



IndigenousWorks

April 14, 2021

Luminary Strategy Sessions (Sharing Circles)

The image of Northern Lights captures and mesmerizes us. There are different stories and legends. One legend is about Inuit playing a game, kicking a walrus skull around as they are running across the cold, frozen snow. Their steps become the crackling sounds of the northern lights. A different legend from Artist Morris Neyelle from the Northwest Territories relates his grandfather's story that the Northern Lights give a gift, "like medicine power."

Other legends say that the Lights are spirits trying to communicate with you. Northern Lights continue to fire our imaginations as the inspiration for stories, teachings, legends, wonderment, and creativity, stimulating the works of poets, artists, and scientists alike.

Luminary's respectful acknowledgement of the power and mystique of the northern lights is symbolic as we embark on a journey to advance Indigenous Innovation for Economic Transformation, Employment and Wellbeing. Our path will be exploratory and while our process is clear, the strategy and plan we co-design together has yet to be revealed. The insights that each of you offer as 'Luminaries' is powerful. What brings us together in part, is the recognition that social innovation and collective impact can transform lives, communities, and nations.



You are the Luminaries who will help us light up the sky with a new vision, strategy and plan!

About the Luminary Planning Phase

From March – December 2021, the Luminary planning initiative will convene over 100 Luminary Charter Partners from across Canada to co-design a new Indigenous research ecosystem to ensure that Indigenous businesses and research institutions have the skills and systems in place to advance Indigenous innovation for economic transformation, employment and wellbeing.

The Luminary Strategy Sessions Introduction Video

We have prepared a 19 minute video with voices, insights and perspectives from Canadians highlighting each of the eight strategy sessions of a proposed ecosystem. The video is intended to stimulate your thinking and prepare you for your dialogue therefore we encourage to [watch the video](#) prior to joining your strategy session. Please feel free to share the video with your colleagues to solicit their input.

Strategy Sessions (Sharing Circles): Eight Themes

The Luminary planning exercise begins with a series of virtual two-hour sharing circles with small teams of 10-18 people which will be held from mid-April to late May. Eight strategic themes have been identified as potential building blocks of an Indigenous innovation ecosystem and Luminary Partners have identified their top three preferences. **Your input is absolutely essential in the design of the Luminary strategy and plan!**

We hope that after viewing the video and the session questions, **that you will be inspired to sign up for the session(s) that relate to your other two preference(s) or for any other session(s) that interest you.** You will find below a list of all the strategy session themes and the date and time options. Please email Micheline to register and we would be most pleased to have you join us!

1. Increasing Innovation Awareness, Education and Skills

Option 1 - Monday, April 19 at 12pm Eastern time
Option 2 - Thursday, May 13 at 2:30pm Eastern time

2. Growing Research Collaborations

Option 1 - Monday, April 26 at 12pm Eastern time
Option 2 - Thursday, May 13, at 12pm Eastern time

3. Creating Knowledge Transfer and Mobilization Strategies

Option 1 - Tuesday, April 27 at 2pm Eastern time
Option 2 - Friday, May 14 at 12pm Eastern time

4. Identifying and Supporting Indigenous Business Innovation Needs, Priorities and Clusters

Option 1 - Thursday, April 29 at 2pm Eastern time
Option 2 - Monday, May 17 at 12pm Eastern time

5. Growing Indigenous Research Talent

Option 1 - Thursday, May 6 at 12pm Eastern time
Option 2 - n/a

6. Building Indigenous Leadership and Institutional Capacity for Research and Innovation

Option 1 - Friday, May 7 at 12pm Eastern time
Option 2 - n/a

7. Indigenous Curriculum, Knowledge and Student Support Strategies

Option 1 - Thursday, May 6 at 2:30 pm Eastern time
Option 2 - Thursday, May 20 at 12pm Eastern time

8. Economic Transformation, Employment and Wellbeing: Evaluation and Measurement

Option 1 - Wednesday, May 12 at 12pm Eastern time
Option 2 - Thursday, May 20 at 2:30pm Eastern time

Get Started

Please watch the 19 minute [Luminary Strategy Session Introduction Video](#) before your session.

Also in preparation for your session(s), please refer to the brief description of theme, some context setting observations and a series of four (4) questions specific to each theme. We have also included two generic questions that all Luminary partners will be asked to address. These questions are meant to get you thinking and we will take you through them during the session.

If you have questions or suggestions, please connect with either Kelly or Craig directly.

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Theme Descriptions and Session Questions

1. Increasing Innovation Awareness, Education and Skills

In the past, colleges and universities effectively bypassed Indigenous people and communities in favour of identifying their own priorities and conducting their own 'Indigenous research' and this approach lingers on today. There are deep institutional patterns and structures that need to be reset, and new systems and mechanisms introduced which will encourage new generations of Indigenous people to create their own research agendas which benefit their communities and wellbeing.

Indigenous people and businesses have had few opportunities to understand and explore the value of research to innovate their own businesses and economies. They lack the capacity and strategies to identify community-based research priorities. If these issues were to be surmounted, improved awareness of the role of research would enable new growth in Indigenous economic and business development in a wide range of sectors notably agriculture/agrifoods, renewable energy, environmental industries, healthcare, and forestry. These are sectors that align naturally with Indigenous value structures and knowledge systems which emphasize the importance of sustainable growth, wellbeing, and intergenerational connectedness, among others.

Context Setting

Among the academic community what is the level of awareness of the Indigenous economy? Indigenous business and community economic priorities? Among the business schools in Canada? How can we communicate the value of research and innovation to Indigenous audiences. How can we educate Indigenous businesses and communities about research protocols and finally, how will this awareness and education help Indigenous businesses embrace a culture of research and innovation?

To what extent do you believe that a culture of innovation is vital for today's businesses to achieve resiliency in the wake of rapidly changing markets and circumstances? Can you teach innovation to businesses? Do you think the situation is the same for Indigenous businesses as for non-Indigenous businesses in Canada? What skills need to be cultivated?

We talk about innovation sometimes in the context of using new research or adapting existing research to grow new products and services. What role can research and research collaborations play as a stimulus to Indigenous innovation?

1 - Discussion Questions:

1. What critical skills are needed to build a culture of innovation in businesses?
2. How can Indigenous research advance business and social innovation?
3. How can business schools and other faculties such as law, medicine, education, environment, social, etc help build an economy that meaningfully includes Indigenous peoples?
4. What are one or two concrete, implementable actions that can serve to increase innovation, awareness, education, and skills? What is Luminary's role?

Overarching Final Questions for all Thematic Groups:

1. Do you have any comments or advice on the other 7 themes?
2. What else would you add to this discussion? What needs to be addressed?

2. Growing Research Collaborations

Many Indigenous communities currently lack the capacity or processes to identify (community-based) research priorities. Systems and research infrastructure needed include the development of Indigenous 'value-creation models' which enable Indigenous communities and businesses to prioritize their research needs while recognizing wellbeing in tandem with economic priorities. Part and parcel with this are the need to decolonize and indigenize research approaches so that they align more closely with Indigenous needs. New models for 'community-based value creation' are at the heart of what is needed to identify Indigenous-led research collaborations.

New strategies are needed to grow research collaborations which result in economic and wellbeing benefits accruing to communities. It means moving from a deficit picture to a future which enlists the best research minds to grow community economies in ways to which communities aspire.

Context Setting

How can we support Indigenous communities to identify their research priorities for their own socioeconomic and wellbeing goals? What additional systems practices, information or collaborations would help enable communities to identify research needs? Do post-secondary research institutions and Indigenous businesses have the skills and resolve to engage with one another to identify research issues and develop research projects to address core issues and needs? Where are their opportunities to grow engagements?

What would an increased roster of Indigenous-led research collaborations look like within the current post-secondary institutional environment and within the context of Indigenous socio-economic development? What would be required by way of supports and systems to act on these collaborations?

What kind of information and mapping exercises do we need if we are to take a strategic approach to designing new collaborations? How can Indigenous researchers be positioned to play a Vanguard role to work more closely with Indigenous communities and businesses to increase research collaborations and innovation strategies?

2 - Discussion Questions:

1. How can post-secondary institutions collaborate with Indigenous communities to identify and address community research needs? What kind of enablement mechanisms are needed?
2. What skill gaps or barriers impact Indigenous communities and post-secondary institutions in pursuing research? How can these be addressed?
3. What supports and capacity building mechanisms are needed by Indigenous researchers and Indigenous communities/businesses to pursue innovation-focused research?
4. What are one or two concrete, implementable actions that can serve to grow research collaborations? What is Luminary's role?

Overarching Final Questions for all Thematic Groups:

1. Do you have any comments or advice on the other 7 themes?
2. What else would you add to this discussion? What needs to be addressed?

3. Creating Knowledge Transfer and Mobilization Strategies

The post secondary research community has little knowledge of the Indigenous business community and visa versa. These communities rarely interact and there are no systems in place for Indigenous businesses to access the knowledge which researchers are generating. The current systems which enable Indigenous businesses to find Indigenous researchers are not well organized.

Charter partners see the potential for Indigenous economic development corporations to work together with Canadian corporations on research agendas that are to a scale and level never yet dreamed about. Large Canadian corporations, as well as medium and small businesses, have tremendous assets and resources which if channeled in directions that Indigenous communities want and encourage, could lead to exponential growth. These are the strategies that Charter partners will discuss, laying out new ideas for knowledge transfer among Indigenous businesses, Indigenous development corporations, large Canadian corporations, and post-secondary research organizations.

The end results of these collaborations will be long-term partnerships which benefit all parties. It will mean continued and sustained streams of research funding for post secondary institutions, new markets, customers, investors, and partners for Canadian corporations as well as accelerated growth and diversification on the part of Indigenous development corporations including new business development and jobs in communities. The scale of these collaborations will do much toward achieving the goal of a \$100 billion Indigenous economy.

Context Setting

How can Indigenous communities, Economic development corporations or Indigenous businesses make use of new research knowledge? What is needed to monetize or mobilize research knowledge? How do we ensure that there is sovereignty over Indigenous data, for example? What kind of Indigenous research protocols currently exist and what protocols should be addressed?

In what ways can new research be a catalyst to Indigenous economic transformation and wellbeing? What new value creation models are needed by Indigenous communities to ensure that their research has full opportunities to be mobilized?

3 - Discussion Questions:

1. How can Indigenous businesses, communities, and Nations use knowledge to increase Indigenous innovation-focused research? Apply innovation-focused research?
2. How can post-secondary institutions ensure that their ethical guidelines and protocols guarantee that Indigenous people and organizations approve and retain ownership and control over research?
3. How can knowledge be mobilized as a catalyst to Indigenous economic transformation and improved community wellbeing?
4. What are one or two concrete, implementable actions that can serve to create knowledge transfer and mobilization strategies? What is Luminary's role?

Overarching Final Questions for all Thematic Groups:

1. Do you have any comments or advice on the other 7 themes?
2. What else would you add to this discussion? What needs to be addressed?

4. Identifying and Supporting Indigenous Business Innovation Needs, Priorities and Clusters

Moving forward, one issue is a lack of capacity on the part of Indigenous businesses to advance applications for funding for their own research and development needs. It is important to understand capacity needs in the Indigenous context as it relates to their ability to articulate a research agenda and seek funds to support it. Many Indigenous communities are ‘treading water’, pre-occupied with deep social issues which are eclipsing their ability to think in longer or strategic terms. Charter partners will want to explore ‘workarounds’ to address these capacity issues as well as put their minds to other impediments to knowledge mobilization and innovation.

There is also an opportunity to explore possibilities for innovation hubs based on sectoral clusters. These are issues and challenges that cut across Indigenous businesses and communities and lead us to ask... How could these be organized as research clusters? What kind of outreach is needed to reach businesses and economic development corporations? How could Indigenous national and regional organizations be aligned and supported on an innovation agenda, and how could they in turn grow their research activity?

Context Setting

What new capacities and strategies could be considered by Indigenous communities in order to be able to grow research projects which support their goals for nation building? How can Indigenous communities and Nations work together to grow and support more impactful research collaborations and innovation strategies. How can these partnerships be scaled so that they achieve incremental economic transformation and wellbeing?

How can post secondary research organizations support Indigenous efforts to develop multi community or multination research and innovation strategies? What are some ways that research institutions can organize their efforts in ways to bring stronger ROI to Indigenous communities and Nations?

4 - Discussion Questions:

1. How can researchers understand what Indigenous businesses want addressed in their pursuit of innovation?
2. Are there ways for Indigenous communities / Nations to collaborate on research and innovation strategies?
3. How can post-secondary institutions engage in or facilitate multi community / Nation collaborations for innovative research.
4. What are one or two concrete, implementable actions that can serve to identify and support Indigenous Business innovation needs, priorities, and clusters? What is Luminary’s role?

Overarching Final Questions for all Thematic Groups:

1. Do you have any comments or advice on the other 7 themes?
2. What else would you add to this discussion? What needs to be addressed?

5. Growing Indigenous Research Talent

There are insufficient numbers of Indigenous researchers in place and no human resource strategies to develop this research talent. In general, we know very little about the career trajectories of Indigenous researchers and what motivates them to complete their education and choose research as a preferred career.

It is important for Charter partners to understand the drivers for young people to get into a research career and whether and how their research pathways were influenced by factors such as their desire to 'give back' to their communities. If we could uncover more information about this and other motives it would be powerful in aiding our understanding about the underlying reasons why an Indigenous person would choose research as a career path. It would also help us to encourage more Indigenous youth to follow this career in the future.

Context Setting

The data about Indigenous research personnel is poor. There seem to be little available data about the numbers of Indigenous Masters and PhD students enrolled in post-secondary colleges, universities and polytechnics? It is difficult to determine how many of these students are enrolled in business-related faculty etc. How important is this data either for Indigenous communities or post-secondary institutions? Who should be trying to gather up this information?

New Zealand has set some goals about the number of Maori PhD's that it hopes to graduate in the coming years. Among various reasons, this is premised on the strategy that more research talent is needed to advance Indigenous research. Should Canada be opting for such a strategy to grow Indigenous research talent and if so, how?

Many post-secondary research institutions are grappling with the question about how to decolonize? Others are focusing on how to indigenize. How are these the same or different to you? What supports do you think are needed to ensure that today's post-secondary institutions are better able to attract Indigenous interest to pursue careers as researchers?; meet their cultural needs and/ or acquire the professional development skills needed to play leadership roles inside research institutions?

5 - Discussion Questions:

1. What would be the value in developing a database of Indigenous graduate and post-graduate scholars, especially those enrolled in, or graduated from, business-related disciplines?
2. How can Canada learn from, emulate, or apply the New Zealand approach of setting goals for the number of Indigenous PhD graduates in coming years? What would be required to adopt this kind of strategy?
3. What do post-secondary institutions need to do to attract Indigenous students who will focus on innovative research?
4. What are one or two concrete, implementable actions that can serve to grow Indigenous research talent? What is Luminary's role?

Overarching Final Questions for all Thematic Groups:

1. Do you have any comments or advice on the other 7 themes?
2. What else would you add to this discussion? What needs to be addressed?

6. Building Indigenous Leadership and Institutional Capacity for Research and Innovation

The current research ecosystem has been developed and built up by western institutions which are deeply premised in western thinking, western values, and western constructs. Indigenous people look at the world in unique ways and these Indigenous worldviews fundamentally shape what is important, what is included, and what kind of research should be undertaken, and how. Indigenous people are looking for ways to grow their presence in existing institutions and to shape the research ecosystem to their own ends.

Indigenous people are also looking to create their own institutions and create new ecosystems in their own image. How do we decolonize and indigenize existing research and innovation institutions and how do we support Indigenous educational institutions to expand their research capacity, programming and funding? What kind of research is currently being conducted by Indigenous academic institutions? What challenges and opportunities do they face? What role does leadership play to drive these changes and how will things look ten or twenty years out if successful.

Context Setting

What are some research areas that Indigenous people can achieve a strong presence and influence?

Should Indigenous nations be building their own research funding agencies? How would these institutions be established and introduced? Should existing research agencies establish budgets set aside for Indigenous research?

How can Indigenous communities and Nations establish their own research enterprises? How can the overhead be paid for these enterprises? To what extent is the establishment of Indigenous research enterprises important?

What kind of changes need to be made to support an Indigenous research and innovation ecosystem? How can we support Indigenous-led initiatives and capacity building?

6 - Discussion Questions:

1. What gaps exist where Indigenous researchers are needed to shape, decolonize, and indigenize the academic approach to research?
2. What would be required for Indigenous Nations/Institutions to establish their own research entities and build their capacity?
3. What is required for post-secondary institutions to meaningfully support Indigenous research and innovation ecosystems.
4. What are one or two concrete, implementable actions that can serve to build Indigenous leadership and institutional capacity for research and innovation? What is Luminary's role?

Overarching Final Questions for all Thematic Groups:

1. Do you have any comments or advice on the other 7 themes?
2. What else would you add to this discussion? What needs to be addressed?

7. Indigenous Curriculum, Knowledge and Student Support Strategies

Students enrolled in today's campuses often have little exposure to Indigenous contributions to knowledge. We are just now seeing business schools across the country beginning to include examples and illustrations of Indigenous business development. A few years ago, there was virtually no inclusion of these developments in university and college curricula. Indigenous students attending our top education institutions today are still grappling with how these institutions are responding to their own culture and how curricula are relevant to their own journey as a people preoccupied by themes such as nation-building, sovereignty, and self-determination as their destinations. What does Indigenous curriculum development look like in today's post-secondary institutions and what is the process of co-creating it and embedding it into the value offer of today's institutions. How can we redefine the supports needed for Indigenous students so that they pursue academic, and research careers which are relevant to their own lives and communities? Where does the theme of innovation fit in the context of these questions?

A related issue facing many business schools is how to attract Indigenous students into business education, develop and share appropriate pedagogy models and approaches and help support those students seeking to advance their research acumen and pursue MA and PhD's. Addressing this issue is a pipeline approach to developing and growing research talent by focusing attention at the front end of the spectrum, namely increasing undergraduate participation. Many schools are exploring how 'Indigenous curriculum and case studies' can be incorporated into the mainstream education of all commerce students.

Context Setting

How can Business schools attract Indigenous students into business education and support their development? What are the strategies that communities and the Indigenous business community adopt to better respond to Business schools attraction strategies? Are there particular opportunities to grow strengths of Indigenous numbers in different faculties? If so, which faculties and how?

How do we grow more Indigenous participation in today's post-secondary institutions? Should we be supporting Indigenous institutions in specific ways? Are there opportunities for colleges, universities and polytechnics to work together to grow Indigenous student numbers and ensure that students complete their programs? What could be the policy and strategy drivers to significantly increase Indigenous enrollment in post-secondary institutions? What are the curriculum and pedagogy issues facing business schools? How we facilitate opportunities to grow Indigenous knowledge? What is the current state of knowledge?

7 - Discussion Questions:

1. What support, resources, or processes are required for post-secondary institutions to attract Indigenous students?
2. Are there ways for post-secondary institutions to collaborate to attract and retain Indigenous students through to graduation?
3. How can business schools integrate Indigenous knowledge into their curriculum and pedagogy?
4. What are one or two concrete, implementable actions that can serve to address Indigenous curriculum, knowledge, and student support strategies? What is Luminary's role?

Overarching Final Questions for all Thematic Groups:

1. Do you have any comments or advice on the other 7 themes?
2. What else would you add to this discussion? What needs to be addressed?

8. Economic Transformation, Employment and Wellbeing: Evaluation and Measurement

We all know innovation is important but how important is it to Indigenous economies and to the Canadian economy? How do we even define innovation in the Indigenous context? It is a given that Indigenous people have unique world views, and they bring originality and creativity to their traditional economies and way of life. Historically, Indigenous innovations have shaped their ability to survive and prosper in places which others might otherwise describe as harsh and inhabitable.

In the modern world and particularly the business world, we do not yet see such a culture of innovation among Indigenous businesses and local economies. The evolution and identification of Indigenous entrepreneurship is an emerging story that thus far has had many successes. The evolution of commercial innovation in the Indigenous business and economic context is still in a nascent state. What could be achieved by way of jobs, business development and increased wellbeing if this culture of commercial innovation were truly embraced and nurtured by the Indigenous business community? What could be the return on investment (ROI) of an Indigenous innovation strategy and what could be the transformative impact?

Context Setting

What could be the impacts of a concerted effort to grow Indigenous research collaborations and innovation strategies, both for Indigenous economies and wellbeing and for Canada as a whole?

What do we mean by wellbeing? What is the Indigenous views of wellbeing and how can innovation improve wellbeing? What could be some success measurements 5 or 10 years into the future of strategies to grow Indigenous research collaboration and innovation strategies? If we were 10 years in the future and looking back what would we say 'were' the top three or four policy pieces that we're introduced to achieve these incremental gains?

What could some of the characteristics of Indigenous transformation be in the context of the drive toward increased research collaborations and innovation strategies? What are the overall changes that need to be made to the current Indigenous research ecosystem to better achieve transformative growth in Economic development and wellbeing?

8 - Discussion Questions:

1. How can a strategy for innovative Indigenous research meaningfully impact socio-economic indicators and wellbeing of Indigenous communities and Nations?
2. What measurements can be used to gauge the impact of Indigenous research collaboration and innovation strategies?
3. What needs to change in the current Indigenous research eco-system to increase innovation-focused Indigenous research?
4. What are one or two concrete, implementable actions that can serve to address economic transformation, employment, and wellbeing? What is Luminary's role?

Overarching Final Questions for all Thematic Groups:

1. Do you have any comments or advice on the other 7 themes?
2. What else would you add to this discussion? What needs to be addressed?