



Strategic Plan 2023-2028

Prepared by:

In Synch Consulting Inc.

STRATEGIC SOLUTION SPECIALISTS



Table of Contents

- LIST OF ACRONYMS 3
- STRATEGY OVERVIEW 4
- METHODOLOGY 6
- STRATEGIC RETREAT 8
 - Participants*..... 8
- DCBDC MISSION, VISION, VALUES 9
 - DCBDC Vision Statement*..... 9
 - DCBDC Mission Statement*..... 9
 - Value Statement Collaboration/Partnerships* 11
 - Value Statement Diversification*..... 11
 - Value Statement Self-Sufficiency*..... 11
 - Value Statement Small Business Benefit Communities*..... 11
- ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS 12
 - Current State*..... 13
 - The Dehcho Economy* 14
 - Best Practices*..... 15
- STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT AND FOCUS 16
 - Barriers*..... 17
 - Strengths*..... 18
 - Strategy - Small Business Services*..... 19
 - Strategy – Self-Sufficiency*..... 20
 - Strategy – Education & Youth* 20
- CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS 22
 - Culture Matters*..... 22
 - Celebrate Success:* 22
 - Ownership and Accountability:* 23
 - Further Due Diligence:* 23
 - Independence and Accountability:* 24
 - Realistic Expectations:* 24
 - Client Feedback:* 24
- NEXT STEPS 25
 - Conduct Action Planning:*..... 25
 - Recruitment Requirement*..... 25
 - Effective Communications:* 25
 - Marketing Efforts:* 26
 - Community Visibility:*..... 26
- CONCLUSION 27

Appendices:

- A. Strategic Retreat Slide Deck
- B. Best Practices Interview Tool
- C. Best Practices Summary

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ABFP - Aboriginal Business Financing Program
ACCs - Aboriginal Capital Corporations
ACDP Aboriginal Capacity Development Program
ADLA - Aboriginal Developmental Lending Assistance
BDC - Business Development Bank of Canada
BDIC – NWT Business Development & Investment Corporation
CANOR – Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency
CFs - Community Futures
DCBDC – Dehcho Business Development Centre
EA - Enhanced Access
GM – General Manager
GNWT – Government of the NWT
ISCI – In Synch Consulting Incorporated
ITI – Industry Tourism and Investment department of the GNWT
IWE – Indigenous Women Entrepreneur (program offering through NACCA)
NACCA – National Aboriginal Capital Corporation
NIEDB – National Indigenous Economic Development Board
MDDF – Métis Dene Development Fund
TBDS - Thebacha Business Development Corporation

STRATEGY OVERVIEW

On July 19-20, 2022 a Strategic Planning Retreat was held with the directors and the General Manager of DCBDC. This Strategic Plan was finalized in January 2023. The DCBDC Board Members agreed on the following fundamental strategic elements.

DCBDC CORE VALUES

WE CHOOSE TO WORK WITH OUR CLIENTS, OUR STAKEHOLDERS, OUR COLLEAGUES AND WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS WHO HAVE VALUES SIMILAR TO OUR OWN AND WHO WORK TO THE SAME STANDARDS WE DO.

DCBDC VISION
The DCBDC is the first point of contact for small businesses.

DCBDC MISSION
DCBDC assists small business ventures and fosters economic development activities that generate benefits for stakeholders and the region.



VALUE STATEMENT: COLLABORATION/PARTNERSHIPS
We believe in developing, improving and fostering collaborations and partnerships. Through these relationships we are able to fully realize our contribution to the Dehcho economy.

VALUE STATEMENT: DIVERSIFICATION
We are committed to the diversification of our small business investments. Our commitment ensures a balanced investment approach to a diverse range of demographics, commercial opportunities and socio-economics.

VALUE STATEMENT: SELF-SUFFICIENCY
Through our assistance small businesses in Dehcho communities realize their true potential. We believe in sustainable economic prosperity which is achieved when small businesses are self-sufficient

VALUE STATEMENT: SMALL BUSINESS BENEFIT COMMUNITIES
Small businesses enhance prosperity and contribute to a stronger Dehcho economy. We believe that small businesses contribute to healthier communities.

Participants determined that the primary role of DCBDC is to:

- Help business succeed
- Support, enhance, and guide small business
- Offer sustainable and successful business start-ups to allow them to achieve their goals
- Foster early stage business development
- Collaborate/partner with others
- Inspire and support small business participants with confidence
- Remain empathetic to business owners’ difficulties
- Foster business success

Resultantly, the following have been developed as strategic priority areas each one discussed in more detail in the Strategy Development and Focus Section of this document.

Strategy - Small Business Services

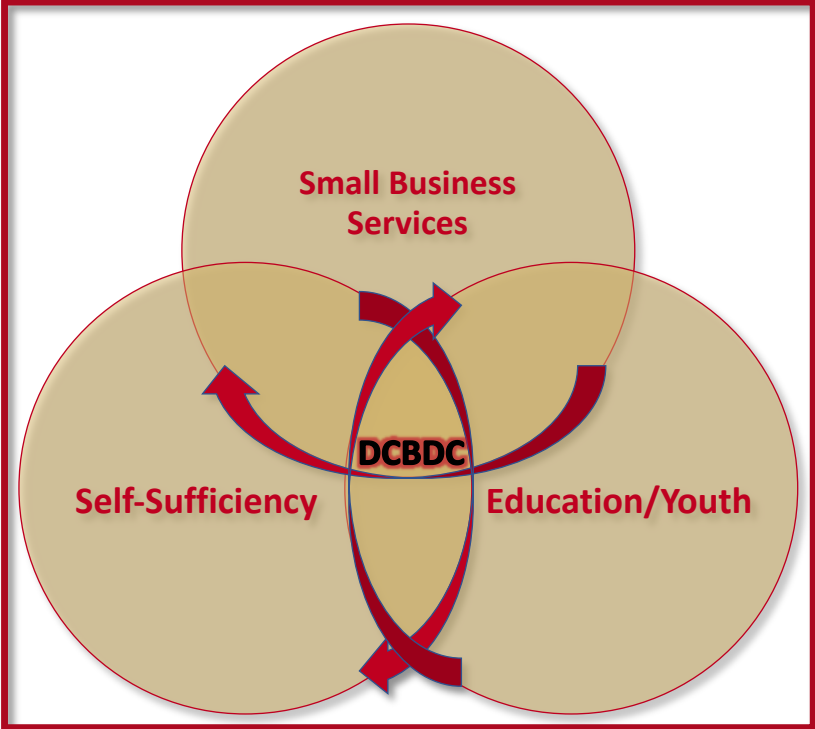
DCBDC is committed to providing profitable and sustainable financial services and support to small business clients desiring the attainment of economic betterment.

Strategy – Self-Sufficiency

Our goal is to assist communities and residents of the region in becoming increasingly economically self-sufficient; this requires that we too have economic self-sufficiency.

Strategy – Education & Youth

DCBDC is dedicated to the promotion and awareness of small business benefits in the Dehcho Region with a targeted effort on the Youth.



METHODOLOGY

DCBDC serves regional business needs in the Dehcho region of the NWT. With a predominantly Indigenous population it is imperative to consider this populous when considering strategy for small business needs. Before colonization, Indigenous peoples had thriving trading-based economies and a high quality of life. As newcomers arrived, they continued to thrive as master traders (i.e. fur trade era). The introduction of the Canadian government policies, the loss of a land base and removal of generations of children from their families and communities to residential schools led to the disruption of access to resources and passed down foreign economic practices. Indigenous people are now in the process of recovering from attempts at assimilation and are working to regain control of their lands and resources, fuelled with a desire to exercise their rights and title, and engage in wealth-generating enterprises compatible with the long-term sustainability of their territories and nations. Adequate financial resources are an important aspect of effective self-government. As noted in the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP), increasing opportunities for wealth-generation, through access to land and resources, as well as redistribution and economic development, is an important aspect of advancing the governance capacity of Indigenous nations.

Since RCAP's release the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) has released its reports and Calls to Action. Specific to Economic Development the TRC Call to Action #92:

“We call upon the corporate sector in Canada to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a reconciliation framework and to apply its principles, norms, and standards to corporate policy and core operational activities involving Indigenous peoples and their lands and resources.”

Furthermore, the National Indigenous Economic Development Board (NIEDB) in 2022¹ revealed that “closing the socioeconomic gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples in Canada will lead to tangible economic benefits beyond those experienced in Indigenous communities.” The NIEDB further suggests that:

“Across Canada, progressive leadership along with vibrant Indigenous businesses and entrepreneurs are strengthening communities, contributing to regional economies, supporting self-determination, and leading economic reconciliation. This represents a vast future potential that could be realized in more communities if the right conditions were in place—inclusive of all Indigenous Peoples.”

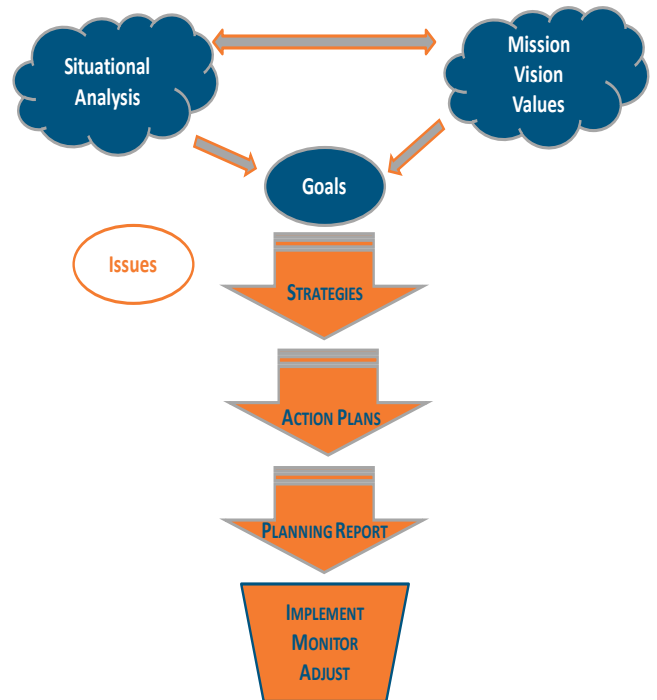
¹ National Indigenous Economic Strategy for Canada 2022 Pathways to Socioeconomic Parity with Indigenous Peoples

In Synch Consulting Inc. (ISCI) with its decades of experience working with and amongst Indigenous Communities has developed a keen eye to progress with respect to Indigenous economic development and strategy. The graphic to the right (Figure 1) provides an overview of the major phases of ISCI’s strategic planning process and the common order in which the phases are performed. The framework is designed to build capacity with participants, be flexible, providing participants with:

- Coaching and information sharing to enable strategic thinking and planning to occur.
- A safe environment in which to stretch the views and opinions of others.
- A framework to build ideas and concepts into articulated strategies and goals.
- The translation of strategic goals into measurable and targeted achievements and action plans to guide future activities.
- Due care and consideration for the larger community’s best interests.

This project taking place over the summer of 2022 culminated in the refinement of the DCBDC *Mission, Vision, Values, Situational Analysis* including a review of the *issues* in the development of overarching *Goals* and the subsequent development of *Strategy*. It is recommended that the DCBDC still take the time to build upon these strategies so as to flesh out the Action Planning portion of ISCI’s strategic planning process depicted and described herein.

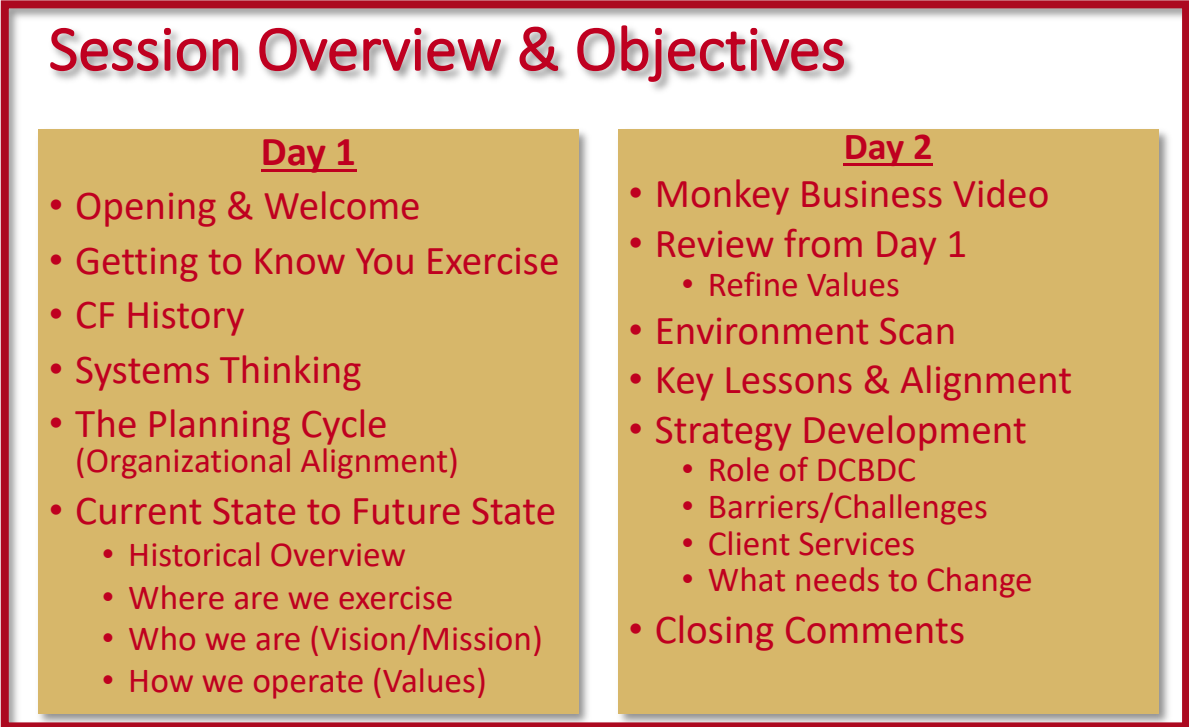
Figure 1: Strategic Planning Process



STRATEGIC RETREAT

On July 19-20, 2022 a Strategic Planning Retreat was held with the directors and the General Manager of DCBDC. Figure 2 below depicts the topics of discussion for the gathering and a more detailed slide deck is attached as Appendix A.

Figure 2: DCBDC Strategic Retreat



Participants

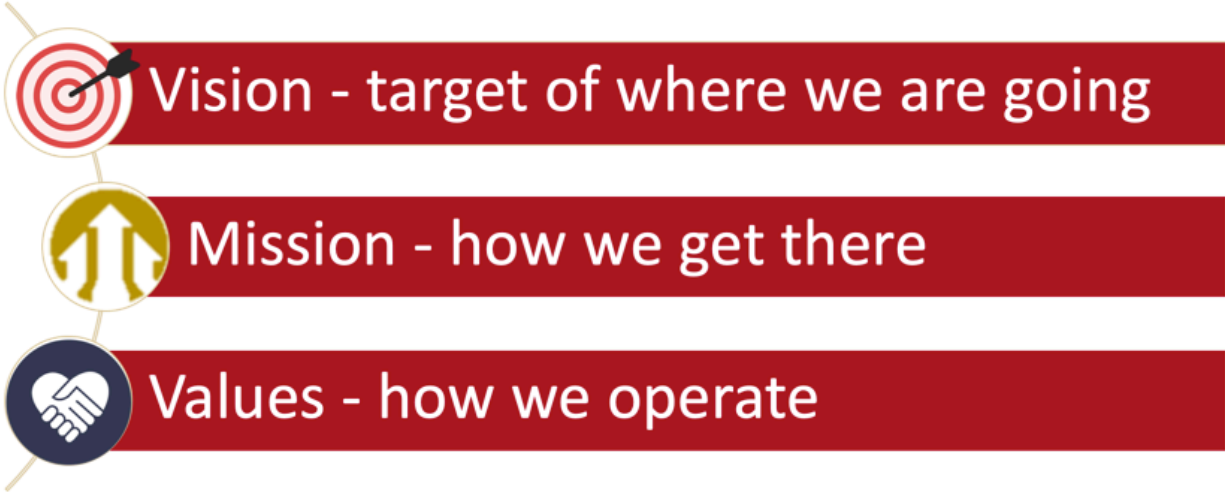
The two-day strategic retreat was facilitated by ISCI and attending the sessions were the following participants:

- Rosemary Gill, President, Chairperson
- Ruby Jumbo, Vice-Chair
- Shadab Khan, Secretary Treasurer
- Kathy Tsetso, Director
- Gabe Hardisty, Director
- David General, General Manager

DCBDC MISSION, VISION, VALUES

The Vision, Mission, and Core Operating Values, aid in the daily operations and in assisting directors with their decision-making. These basic elements of strategy are depicted in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Basic Elements of Strategy



- The corporate vision sets a target of where we are going,
- The corporate mission is how we get there, and
- The core values are how we operate.

Armed with each of these important and strategic elements DCBDC is able to articulate with efficiency and precision; what their business is all about; to potential clients, to funders, and to other stakeholders or interested parties.

DCBDC Vision Statement

The DCBDC is the first point of contact for small businesses.

DCBDC Mission Statement

DCBDC assists small business ventures and fosters economic development activities that generate benefits for stakeholders and the region.

The retreat participants were able to review, refine and rank values of importance. This section of the report outlines those agreed upon Core Values.

Core Values

We choose to work with our clients, our stakeholders, our colleagues and with other organizations who have values similar to our own and who work to the same standards we do.

The core values are depicted in a circle in Figure 4 below. This depiction demonstrates that they are interrelated and interconnected. The core values are described in detail on the next page.

Figure 4: DCBDC Core Values Diagram



Value Statement Collaboration/Partnerships

We believe in developing, improving and fostering collaborations and partnerships. Through these relationships we are able to fully realize our contribution to the Dehcho economy.

Value Statement Diversification

We are committed to the diversification of our small business investments. Our commitment ensures a balanced investment approach to a diverse range of demographics, commercial opportunities and socio-economics.

Value Statement Self-Sufficiency

Through our assistance small businesses in Dehcho communities realize their true potential. We believe in sustainable economic prosperity which is achieved when small businesses are self-sufficient.

Value Statement Small Business Benefit Communities

Small businesses enhance prosperity and contribute to a stronger Dehcho economy. We believe that small businesses contribute to healthier communities.

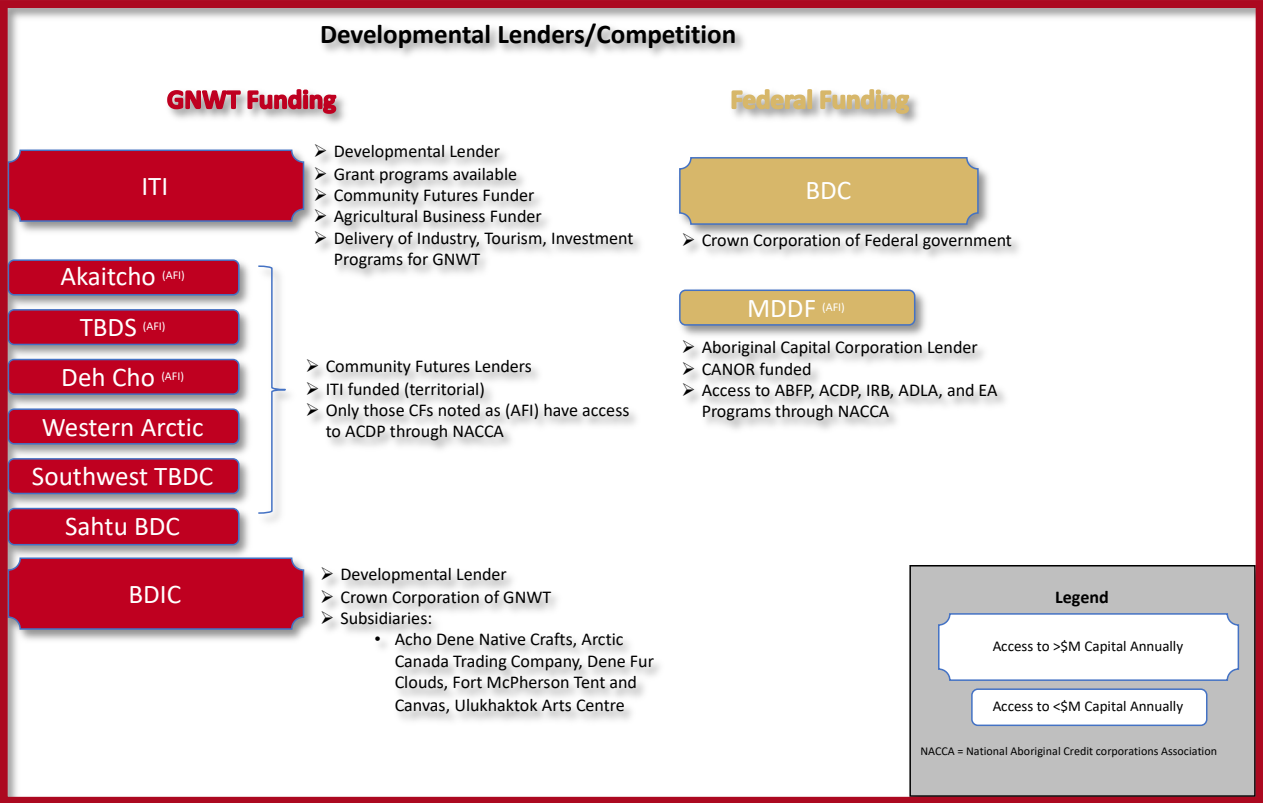
ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

DCBDC is a Community Futures non-profit development corporation physically located in Fort Simpson, NWT and operating in the following Dehcho communities:

- Fort Liard
- Fort Simpson
- Jean Marie River
- Wrigley
- Trout Lake
- Nahanni Butte

There are various types of developmental lenders operating in the geographic area of the NWT. Some in-fact, are considered to be competitive with the operations of DCBDC. Although the major banks and credit unions operating the same geographic area, it is firmly recognized that the types of lending supports, pre-work, and aftercare that the clients receive from a developmental lender cannot be similarly obtained through traditional banking facilities. Participants reviewed and discussed similarities/differences of the developmental lenders in the NWT. The image below (figure 5) provides an overview of the various types and sizes of these developmental business lenders.

Figure 5: Developmental Lenders in NWT



In reviewing the various types of developmental lenders, it is noted that the Community Futures lenders are funded through the GNWT Department of Industry Tourism and Investment (ITI). In other parts of Canada, funding for Community Futures offices and the network is provided by the Government of Canada's Regional Development Agencies (RDA). As an example, Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) consists of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba with no provincial government linkage. Rather, there is a cooperative relationship with the provinces of western Canada, business, labour and other public and private organizations.

Current State

Participants determined that the role of DCBDC is to:

- Help business succeed
- Support, enhance, and guide small business
- Offer sustainable and successful business start-ups to allow them to achieve their goals
- Foster early stage business development
- Collaborate/partner with others
 - sharing the workload and
 - leveraging what we do well
- Inspire and support small business participants with confidence
- Remain empathetic to business owners' difficulties
- Foster business success through
 - Brand reputation
 - Word of mouth
 - Building a solid reputation
 - Positive messaging
 - Testimonials
 - Revisiting successful businesses from the past

Participants Identified the following Global/National Economic Trends:

- Climate change – emissions and a shift in economic circumstances. Forest Fires, flooding opportunities to move communities, housing and infrastructure changes.
- Monitoring – Guardianship report changes in wildlife and on the land, food supplies. Need for freezers, food security, alternative power sources needed.
- Small manufacturing of local products to be put online. Change the way we use businesses. No longer need location. Lots online.
- Pandemic - we saw shift geographically to look at different kinds of infrastructure (offices empty, work from home)
- War in Ukraine has affected food prices. Opportunity for community gardens and harvesting local (food security).
- Population shift to more 50+

- Tree planting for shade.
- Mackenzie Highway need more competition for groceries.
- Outfitters; now have three operating in region and all from outside ownership, no long-term residents own.
- Airlines are leaving or selling operations.
- Dehcho process, Dene government, economic development in mining.
- Indigenous protected areas strategy.
- Dehcho land use segregated zones
- Nahanni National Park
- Greenhouse for reforestation – Inuvik repurposed their arena to do hydroponics.

The Dehcho Economy

The following paragraphs have been extracted from the most recent economic report conducted in 2017 for the DehCho First Nations².

The wage-based economies of the Dehcho and its communities are relatively small, meaning the markets are limited by a small number of buyers and sellers. The majority of activity is derived from basic consumer needs of residents and public-sector activity. There are some Entrepreneurs operating in service-related areas such as tourism and retail. First Nations in Each community have formed development corporations that are engaged in a variety of businesses, including transportation and construction.

Most of the money circulating throughout the region’s economy arrives via the public sector, whether through governments’ own expenditures on administration, health, or education, its spending on capital projects, its legal obligations to transfer funds to First Nations, its payment of unemployment insurance and social assistance, and its transfers related to the Dehcho Process including those related to the Interim Resource Development Agreement and other legal decisions.

Currently, there are no activities attracting large-scale private-sector investment or that are expanding local employment on a consistent basis.

Although this report is somewhat dated in its statistical content and this report was conducted prior to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic’s ramifications on the economy, the bulk of the assertions formed in the above quoted section remain relatively constant.

² Impact Economics 2017 Report on the Deh Cho Economy, March 28, 2017

Best Practices

In determining best practices, the participants identified another Community Futures organization to be that which they may aspire to emulate. Thebacha Business Development Services (TBDS) was determined to be the benchmark for success and the General Manager was additionally identified to have a vast knowledge of Community Futures due to their longevity in the position and their Chair seat at the NWT CF board table. As a result, a short interview was conducted and the following summarizes that discussion. A copy of the interview tool is attached as appendix B. A summary of responses is attached as Appendix C and the list below showcases some attributes to their success.

- The format for mentoring at TBDS is unstructured.
- TBDS is actively pursuing the purchase of a building. The funds to purchase are comprised of savings from sole-source revenues that do not have any government contribution agreement and/or grant restrictions associated with the moneys.
- Critical to its success story, TBDS has built up trust with its client base and other stakeholders over time.
- TBDS manages their loan portfolio by tracking its performance monthly.
- TBDS has regular board retreats either for governance capacity building or for strategic planning.

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT AND FOCUS

Before commencing with strategic planning discussions, participants were given time to review, reflect, and discuss the work that took place in prior strategic planning events. Participants were then asked to focus on the desired future state. This exercise in determining a perfect and much desired future state temporarily sets aside any barriers and/or issues. The list below offers a glimpse of that perfect picture 10-20 years in the future:

- Surviving – existence viable businesses are there and we are there showcasing them
- Collaborations with region/territories/national partners to support our business ventures
- Relevant DCBDC
- Funding still for DCBDC
- Regional office not in Yellowknife
- A place where communities can go for help
- Elders have powerful standing in the community
- Small community investing and planning for Dehcho future created for themselves
- Diverse clients equally representing men, women, youth to have businesses in the region
- Regional wellness camps run by First Nation businesses. Food and supplies supported by DCBDC
- Craft shop sold at shop and supplies for crafts
- High school graduates – youth mentoring gaining business skills to protect themselves. People will take up on opportunities. Youth internships for indigenous youth
- Successful in mentorship and hiring locally to run our programs
- Educated young people to take over businesses
- Warehouse partnerships where all can benefit from bulk buying opportunities
- Competition for northern fresh produce (agri-business)
- Homegrown general manager that is trained and we are truly the go-to for business
- Bridge across the Liard Triple P (public, private, partnership)
- Variety of small business - retail no longer need to leave
- Women owned businesses
- Curriculum for the high-school students to be entrepreneurs with financial training and can go to college as a viable career choice

Many of the items from the above list are absolutely attainable. Ultimately however, practicality and unavoidable obstacles require a sense of realism be applied to Strategy. The discussion then centered around some of the numerous difficulties that arise in the course of operations.

Barriers

DCBDC recognizes and acknowledges the following barriers that must be overcome to achieving its goals. Participants offered the following list (not exhaustive) of difficulties and barriers to success many of which must be overcome:

- Adequate office/storage space
- Workshops on pitfalls of business in small communities
- Place for business owners to print documents
- Communication with clients
- Capacity building of business owners
- Marketing for business owners
- Knowledge of mega projects
- Outreach with communities
- Warm inviting space to invite people into
- So many partner opportunities unutilized
 - Duplication can be better serving communities with capacity building efforts
 - Leveraging of all sources of support
- Lack of partnerships
- Aurora college has small business programs and DCBDC isn't involved
- Youth conference on Entrepreneurship
- Youth representative on the board
- Website links to business planning and marketing
- Lack of network beyond those very close to the centre or previous clients
- Lack of ability to go on the road with materials in the communities
- No collaboration/partners
- Fear of investments
- Event with everyone at the table to know the gaps and/or opportunities. Need everyone working together
- Working in silo's
- Missing completion of the Dehcho Process

Strengths

DCBDC recognizes and acknowledges the following strengths that are worth celebrating in better reaching their goals. Participants offered the following list (not exhaustive) of advantages to the work they are performing in the Dehcho economy:

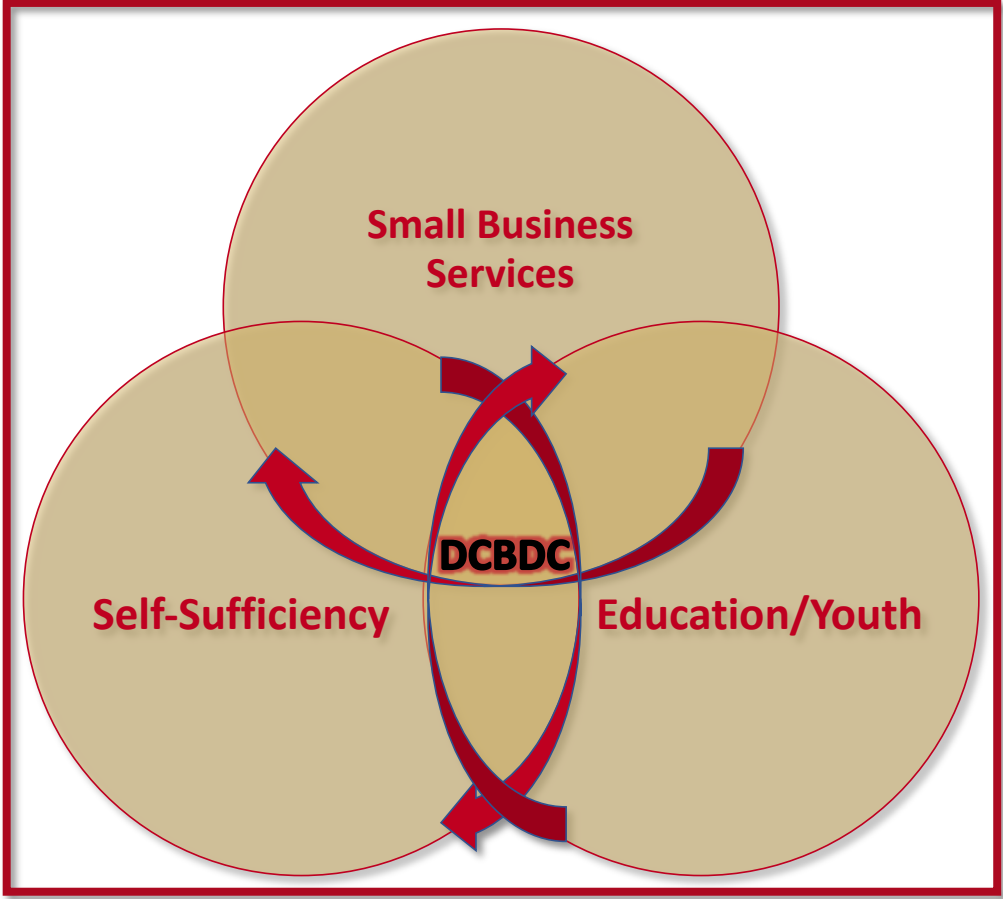
- Provide good Business Advisory Services
- Able to work hands-on with the businesses seeking assistance
- DCBDC can be relied upon to be a professional business office
- Long-term personnel have the knowledge of the economy/business in the region
- Arrears collection has been proficient
- Provide excellent business summary preparation for investment review
- Investment Committee includes board representatives and local business people
- AGMs are face to face in the region
- Marketing and Promotions in communities
 - New DCBDC website
- Ongoing Board Training
- Good risk assessment tool is developed

The following are cost-benefits to having DCBDC perform its function as a developmental lender:

- Flexible, able to get to ground-level and can perform many functions
- Aftercare possible
- DCBDC has a good base-knowledge of many businesses in the region
- Volunteer board and staff members are passionate about providing help
- Government doesn't have the same skill set
- Relationships are developed at the ground level
- DCBDC is comprised of people of the region, therefore have networking connections

Arising from the aforementioned efforts and discussions participants determined three (3) overarching themes arise. Figure 6, below graphically depicts the heading of those strategic initiatives in a circular motion to display that there is **constant movement** and to portray that there is **no beginning and no end**. The diagram also demonstrates that no initiative is greater than any of the other(s), in that the circles overlap signifying the **interconnectedness**. The full detail of each strategic initiative action plan is provided on the subsequent pages.

Figure 6: DCBDC Strategic Focus



Strategy - Small Business Services

DCBDC is committed to providing profitable and sustainable financial services and support to small business clients desiring the attainment of economic betterment. We do this through innovative ways to provide:

- Small business loans
- Small business planning and technical services
- Navigating small businesses seeking networks, grants, marketing venues, etc.
- Small business advisory/counselling services

- Access to economic development offerings and information for small businesses
- Training events
- Marketing promotions and opportunities for small business operating in the Dehcho region

Our goal is to strengthen the Dehcho economy and enhance awareness of our services to potential or existing small businesses. DCBDC does this by improving the quality, range, depth and effectiveness of services offered. Wherever possible we will ensure businesses are guided to those providing services that are needed. We are able to communicate effectively with small businesses, residents and other community stakeholders in the Dehcho region. We are the centre that is accessible and effective as a developmental lending institution

Strategy – Self-Sufficiency

Our goal is to assist communities and residents of the region in becoming increasingly economically self-sufficient requires that we too have economic self-sufficiency. The focus to attaining self-sufficiency seeks to achieving revenue/income at a level that enables the operations to support itself for initiatives that are not necessarily funded and/or fully funded by government grants and contributions. As a not-for-profit, focussed attention on ensuring we maintain our standing as described in the relevant legislation. Directors are also encouraged to familiarize themselves with the legislative requirements as well as the details contained in existing agreements before progressing toward collaborative relationships with other agencies, governments, and institutions in an effort to raise funding levels. The desired outcomes will include (but are not limited to):

- Increased core funding and/or federal funding
- Repositioning to be able to participate in larger Dehcho economic projects
- Larger capital pool for DCBDC
- More fulltime permanent staff
- Continued (re)development of policy(s) on investments
- Subsidiary or sibling corporate entity for revenue generation

Strategy – Education & Youth

DCBDC is dedicated to the promotion and awareness of small business benefits in the Dehcho Region with a targeted effort on the Youth. DCBDC will foster and advance training of Entrepreneurs with a focus initially on the known and pending opportunities/projects, some of which include:

- Youth Programming (training, generate interest in entrepreneurship, career choices, cultural/historical indigenous entrepreneur understandings)

- Engage more women in entrepreneurship through training and support
- Hosting/collaborating on workshops on Business Basics and Accounting/Bookkeeping
- Working with educational institutions (Aurora College) and with high-schools to introduce entrepreneurship as an alternative career choice for students
- Develop promotional messaging for the societal benefit of enlarging the Dehcho economy due to business development and growth
- Development of Entrepreneur Role Model campaign
- Desired outcomes for this initiative will be:
- Better working and collaborative relationship with:
 - Industry,
 - Schools,
 - Community,
 - Dehcho First Nation & Metis Governments,
 - GNWT, ITI, and
 - Other developmental lenders

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

In order for DCBDC to achieve and fully capitalize on the various opportunities that result from Strategic Planning, various factors, critical to the successful implementation need be identified and properly managed. These factors address many of the challenges, sensitivities, and barriers identified. While not an exhaustive list, the following recommendations based on secondary research in working with Indigenous Communities will prove important elements of the ongoing process:

Culture Matters:

Culturally-ideal strategies include an emphasis on spirituality and a long-term perspective that focuses on the good of the community. As part of the ongoing communication efforts, and part of the garnering of support for the plan, culture must be intertwined within everything that is carried out. Cultural emphasis deepens the development process. Revitalizing a community's identity, symbols, arts, festivals, history, traditions and environment – its culture- is the key to both economic and social wellbeing.

Celebrate Success:

As part of a project kick-off campaign, and as the strategy or action planning unfolds, it will be important to relay positive messages as goals become realized and/or achievements surpass expectations. An example of this might be as follows: the chair of DCBDC is asked to attend a local community event. at that event he/she recalls the most recent quarterly report of DCBDC and mentions one or two important successful actions that have occurred. Additionally, the monitoring and reporting of performance indicators at quarterly meetings assists directors in quickly recalling what the overall success measurements might have been. Quarterly differences may not be helpful, but longer-term reports on these metrics may prove useful. At minimum DCBDC may want to consider monitoring the following metrics:

- Total loan growth (subcategorized by community)
- Number of events attended by directors and GM
- Number of Expansion Loans (sub-categories for youth/women)
- Number of Start-ups (sub-categories for youth/women)
- Number of Inquiries (sub-categories for youth/women)
- Number of Employees (sub-categories for youth/women, NAICS code)
- Increased support staff for DCBDC
- Increased or better utilized/designed office space for DCBDC
- Introduction of new technologies (i.e. software/hardware)

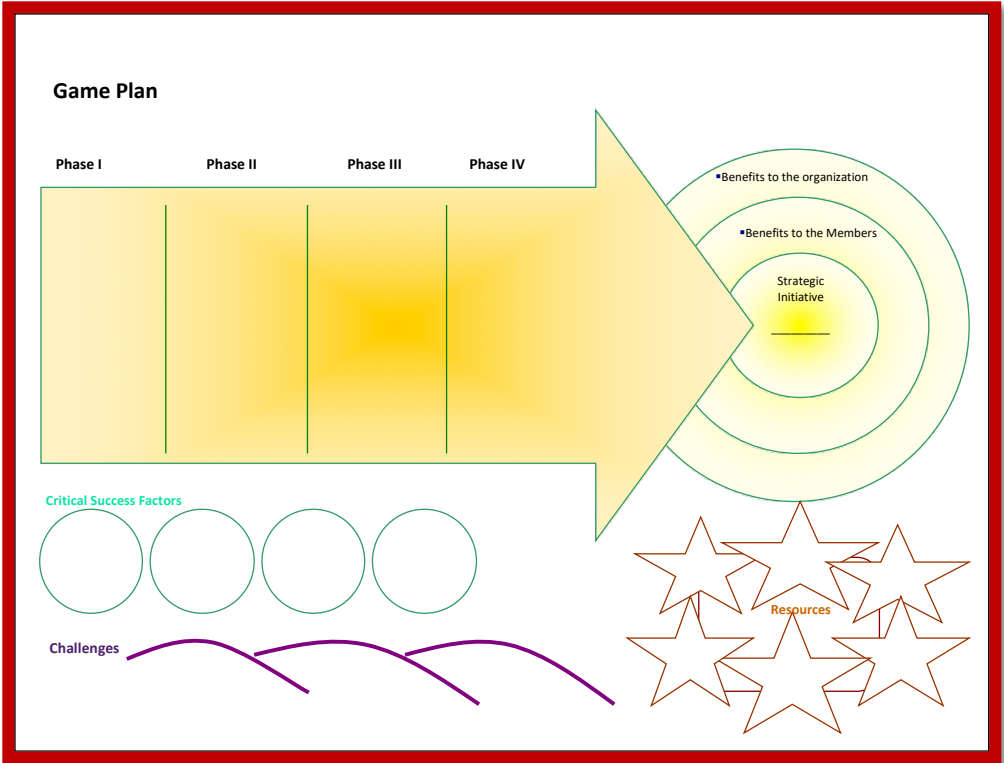
Ownership and Accountability:

Individual and collective director acceptance and agreement to change the status-quo, and to support each other through the change is required. Furthermore, holding self and others accountable to make a positive contribution will result in significant incremental advancements. With a current staff of two people, much of the promotion must fall upon the directors to be diligent at promoting and advancing DCBDC at the community level and beyond.

Further Due Diligence:

The strategic plan created thus far is a solid framework from which to develop more detailed Action Plans as well as Annual and Budgetary plans. Depending on the complexity of the initiative, further analysis may be required to determine the viability and most effective next steps associated with moving any of the concepts forward through implementation. ISCI has conducted many of these more detailed Action Planning Events using the *Game Plan* template illustrated below in Figure 7.

Figure 7: ISCI Game Plan Illustration



Independence and Accountability:

Ensuring that the projects and activities of the stakeholders are kept at-arms-length from personal and/or political agendas is of paramount importance.

Realistic Expectations:

Setting realistic expectations and success metrics that can be easily applied, monitored and reported on. Throughout the strategic planning process directors were reminded of the importance of consistently reviewing the strategic plan and discussing where DCBDC is in achieving its goals.

Client Feedback:

The collection of client feedback is important to provide factual information on where improvements can be made, to foster innovative ways of working, and ultimately to demonstrate to others' that investment in DCBDC is paying off in big ways.

NEXT STEPS

The following is a list of a number of additional steps that require action in order to effectively implement the key components of the plan. This list is not exhaustive but has been provided to assist in guiding initiatives DCBDC will need to consider as next steps.

Conduct Action Planning:

Strategy development contained herein offers a high-level overview of the director's long-term planning. Much of the discussion on planning initiatives are preliminary in thought and will require additional tactical action planning as well as additional research and input before implementation.

Recruitment Requirement

Directors are currently faced with the recruitment and selection of a new General Manager along with the recruitment of additional board members. The implementation and next steps require time and attention ideally by those who built the plan; the directors. Therefore, board members will need to keep each other updated with any progress they make along the way and apprise new entrants to the background thoughts in an effort to see successful implementation.

Effective Communications:

Email and videoconferencing appears to be the best mode of internal operating for DCBDC given the distance of the communities and directors working on behalf of DCBDC.

Continued updates to the website to provide awareness to the larger community should be expanded, keeping in mind that smaller portions of the strategic information is shared with the larger community and public audiences in a timely manner. Internal knowledge transfer, public awareness and participation in activities, media campaigns, launches and advertising promotions are all important elements of overall communications.

Effective and targeted professional communication with external stakeholders will help in attracting potential investment, and partnerships, which in turn will result in improved economic benefit for the communities as a whole.

Directors have access to many various meetings and events at the community level and often it is the community word-of-mouth technique that can be most effective at generating new interest

in DCBDC initiatives. Additionally, invitations to DCBDC when these community events are happening may prove to be an effective use of resources for marketing purposes. Directors need to circulate that information amongst the group.

Marketing Efforts:

New marketing materials will need to be prepared including the profiling of success stories. Where applicable free press relations is recommended to be utilized (i.e. speaking at various events).

Community Visibility:

Whenever feasible and plausible, board meetings should be conducted in each of the communities and tied to small venues of public open house style information sessions. Having all of the board members present spreads the workload of public awareness and fosters an atmosphere of working together as a team. Director involvement in the events hosted or co-hosted by DCBDC is vital to ensuring top-level support for the visibility of the corporation at a community level.

CONCLUSION

By creating this Strategic Plan, DCBDC has shown its recognition that working collaboratively will result in the success of many. The challenge now is to keep that momentum going and being committed to holding each other accountable while remaining flexible in our efforts to better the communities we represent. As directors we commit to providing our insights and lending support when called upon.

This plan should be viewed as the first step in a long-term process. The development of a formal system to allow for systematic, periodic review of the plan and the collection of client feedback, is necessary to ensure continued effective and responsible management of DCBDC assets and programming. Such an ongoing commitment will provide DCBDC with the necessary dedication to stay abreast of the economic opportunities as they arise in an ever-changing environment.