, communities are often wary of research and data collection.”

Aboriginal Organizations and First Nations

- There is a general recognition that communities and organizations have significant capacity needs, not just to collect information, but also in analysis, interpretation and dissemination.
- Capacity challenges exist throughout Aboriginal organizations and First Nations, but are most pressing in the smaller communities and organizations with limited resources or in-house expertise to tackle the type of analysis needed to support effective advocacy efforts. There may be low capacity to consistently participate in data collection efforts due to lack of computers, training in basic research methods/data collection and/or data analysis software.

- After years of misleading or inappropriate analysis of their data, communities are often wary of research and data collection. In accordance with the principles of OCAP, there is a need for data collection to be community driven, and some communities wish to develop internal capacity to collect and analyze data for research, policy and program development purposes. However, inadequate funding contributes to capacity constraints as there are limited funds to train staff or hire staff with such expertise. Furthermore, the cost of mounting a survey to answer a community/organization's need for information can be prohibitive. Even if it is possible to carry out some data collection, small research budgets can limit sample sizes, which reduces the quality of the data and the amount of analysis that can be carried out.
- Financial constraints also make it difficult to be able to afford external assistance with expertise in data collection, analysis and interpretation. Related to this, community policies disallowing information sharing may make external assistance difficult to obtain if potential partners do not have an appreciation for OCAP. In addition, when a community's requirements in data collection and analysis are too rigorous, external assistance is often difficult to obtain, except from those extremely committed to undertake joint initiatives.
- Communities need a methodology to collect data in a credible process that governments recognize and trust so that requests for funding are evidence-based and not merely anecdotal.

Data Solutions by Scan Respondents **Identifying data needs and filling the gaps**

In communities a fundamental aspect of building capacity is identifying data requirements, which in turn requires an understanding of what is an effective, functioning First Nations government. Many communities may not fully appreciate the critical role of data simply because they have never had it. As one respondent noted, First Nations keep focusing on what exists and they do not have the luxury to get the data they need. A data map was suggested as a way of linking data to a vision statement, mandate, goals and/or objectives through mapping data requirements for each and identifying what data already exists, where it is housed, what data relationships exist, and which need to be created. A data mapping exercise is an opportunity to look at what information is needed from a First Nations lens, and to critically examine existing data for relevance and usefulness.

The cost of mounting a survey to answer a community/organization's need for information can be prohibitive; however, partnerships with government departments may provide a solution. For example, one organization was piloting an information collection template in communities in association with a ministry of Aboriginal affairs. In another example, a bureau of statistics participated in the development of a skills survey for three communities.

Many Aboriginal organizations and/or communities have relied on external research support as needed. For example, in one situation, an organization handles basic survey data collection, but sends major analysis to an external organization. In this arrangement, both parties discuss the interpretation and presentation of the analysis. In addition, linkages have been made with Statistics Canada to assist in specialty areas.

Federal Departments and Agencies

- Even though statistical data is needed to support performance measurement and accountability to government, in today's privacy sensitive environment it is very difficult, if not impossible, for a government department other than Statistics Canada, which is mandated to collect data, or AANDC, which requires data for their community programs, to initiate new data collection mechanisms among First Nations. In addition, privacy legislation was described as making it nearly impossible to request identifying information on data collection forms.
- The federal government has the Crown's duty to consult with First Nations which can slow down the development of data collection initiatives in communities. Constraints to obtaining data can also exist between federal departments in situations where both have data and each have guidelines describing data sharing. In these cases, data negotiations that need to take place add to issues of access and timeliness.
- From the federal departmental perspective, creating surveys and attempts at data collection is a costly proposition with no guarantee of community participation and concerns about the ability to analyze small populations.

Data Solutions by Scan Respondents Identifying Respondents for Data Collection

A solution to a federal department's inability to identify First Nations in its population was shared, in which an arrangement was made with AANDC to mail out a survey to all persons on the Indian Register in the jurisdiction, thereby preserving confidentiality. A good response rate on the survey was obtained from this partnership.

Partnerships between communities and governments who would provide financial support were described as a feasible route to obtain community data. If a project is community-based there is no need to collect First Nations-identifier information and OCAP might not be an issue. Such projects would need to pass ethics and research peer review set forward by the various parties, incorporate a voluntary premise to data collection and follow rigorous guidelines.

Yet-to-be-collected data provides opportunities for data sharing. For example, a data sharing agreement can be made between Statistics Canada and any department or municipal or other corporation for the sharing of information collected by either Statistics Canada, or the department or corporation, on behalf of both of them and for the subsequent tabulation or publication based on that information.¹⁷ This agreement requires that survey respondents be asked if they agree to share their information with the third party which would allow microdata stripped of identifying information (anonymized data) to be provided to the non-Statistics Canada partner. This type of agreement has already been used for surveys where the non-Statistics Canada partners were Aboriginal governments. Provincial legislation may also limit the sharing of identifiable data to the circumstances of consent of respondents and the execution of a formal data sharing agreement.

¹⁷ Described in Section 12 of the *Statistics Act*

Needs and expectations of FNSI among stakeholders

Although the different groups represented in the scan conveyed expectations specific to their needs, many of these expectations overlapped and there was a general expectation that FNSI can make a positive difference to communities, government departments and statistical bureaus with regards to First Nations statistical data. The consensus was that FNSI must gain trust in First Nation communities by starting small to enable early successes and put its stamp on products that can be used to showcase FNSI as a results-based organization. It was recommended by numerous respondents that FNSI find its niche and brand itself as an independent organization and find a complementarity in its products and services to those provided by federal departments. In addition, FNSI will need to navigate between organizations and communities that are hesitant to share their information or to participate in initiatives to identify First Nations data in government data holdings with those who believe that a relationship of mutual benefit can be forged with government while honouring OCAP. The scan has demonstrated that First Nations and government departments or statistical bureaus are participating in respectful, collaborative endeavours which have resulted in expertise and/or new statistical knowledge being shared.

Aboriginal Organizations and First Nations

Expectations of FNSI's contribution to First Nations statistics in Canada were largely about providing data that will help advance the agendas of First Nations and Aboriginal organizations. A main issue was to address effective First Nations government through four variables: competency, capacity, tools (e.g., data capture) and instruments (e.g., data agreements and guidelines for negotiation of data sharing). It was also felt that First Nations statistics should respond to and benefit communities first, and governments second. Specific needs

and expectations shared by scan respondents regarding how FNSI could assist organizations and communities are listed below.

Be a data clearing house with the objectives of improving accessibility, timeliness and reliability of First Nations statistical data

- Address data quality issues and provide relevant and reliable data to advance advocacy or program planning efforts. For example, address flaws in AANDC and Statistics Canada data (the two largest repositories of First Nations data) and overcome barriers to linking Indian Register data with other databases to identify First Nations information.
- Provide a one stop portal, enabling easy and inexpensive access to data. Identify statistical resources that are available and accessible to communities, and inform communities where the data can be accessed.

Build partnerships

- Partner with organizations for ongoing research, training and data needs. For example, support and validate trend analysis and assist with innovative research projects. This can also include informing First Nations about the application of OCAP principles.
- Provide qualified researchers/consultants to assist communities with their own data collection or analysis efforts.
- Provide leadership in advancing a vision of an integrated data system at community, regional and national levels.
- Provide assistance in meeting the challenges of dealing with funders, governments and Canadians who are often using inaccurate and dated information.
- Work with AFN and leading Aboriginal academics in Canada.

Identify data gaps and address these gaps

- Provide a gap analysis to identify data needs and develop a plan to address these needs.
- Provide forecasting and other methodological expertise which has a First Nations perspective and no government biases. Reconstruct questions from a First Nations perspective in order to eliminate/decrease misleading questions.
- Provide secondary statistical analysis of existing data and conduct impact analyses of proposed government policy changes.
- Provide leadership in collaborating on national surveys, where more specific questions can be asked based on needs identified by communities and organizations and where Indigenous definitions are used for health and other topic areas. In addition, work the RHS to extend it into further topics for data collection (e.g., the resource sector).
- Produce information products (fact sheets, papers, analytical pieces, etc.) that tackle difficult topics, including projections of the cost of doing nothing, cost drivers of the non-insured health benefits program (NIHB), drug utilization analysis, and analyses which delve into regional and sub-regional levels.

Provide or facilitate capacity development initiatives for communities

- Advocate for certified data manager training that does not require college/university level education and make training meaningful and practical for communities' needs (e.g., what should be measured and how to report in meaningful terms).
- Facilitate the development of low-cost online options for data manager training, as well as governance training to provide skills to identify what data needs exist, and what evidence/data management and boards should think about when planning programs and services.

Federal Departments and Agencies & Provincial and Territorial Bureaus of Statistics

Expectations among federal departments/agencies, and of provincial/territorial bureaus of statistics were in general, at a macro or strategic level in that FNSI should:

- Take the lead in First Nations data acquisition on a national level and provide more meaningful statistics that could be accessed for better policy development. Be clear about its definition of First Nations and develop strong methodological solutions to the census changes.
- Work in areas in need of clarity and which have been driven by communities and their priorities as government needs to support program development relevant to communities.
- Focus initially on its original intent to support the FNFSMA sister organizations in the area of economic development, which will provide the most support for First Nations self-governance.
- Establish credibility through early wins and develop a reputation as delivering accurate, reliable and credible data. It was recommended that FNSI work to find its own niche through bringing a needed First Nations perspective and perhaps become a centre of expertise in First Nations statistical analysis. At the same time, integration with statistical capacity in the provinces and territories was recommended so parallel systems are not created.
- It was suggested that FNSI work to create standards in data collection, management, and dissemination, and delve into the metadata¹⁸ issue to improve data definitions and quality, consolidating and bringing coherence to Aboriginal data and statistics.

¹⁸ Metadata provides descriptions allowing evaluation of the comparability of different data sources.

- Researchers, governments and organizations may have differing levels of understanding, support and awareness of the First Nations principles of OCAP. Guidelines and clarity regarding OCAP were requested by government respondents to facilitate partnerships with communities.
- Provincial and territorial statistical bureaus suggested that FNSI could act in a liaison capacity, building bridges between statistical bureaus and First Nations communities, or perhaps participate in a joint data collection partnership with a statistical bureau. One respondent suggested that funding opportunities may be available in provincial or territorial ministries (e.g. health or post secondary education) which have a need for First Nations statistical data and where a FNSI/bureau partnership could advance a proposal. Involvement of ministries allows the expense of a survey to be spread across a wider base.
- In at least one province, the removal of the mandatory long form census and creation of a voluntary NHS by the federal government was seen as an opportunity for the province to work with FNSI on filling the anticipated Aboriginal data gap.

Data Solutions by Scan Respondents Tripartite Projects

Respondents shared instances of tripartite projects that allowed identification of First Nations individuals in provincial databases. In one province, individuals with Indian status provide their First Nation identifier in order to obtain an on-reserve fuel tax exemption, which is verified with the band registrar. The First Nations identifier is linked to driver's licenses and triggers a point of sale exemption at the fuel pump. The system collects data to support the implementation of the tax exemption program, which is not shared for any other purposes. In a second case, provincial health card numbers are linked to a person's Indian status and First Nations persons are identified in provincial health data holdings. This project is at a pilot stage, and is expected to result in a better understanding of First Nations health care utilization and status.

Observations/Conclusions

Themes that have been distilled from responses obtained from representatives of Aboriginal organizations and First Nations, federal departments/agencies and provincial/territorial bureaus of statistics that took part in the FNSI's environmental scan of the First Nations statistical landscape in Canada are listed below. These themes and additional observations acquired from this scan are being considered by FNSI in the development of their program agenda.

Advocacy

- FNSI should advocate for accessible data and improved capacity for community data collection and analysis within a well-defined role as an information provider or facilitator.

Representation:

- FNSI should be represented on advisory bodies to Statistics Canada, such as the FPT Consultative Council on Statistical Policy, which provides communication, collaboration and consultative functions across jurisdictions, the Canadian Education Statistics Council, and the Justice Information Council.

Communication

- As well as ensuring a wide awareness of FNSI and its mandate among all stakeholders involved in First Nations or Aboriginal data, FNSI should assist communities in shifting their thinking towards valuing data and information as integral for planning, program administration and governance. Communities have been recommended as the primary recipients of information and other FNSI products.

First Nations Census

- There is an expectation that FNSI will play a leadership role in ensuring that a credible, accurate, comprehensive and reliable source of First Nations socioeconomic and population data will be available despite the changes to the long form census. In addition, FNSI should assist communities that wish to conduct their own census and create the tools and regulatory environment to spread the First Nations census model forward.

Partnerships

- Aboriginal organizations expressed willingness to work in partnership with FNSI, but specifics await a clearer direction from FNSI on its program agenda over the next few years. Organizations have an established presence in the broader First Nations community and can help increase FNSI's visibility and credibility with First Nations and further its mandate of supporting the data and statistical needs of communities. Governments (federal and provincial/territorial) were also willing to assist FNSI as it begins its operations, such as in providing advice or occasional expertise, and facilitating data partnerships.
- Provincial/territorial statistical agency respondents hoped that FNSI can be a liaison with communities, helping to understand and interpret OCAP and facilitating a better understanding of each other's needs for statistical data.
- For all organizations and departments, formalized data sharing arrangements would involve the negotiation of a protocol agreement in association with FNSI and the relevant communities and would include transparent provisions of how the data would be held and stored. Information would need to be accessible to all partners for their own use, for example, in improving the delivery of programs.

Economic Analysis

- Respondents in all three groups with knowledge of FNSI's original purpose recommended that it stay true to the original vision of the FNFSMA in providing a means to facilitate/improve economic activity in First Nations communities. Economic analysis was also highlighted by respondents with no historical knowledge of FNSI as it is fundamental to supporting First Nations self-determination. An opportunity for FNSI will be in providing statistical data which will support a government-to-government appropriation in self-government or Treaty agreements.

Centre of First Nations Expertise

- Facilitating access to First Nations statistical data arose as a main role for FNSI among respondents. This scan itemized many issues that affect access to First Nations data, and its availability and quality. Difficult issues that require solutions included: increasing the amount of available economic information (e.g., extending the Labour Force Survey or an alternative on-reserve); providing statistical analysis for small populations; measuring the effect of migration on the accuracy of population and other statistics; and improving capacity of communities in data collection and analysis to support evidence-based decision making processes.
- Other areas that a centre could address included: leadership in metadata to advance common definitions of First Nations and statistical terms throughout the organizations, departments and statistical bureaus; establishment of a clearing house for First Nations statistical data which would ultimately support an integrated data system at community, regional, provincial/territorial and national levels; provision of secondary statistical analysis from existing data; establishment of a data broker mechanism between communities and government; and increasing existing and future researchers' Indigenous knowledge.
- Governance at a community level requires a critical lens to understand data needs. FNSI can assist in developing tools to train boards/administrators to look at commonly accepted data indicators, as well as examining their requirements from an indigenous perspective. Secondly, FNSI can help by advocating for practical support mechanisms, including the standardization and core competency development of data managers in communities and the eventual development of a professional body to certify these managers.

Appendix A – First Nations Statistical Institute’s Sister Organizations

First Nations Tax Commission (FNTC)

The FNTC mission is to help First Nation governments build and maintain fair and efficient First Nation property tax regimes, and to ensure those communities and their taxpayers receive the maximum benefit from those systems. Specifically, FNTC will provide services required for the securitization of real property tax revenues, assume and streamline the law approval process, serve as an authoritative body to help balance community and taxpayer interests and will facilitate timely and professional dispute resolution.

First Nations Finance Authority (FNFA)

FNFA has worked to find the means by which First Nations, like other governments, might use debentures to access longer-term and more affordable financing. FNFA will allow participating First Nations to raise long-term private capital at preferred rates by securitizing a portion of their potential real property tax revenues. First Nations’ capital requirements will be pooled through FNFA, where investment grade debentures will be issued to meet their borrowing requirements. Initially, FNFA will issue securities on the strength of property tax revenues. This revenue will ensure basic health and safety for participating communities and also allow First Nations to develop infrastructure to a standard that supports business investment.

First Nations Financial Management Board (FMB)

As a new institution, the FMB’s initial task will be to provide independent financial management assessment services required by First Nations seeking entry into the FNFA borrowing pool. As legislated under the FNFSMA, FMB will develop financial performance standards used to determine if a First Nation is a good borrowing prospect. The FMB’s purpose is to provide tools and guidance that will instill confidence in First Nations financial management and reporting systems in order to support economic and community development.

Appendix B – First Nations Statistical Institute’s Environmental Scan Respondents

First Nations and Aboriginal Organizations

- Aboriginal Finance Officers of Canada
- Aboriginal Healing Foundation
- Aboriginal Human Resources Council
- Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada
- Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs
- Assembly of First Nations
- First Nations Finance Authority
- First Nations Financial Management Board
- First Nations Information Governance Committee
- First Nations Summit
- First Nations Tax Commission
- Indigenous Leadership Institute
- Ktunaxa Nation
- National Aboriginal Diabetes Association
- National Aboriginal Health Organization
- National Centre on First Nations Governance
- National Indian and Inuit Community Health Representatives Organization
- National Native Addictions Partnership Foundation
- Native Women’s Association of Canada
- Yukon First Nations Statistical Agency

Federal Departments and Agencies

- Canadian Heritage
- Canadian Revenue Agency
- Health Canada
- Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
- Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
- Justice Canada
- Natural Resources Canada
- Privy Council Office
- Public Health Agency of Canada
- Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada
- Statistics Canada

Provincial and Territorial Bureaus of Statistics

- Alberta Office of Statistics and Information
- BC Stats
- Manitoba Bureau of Statistics
- New Brunswick Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat
- Nova Scotia Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs
- NWT Bureau of Statistics
- Ontario Office of Economic Policy
- Ontario Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs
- PEI Economics, Statistics and Federal Fiscal Relations
- Saskatchewan Bureau of Statistics
- Saskatchewan First Nations and Métis Relations
- Yukon Bureau of Statistics

Appendix C – List of Acronyms

AANDC – Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada

ACS – Aboriginal Children’s Survey

AFN – Assembly of First Nations

APS – Aboriginal Peoples Survey

FNFSMA – *First Nations Fiscal and Statistical Management Act*

FNSI – First Nations Statistical Institute

NHS – National Household Survey

OCAP – Ownership, Control, Access and Possession

RHS – First Nations Regional Longitudinal Health Survey





FIRST NATIONS STATISTICAL INSTITUTE

*289 TED COMMANDA DRIVE
GARDEN VILLAGE, ON P2B 3K2*

WWW.FNSI-ISP.N.COM