Signal49 RESEARCH

Ready to Export? A Conversation With Indigenous Exporters and Ecosystem Leaders

Speakers

- Alicia Hussain, Senior Research Associate, Indigenous & Northern Communities, Signal49 Research
- Matthew Foss, Vice-President of Research & Public Policy, Canadian Council for Indigenous Business
- Dawn Madahbee Leach, General Manager, Waubetek Business Corporation
- Anthony Wingham, Co-Founder & Chief Operating Officer, Nuez Acres
- Kevin Rose, Chief Strategy Officer, National Aboriginal Capital Corporation Association
- Magnolia Perron, Director, Strategy & Partnerships, National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association (NACCA)

Transcript

00:010-1:30:47

Alicia Hussain, 00:02-00:53

Hello, everyone, and welcome to the Ready to Export webinar. My name is, and I'm a senior research associate here at the at Signal49 Research, working on the Indigenous and Northern Communities team. I had the privilege of leading the Indigenous SME Exporters Research Project that has brought us here today. Thank you for joining us for this conversation about what export readiness looks like for Indigenous businesses and what can help businesses that choose to pursue international markets do so successfully? A quick note that this event is being recorded.

Alicia Hussain, 0:55-1:56

Signal49 Research is an independent applied research organization. Our Indigenous and Northern Communities team conducts research with and for Indigenous communities, organizations, and businesses to support evidence-based decision making. Signal49 Research is a virtual organization, so I want to acknowledge the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples who have cared for and

governed these lands and waters long before Canada's borders took form. At Signal49 Research, we are committed to working respectfully with Indigenous partners and supporting Indigenous rights, priorities, and decision making. For today's conversation, we also want to recognize the long history of indigenous trade, economic relationships, and entrepreneurship that predates European settlement and continues today.

Alicia Hussain, 1:59-3:43

So, for today's webinar, I'll begin with a brief overview of the research. Then we'll move into what I think will be the heart of the session-a panel conversation bringing together different indigenous and ecosystem perspectives on what export readiness really looks like in practice. We'll then open the floor for audience questions before closing with a a few final remarks. So, I'm going to spend the next few minutes giving you the highlights of the research, but it's not everything in the report. You're more than welcome to read the final report online, if you if you if you so choose. All right. So, before getting to the findings, I want to share a bit about our research approach. Our findings draw from Statistics Canada's 2001 and 2021 census data, which gave us the big picture of Indigenous business participation in export-oriented sectors. The literature and policy review showed us what was already known about Indigenous exports, where the gaps were, and what we needed to really explore further. We conducted 15 ecosystem interviews that included educators in export trading programs, representatives from trade and business support organizations, and governments or policy stakeholders. The ecosystem interviews helped us really understand how the support system works.

Alicia Hussain, 3:43-5:39

Lastly, we conducted six case studies of Indigenous-owned and operated businesses that have been exporting internationally. The project was guided by the Truth and Reconciliation Call to Action 92, Section two, and supported through the Government of Canada's Future Skills Program. Right, so the six case studies looked at businesses in different sectors, places, ownership models, and stages of exporting. They're not meant to represent all Indigenous businesses, but they show how export readiness can look different across First Nations, Inuit, and Métis contexts. We were also very fortunate to be guided by a six-member research advisory board with expertise in indigenous business development, exporting, finance, training, and public policy. So, I want to take us this opportunity to acknowledge Sebastian Dinoye Picard, Matthew Foss, King. Lim, R. J. Ramerton, Kevin Rose, and Caroline Tompkins for their generous guidance and insight throughout the entire project. It was such a pleasure to work closely with them and learn from from them as well. Indigenous entrepreneurship is growing fast, but exporting has not kept pace. Our research found that 7.2% of Indigenous SMEs export, compared with 12.1% of non-Indigenous Canadian SMEs overall.

Alicia Hussain, 5:39-6:46

We found that indigenous businesses are already succeeding globally. The question is for indigenous businesses that choose to export: How do we help more of them get there, and not just get there, but flourish once they do? One of the clearest findings was that training and readiness are not the same thing. Skills are knowing what to do. Capability is being able to apply those skills in real market conditions. Readiness, on the other hand, is when there is enough evidence for buyers, lenders, and other partners to have confidence that the business can deliver and manage the risks. The case study businesses showed that there is no single pathway to export readiness. Governance, sector, geography, infrastructure, and relationships-big, big emphasis on relationships all affect what delivery, stability, and risk might look like.

Alicia Hussain, 6:47-8:57

The core expectations may be similar, but how businesses demonstrate them can be very, very different. The research pointed to six practical actions: separate training from readiness assessment, create opportunities to test the market, use criteria that fit different sectors and governance models, invest in strong long-term relationships, improve referrals and coordination, and use trade missions to better understand risk before scaling. Together, those actions are about making capability visible, matching support to the business, and helping businesses get the right support when real opportunities actually present itself, the research showed a real need for a shared way to talk about export readiness. The 3d's placemat reflects what Indigenous businesses and ecosystem partners told us in in the project, it centers on three questions: Can the business deliver? Can it keep delivering? And what reduces risk for partners? These are what we're calling demonstration, durability, and de-risking. So, it is not a scorecard or a single pathway, it gives people a common language for discussing readiness using evidence that can range from contracts and finances to experience, relationships, and a strong, you know, track record. Even Those findings leave us with three questions for the panel: What signals readiness? What helps businesses sustain momentum? And what reduces risk? The research gave us the three Ds framework.

Alicia Hussain, 8:58-9:43

The panel gives us a chance to test it a little bit against real experience. So, we have a great panel with us today. Sorry, they're bringing perspectives from indigenous business, finance, policy, and economic development. It gives us a chance to hear how export readiness is understood and experienced from different from several different sides of the table. I'm extending a very warm welcome to our five panelists today: Anthony Wingham, Patrick Hunter, Dawn Mattabie Leach, Matthew Foss, and Magnolia Piron.

Alicia Hussain, 9:43-13:05

Welcome to all of you. Kevin Rose from the National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association was originally on our schedule as a panelist, but he is unfortunately unwell today and sends his regrets. So let me introduce you to Anthony Wingham, who brings governance, entrepreneurship, and hands-on export experience. He is president of Métis Nation British Columbia. Congrats, Anthony, on that new and important position. Anthony is co-founder and COO of Newest Acres. He has supported Indigenous businesses with export readiness and market development. A quick note: Anthony will need to leave us during the event, but he has offered us his email address. If you have any questions for him afterwards, thank you, Anthony. I'd like to introduce Patrick Hunter. He is an award-winning Two Spirit Ojibwe artist, graphic designer, and entrepreneur, who work who whose work reaches international audiences through collaborations, licensing, digital sales, and teaching. Patrick is also the most recent artist to have a collectible coin with the Royal Canadian Mint. So very warm congratulations on that big achievement, Patrick. I'd like to introduce you to Dawn Mattabie Leach. She is a general manager of Waubetek Business Corporation and founder and president of Indigenous Business International. She also chairs the National Indigenous Economic Development Board and helped lead the development of the first National Indigenous Economic Strategy for Canada. Dawn brings decades of experience in Indigenous business development, finance, policy, and international economic opportunities. I'd like to introduce you now to Matthew Foss. He is the vice president of research and public policy at the Canadian Council for Indigenous Business, and brings more than 25 years of experience in public policy, research, and Indigenous economic development. Matthew's work includes international trade, procurement, and Indigenous entrepreneurship, giving him a strong perspective on the policy and system conditions that shape business growth. It's my pleasure to introduce Magnolia Piron, who is the director of strategy and partnerships at the National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association, where she works to advance Indigenous entrepreneurship and economic development. She brings experience in policy research, program development, advocacy, and strategic partnerships, and was recognized as a 2024 Ottawa 40 Under 40 recipient for her leadership and contributions to Indigenous and business communities. Very warm welcome to all of you.

Alicia Hussain, 13:08-13:26

Okay, so I just wanted to open up the discussion right now to the panel. I'd like to start with a quick question. Please tell us where you sit in the Indigenous export ecosystem and the perspective you bring to today's conversation. Let's start with Anthony.

Anthony Wingham, 13:28-14:17

Well, hello everyone. Tanse, Anthony Nasika, soon Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, Chinye, Langley, B.C. Now we can near Mitchif Hello. My name is Anthony Wing. I'm originally from Prince Albert. I

live, work, and play here in Langley, B.C. I am the co-founder and COO of Nuas Acres. We are Canada's only Indigenous pecan oil producer. We have committed our mission to the water waste and the beauty industry. More recently, I've also been the export advisor for Export Navigator. That's a program in British Columbia where I was supporting Indigenous-owned businesses on their export journey, and then also dabbled a little bit on the East Coast with Jelly Academy and teaching export and AI. So really embracing some of those AI tools and seeing how they can support some of our exporters as they explore the world. But really happy to be here and looking forward to the conversation.

Alicia Hussain, 14:24-14:28

Thank you, Anthony. Can we hear from Patrick?

Patrick Hunter, 14:34-15:44

Hey, everybody! It's Patrick Hunter here. Yeah, looking forward to a chat with you all. I feel like I'm kind of I'm always oscillating between like wanting to export more and wanting to export less, given the state of the world at the moment. But I think at you know at the very least, I really was kind of turning. Off that feature on my website to export, you know, it really just kind of makes you look around at who's, you know, in with you or you know your peers in, you know, makes you want to collaborate a little bit more with people that are around or in your orbit, sort of thing. So I've, you know, leaned into folks at the Canadian Council for Indigenous Business, also you know queer councils as well for business. So, it's I'm always kind of I feel like I'm a little bit on. I don't export as much, but I I'm happy to be on the panel and part of the convo.

Alicia Hussain, 15:49-15:57

Thank you so much, Patrick. I think you're in the right spot, and I'd like to give an opportunity to Dawn now.

Dawn Madahbee Leach, 15:59-19:26

Hi everyone, Ivan Dishnakawas Ghag. So I am the general manager of the Waubetek Business Development Corporation, which is an Indigenous financial institution, and we've helped support exporters from the region that we serve in in northern Ontario, so I've been involved in export and in supporting our the businesses from our region. I've also been participating with the Asian Pacific Foundation of Canada on supporting women in trade and and and helping to put together a collective of Indigenous women from across Canada to become involved in trade missions,

especially throughout the Indo-Pacific region. I'm also on the Asian Business Leaders Advisory Council, which is is really interesting because I've been really learning about that market. But one of the things is that many Asian countries really enjoy working with indigenous people from Canada, so they always like to have the point of view that I bring about in our the capacity of our indigenous businesses, which is really a tremendous capacity. I've also worked for on many projects with the OECD over the years, and trying to ensure that Indigenous people are involved in in all aspects of economic development, including trade and export. And I've been on the Global Affairs Canada's Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group, as well as on the iTrade Group, since it started, I believe in 2017, 2018, around there, and through that, those advisory groups, I've helped with the development of the Indigenous Peoples Economic Cooperation and Trade Arrangement, to help come up with all of the wording in that, we worked with our international partners from Australia, New Zealand, and Taiwan to develop the we call it IPEDCA for short. And I've also helped to develop the Indigenous chapter or the chapter on Indigenous Peoples and Trade for all of Canada's free trade agreements that we are advancing globally, so we always try to ensure that this full chapter is included in all Canada's free trade agreements with other countries, and we have had it included in several recent free trade agreements. So we're pretty happy about that, and I'm also part of. I'm called the Canadian patron for the Indigenous Women's in Industry Network, which is a global network of Indigenous women. And we just both Magnolia and I just came off our the second international conference where we had a lot of Indigenous women from 13 countries. I think there were 300 get together to talk about export and trade. So that I've been a real supporter and directly involved in that kind of network. So yeah, I have a pretty varied background in supporting Indigenous people in export and trade. Thank you, Igwetch.

Alicia Hussain, 19:27-19:37

Fantastic to have you here, Dawn. Harry, I'd like to have Matthew respond. Thank you.

Matthew Foss, 19:38-20:54

Thanks, Alicia. Pleasure to be with you here today. As mentioned, I'm vice president of research and public policy with Planning Council for Indigenous Business, member of the Métis Nation of Alberta, and looking to work out a Treaty Six territory in Edmonton. And like Dawn, I've been involved in a lot of the discussions around trade and development of. Our trade agreements and that, and Dawn has been really instrumental in making sure that a lot of that gets pushed into language that actually sticks in the agreements. And so I do want to call out and acknowledge her work in regards to that. At Ghanaian Council for Indigenous Business, one of the things that we've been actively involved in is studying trade, and been involved in writing several reports related to indigenous businesses involved in trade, and also a report on some of the trade policy recommendations that that come out of some of the work that has gone on with committees such as the ones that Dawn has mentioned,

and that, and so certainly a pleasure to be here, and certainly a shout out to the two entrepreneurs that are on our panel that are members of ours and have been very successful.

Alicia Hussain, 21:00-21:05

Wonderful to have you here, Matthew. Great, and last but not least, Magnolia.

Magnolia Perron, 21:08-23:43

Thanks so much. It's so nice to be here and step in in Kevin's absence. I'm Magnolia Peron, director of strategy and partnerships at NACA. I've been with the organization for about six and a half years, I've spent a lot of that time working on programs and initiatives to support Indigenous women and youth entrepreneurs. A quick acknowledgement to Anthony-he spent the last couple of years serving on NACA's Indigenous Youth Business Advisory Council. His term just recently concluded, but really just want to acknowledge his contributions. So a little bit about NACA. We're a national Indigenous organization. We're headquartered here in Ottawa, Ontario, on traditional Algonquin territory. We're actually celebrating 30 years this year that we've been around, we're a membership-based organization, and our members are Indigenous financial institutions, and many of them are celebrating 3540, years that they've been established to support First Nations, Métis, and Inuit businesses, and of course, Dawn, as the general manager of Waba Tech Development Corporation, is one of over 50 Indigenous financial institutions that we have coast to coast to coast. Really, NACA's role in the ecosystem is to support our Indigenous financial institutions as well as promote Indigenous business development in Canada, our Indigenous financial institutions provide developmental lending and business support services to Indigenous entrepreneurs across the country. We really support on the financing side of the ecosystem, and we work with indigenous businesses at various stages of growth, from you know ideation, startup to expansion, including those that are looking to expand beyond local and regional markets into national or international opportunities. So we you know we see the realities businesses face when trying to access capital, manage risk, and scale operations to meet those export demands. So, yeah, that's a little bit about NACA's role. It's really about the advocacy, building capacity, and administering programs that provide capital to Indigenous businesses to start and grow.

Alicia Hussain, 23:43-25:01

Thank you so much, Magnolia. You know it's super interesting that I did not realize how connected you all were. You're all from very different parts of the ecosystem, and I brought you together for this panel discussion for very different reasons, but so connected, right? These reasons are so connected, and I think it's a testament to, you know, the usefulness of a strong ecosystem and what that can do. So thank you all for being here. So I'm gonna go. Let's do round one of questions. So

let's start then with readiness itself. When an export opportunity appears, what tells you that a business is actually ready to pursue it, not simply interested in exporting but able to deliver. So, Anthony, thinking back to the U.S. opportunity for newest acres that launched you into the world of exporting, and feel free to give the audience some context about that. What gave you confidence? Business could act on it.

Anthony Wingham, 25:04-26:11

Yeah, I really appreciate that question, and that's kind of what we we look back as one of our big milestones. So for us, we are a pandemic baby. So as we were starting up this business idea, we were bringing up three kgs of pecans from my wife's family's farm in Mexico, and the entire world was shutting down, so we really had to pivot on how we could get our product to market. We were able to use local farmers markets, so we were able to establish a bit of presence in local farmers markets. And then, as the world started to open up a bit, obviously our location where we are, we're in Vancouver area, so we have the world always coming to us, so as we kind of spent a couple years in the farmers markets, we were noticing a lot of USA buyers were coming to our farmers markets and then purchasing online at our Shopify store. So using kind of some of that data, we started following that data back to certain parts of the United States where we were seeing a lot of the buyers there, and that's where we were able to be introduced to the Trade Commissioner Service as well, where we were able to do a trade mission. So it was kind of marketed as reigniting those traditional trade routes.

Anthony Wingham, 26:11-27:37

So we went down to Arizona to do some trade missions down there, and then really were able to build up the support from the ecosystem. So just as you mentioned, you know the connection with a lot of the members on the panel here, or what allowed us to really have that success there. But really, it came from, you know, as you think about exporting, you really have to have that success in your own backyard. You know, if you're looking at jumping into United States or other markets, you shouldn't be taking the cash flow from our your business to try to make that work. You should have a good strong backyard where you have a really good buying opportunities there. So that's kind of where we got the confidence in ourselves, and then wrapping ourselves around with the trade commissioner service, we were able to get some of that trade service data online, and then obviously the biggest piece with the indigenous businesses and even businesses that are exporting that financial support, so being able to be connected with one of NACA's IFIs, which was TAC in the Lower Mainland here, Brian Gillespie, we were able to get that funding that we really needed to make that that big jump down in the United States, and then just kind of been building on that with a lot of the supports, even with CCIB, the Canadian Business Institute, as well, a lot of the support there with education. So it's really started with you know following our own data and then looking to the support with the ecosystem partners that really are out there to support us all.

Alicia Hussain, 27:42-28:12

Thank you so much, Anthony. And I know that I did speak with Brian Galepsy from TAC, and he did mention that, like you know, the relationship component before actually helping you. That that relationship was already built and existing. So yeah, thank you for mentioning TAC. All right. So for Patrick, for a creative and digital business, what evidence tells you that the business can reliably take on international opportunities?

Patrick Hunter, 28:16-29:37

That is a great question. I mean, for me, like it's very much me at the helm of everything, so it really just falls onto like whether I want to do it or not. I would say, but you know, as a you know a quite cell phone business that's just me working here. I think sometimes it's easy to decide whether or not you want to work with a national sports team that has a problematic logo, or not. And you know, I think it comes down for, in my case specifically, like to their integrity level. You know, are their actions kind of meeting up with their words? Is is there alignment on that? And that's sort of how I kind of gage whether or not I want to work internationally or not. And you know, I had some trepidation about being on this panel, just because like I don't know if I have enough kind of like exam. of of working internationally, but in in the ways that I have, it's been fruitful in for everybody. And you know, this national sports team is the Chicago Blackhawks.

Patrick Hunter, 29:37-30:37

They were kind of interested in changing their or educating their fans on maybe why their logo might need to change in the future, the communities surrounding their arena, and whatnot. So it was a win-win in the sense that I got to do something really cool that I loved, and then they also got to educate their fans, which really needed to happen. You know they're continuing on that reconciliatory journey, so yeah. I guess personally, like if those visions of the business kind of align, then that's a great indicator that it's the right job to take on. But yeah, I think for larger businesses that are maybe more concerned about bottom lines and you know keeping the lights on and whatnot, maybe there's not that freedom to work with whoever, or work with or not work with whoever they want. You know.

Alicia Hussain, 30:41-31:22

Thank you so much, Patrick. And for our previous like conversations, I know that you're really passionate about education, right? And about you know being able to share truth. And I think that that's a way that that's happening even across borders. And that whole part about integrity definitely

plays a part in that. All right. So my next question is for Dawn. When you are working with an entrepreneur, Dawn, what do you look for beyond training or an export plan.

Dawn Madahbee Leach, 31:25-32:47

Yes, because most people never come to me with any training or any export plan when we're working with an indigenous business looking at trade. So, but we have some resources to help them out. We can, we can definitely help with covering a portion of the cost of somebody to help them with an export plan, for example, training is a little bit tougher, and I'm not sure who actually provides that kind of training, except for maybe Export Development Canada and their trade commissioners do help out with that. But one of the things that right now we've been finding is that, at least in my area, I'm not, and I'm pretty sure it's similar across the country. But 95% of Indigenous exporters have exported to the U.S. because Indigenous people never had a border. We've always traded. We've traded, of course, as well as to South America, and so we were trading long before there were free trade agreements, or you know, definitely any kind of formal export routes. But we did have formal export routes in the Great Lakes, down the Mississippi, in the Rio Grande and all of these areas, so we did have an extensive trade routes going on.

Dawn Madahbee Leach, 32:47-36:12

So it's natural, very natural, that our people have always traded throughout that area. But now, of course, there's it's a little bit more complicated, and so when a client comes to us. We see what kind of research they've done or what their existing trade experience is, if they have any. Have they had the trademark or patent their materials? Again, we can help them with that. We can help them go in the right direction when it comes to that. But maybe they already know, did some research and what kind of interest there is from international buyers, or can they produce the needed volume that they may need to have as well? So those are some of the things. But I like to share in one great example that happened recently. We have Beam Paints, owned by Anang Beam, who is she produces organic paints for artwork, and she's done a tremendous job. She was both of her parents are Indigenous artists, First Nation artists from Manitoulin Island, and so she grew up learning how to make paints through her father from the colors around us, the natural roots and leaves and everything else that we have locally. So she produces those, and still, and she started using Shopify, and then through chapters, she was we helped her to expand through those networks, and then more recently, after some of these, the interest we've seen from trade in the Asian countries, and she had somebody interested from Taiwan to purchase her paints, and so we, I introduced her to the Asian Pacific Foundation of Canada, as they organize trade missions, and they're always interested in including more Indigenous women in these trade missions. So she attended, but first she I encourage her to attend the Canadian Women's International Network that is. Also, it's hosted by the Asian Pacific Foundation of Canada, and I encouraged her to enter a contest, and she did to sell her product, make a sales pitch in front of the conference, and she won, and she won business ticket to

anywhere in Asia. So they liked her presentation so much that they included her in the big Asian trade mission that Canada had. I believe it was in June. So she went there first. She didn't have to use her ticket yet, but she was supported as one of the businesses that would promote her product there. And wow, lo and behold, she made built a partnership in Japan, and then she used her ticket to fly back to Japan this past weekend for the launch of her product there, and over half of her product sold out already the first day. So it was really amazing for her to make that contact, and she's also visiting her partner in Taiwan, who's looking to purchase and sell her product there too.

Dawn Madahbee Leach, 36:12-37:12

So, of course, the other thing that we are able to do as an indigenous financial institution is we have funding available to support her using a trade lawyer to help her with all of her trade agreements that she has and her partnership agreements, so we have non-repayable funds available to help her to develop or hire you know experts in those fields to help her. So all Indigenous financial institutions across Canada can provide that support on the legal side, or accounting, financial, or consulting side as well, or environmental side. So, you know, those are some of the things like real opportunities that can happen. And I'm so very proud of all of the Indigenous people. Like for her to travel across the world by herself is really something from small Manitoulin Island in northern Ontario, and to be so successful in the work that she's doing.

Alicia Hussain, 37:15-37:38

I feel as though, like sometimes with export with small businesses, it's it's really a matter of whose office you walk you walk into, and if they're willing to sit down and sort of like sit down and say you know what do you need what do I envision for you as well, so it's not like a one sided conversation you know so, yeah.

Dawn Madahbee Leach, 37:38-37:49

yeah I think having that history with her helped for sure, and knowing that she carries out everything that she does, and she does her homework too.

Alicia Hussain, 37:52-38:03

It's wonderful. Thank you, Dawn. All right. So, Magnolia, what evidence gives a lender confidence that the opportunity is viable, and financing can help move it forward.

Magnolia Perron, 38:05-39:37

Yeah, thanks for the question. I'll try not to repeat too much of what Dawn shared as one of our indigenous financial institutions, but I think overall, from a lender perspective, confidence comes from the evidence. So that could be looking for you know strong management within the business, sound financial performance, cash flow management, a clearly defined opportunity. I think what Dawn just reminded me of though, like you you may not have an entrepreneur come through your doors that you know meets all of Those boxes, and it's part of our role at NACA and through our Indigenous financial institutions to help entrepreneurs build those skills, connect with the right partners, access legal support, and so on and so forth. So it was a really good reminder. I think it's one thing to have an interest in exporting. It's another, you know, to demonstrate that the business can, you know, meet buyer expectations, scale production or service delivery, manage the logistics, and really just to continue operating successfully while taking on these new opportunities, I also really liked what Anthony shared, and I think what like resonated with me and what I've heard from other Indigenous businesses that are getting into export and trade, really about you know starting small and growing slowly.

Magnolia Perron, 39:38-41:27

You know, he shared whether that's through like farmers markets or you know, through e-commerce, and then moving into trade missions and building those relationships and connect connections and accessing support from different organizations. I think that's what's really important, and it's going to result in the most success for the business on the financing side. I think you know financing is most effective when it's tied to a specific growth opportunity, and when there's evidence that the business has the capacity and experience to execute on that opportunity successfully. You know, getting an opportunity is one thing, but being able to keep moving and adapting and growing is another thing. So I guess yeah. Just to summarize, like you know, what a lender is probably looking for things like market demand. Is the entrepreneur or business export ready in terms of operations, staffing, logistics, legal considerations, customer support, and if not, how do we get them there? Financial viability: is this opportunity going to, you know, generate revenues, profit? Is it financially sustainable? Risk management: like, what could go wrong, and how can we mitigate that? And really, that ability to execute, which you know may come from experience or capacity or partnerships, and I think what's really unique about our indigenous financial institutions is that because they're you know located in the communities that they serve and they have really close relationships with those communities and with their clients or possible clients.

Magnolia Perron, 41:27-42:03

They really get to know the person, and I think that's what Dawn’s comment at the end was alluding to. It's really you know looking at the person's like character and in you know do they have that

passion and perseverance to even if they don't meet all of those things, but you know they have the right attitude and right mindset? Like we can help get them there. So I think that's like how I would answer this question and where I'll leave things for now. But thanks. It's really interesting to talk about.

Alicia Hussain, 42:05-42:33

Wonderful, thank you, Magnolia. And it sounds like building trust is really important when you come to like when you come to an institution or a financial institution as somebody from the community. That trust that already exists in trust is very important to have to be there. All right. So Matthew, do different parts of the ecosystem sometimes mean different things when they use the term export ready?

Matthew Foss, 42:36-43:40

Yeah, absolutely. And I think you've heard a little bit of this in the conversations already with respect to what some of the financial institutions are looking for with respect to you know how what's your what are your financial situations how well are you managing some of your risks and that and what your management plan is has got in place from the entrepreneur looking at really where is my market and do I feel confident that I want to get into that marketplace and do I have good relationships established with respect to the parties that I need to be involved in, not just the buyer but also the support agencies or my lending agencies, and I think some of the other actors in the space, like the Trade Commissioner Services, and that are as well looking for how much of your homework have you done with respect to understanding the marketplace and building some of those relationships.

Matthew Foss, 43:41-45:22

On the other side, you also have programs and that that are in place that will have different criteria for what makes you eligible for these for the programs and that often focused around size and scale of your business, and that, and how much ramp up capacity do you have, and that, but I think a lot of it is missed with respect to how important the relationships are, and the relationships that matter, and I think you heard a little bit of that in the conversation already with respect to how well do how well do I relate to my financial institution? Do they understand me well? Are they ready to support me? And do they have my back with respect to that? How well do I know my buyer? And so, yeah, export readiness varies quite rapid across which perspective you're looking at it from, but I think often indigenous businesses, because they do tend to be smaller businesses, tend to miss a lot of the. The obvious metrics in terms of scale and size that are often looked at with respect to export

readiness, when in fact a lot of times there's a demand pull for our products that gives us an upper hand towards those export markets that is often underexplored.

Alicia Hussain, 45:28-45:42

Wonderful, thank you, Matthew. And you brought up the pull, and sometimes there's the push. There's a push and the pull, and this is something that we talked about in the research in terms of readiness. Did you want to say a few words about that?

Matthew Foss, 45:44-47:17

Well, yeah, and I think like a lot of the programs and supports that are out there are really geared towards pushing products into new markets, and that and getting exporters ready to push their products into new markets and find new places to sell, and our experience with a lot of indigenous entrepreneurs is that somebody has found their product, or been introduced to them, and wants to pull it into their marketplace as opposed to being pushed in. And so that there is that gap between having those supports and that are ready for indigenous entrepreneurs that are have products that people want and are asking for them and getting them situated to be able to supply those products as opposed to taking a successful business and looking for new markets for it, which is a very different service provision. I think you heard a little bit of that from Dawn's answer with respect to some of the work that that went on to help get that the artists and those paints into new markets, and that somebody found them and wanted them, and that wasn't so much that we had to get her ready to be an exporter, but and look for a marketplace, but rather get her ready as an exporter to a market that's already been found for her.

Alicia Hussain, 47:22-47:50

Thank you, Matthew. All right, thanks everyone for responding to that. Let's move to round two. All right, so getting an export opportunity is one thing. Being able to remain an exporter and flourish is another thing. So, Dawn, let's start with you. Where do businesses most often get stuck between having an opportunity and getting the support they need?

Dawn Madahbee Leach, 47:51-48:59

Well, first of all, especially now with the changing times, it's been very, very difficult because, of course, Canada's focused on diversifying trade, so people are having to pivot from their any trade that they've been focused on since maybe they started their business. So not being aware of some of those other global markets-that's a that would be something kind of scary for anybody to be

looking at diversifying your own kind of trade when you don't really know those markets, and sometimes there's language barriers, and it's very difficult, and some aren't familiar with the trade processes as well, or how do you affect, for example, your patent in these other countries, your trademarks in these other countries, and but one of the largest impediments is the actual funds needed to participate in in trade missions.

Dawn Madahbee Leach, 49:00-52:08

It can be very, very costly to do that. Flights today are hugely expensive, as well as accommodations to go anywhere. The minimum you would spend is $5,000, and you may come back with nothing from a trade mission. And so, that's a lot of money to pay out, but usually I have to say the cost is usually more than $5,000. So minimum, I mean, would be $5,000 to go on a three or four day trade mission. It'd be very difficult. So having that capital, having that knowledge of those global markets having the not sure about the trade processes either what who can help them because they've already navigated maybe trade in the U.S. but they haven't navigated trade in Europe trade in Asia so those are. Huge, huge areas where all businesses can become stuck, and so. But I think that again, having I've purposely researched out connections for a lot of our people. So, having people I know in the export development offices, the trade commissioners, getting to know them and having to maybe hold their hand, connect by email to be as an intermediary for those clients to connect with those other groups or with well again the Asian Pacific Foundation of Canada. If we're looking in that region particularly, and did you know that there's a lot of indigenous people in throughout Asia? I never knew that until I met with people, the indigenous peoples, the Ainu people of Japan, for example, or the Indigenous Peoples Council of Taiwan. There's a lot of Asian people, and this is something that I would not have known. So now I can connect people with some connections that we have with the indigenous peoples there. I think that that's something that helps, and it's just important that as we refer somebody, it's always good for us to make that connection by email, for one thing, and as we do for anything else, but that helps. We got to do a lot of handholding, and that's what Indigenous financial institutions do more so than your regular bank. I have to say, and but I'm sure that they can help too, but we seem to know well. We know who the Indigenous team is at Export Development Canada, for example, so we can connect them there, start there, and I think that that's one of the areas. But there's a lot of places where businesses can get stuck in the process, but it's always important for them to know that you could start somewhere, and where it is with an indigenous financial institution.

Alicia Hussain, 52:12-52:23

Great, thank you so much, Dawn and Magnolia. When a commercially viable business does not fit standard financing or program criteria. What happens next?

Magnolia Perron, 52:25-54:41

Yeah, good question. Once an indigenous business has identified that market opportunity, the challenge is often not the viability. It's usually access to capital. You know, many indigenous businesses have strong leadership. They have growth potential. They have the contacts or contracts and everything like that. But they may not meet conventional lending criteria due to barriers rooted in historical and ongoing impacts of colonialism. So you know, yeah, what happens when a commercially viable business doesn't fit those standard financing models? This is really where indigenous financial institutions play a critical role. We talked a little bit earlier around that relationship-based lending and deep community knowledge. IFIs assess opportunities more holistically than many, I think, traditional lenders. They recognize strengths that may not be reflected through conventional credit or financing requirements alone. So NACA in the IFI network helped bridge the financing gap by ensuring viable Indigenous businesses are not excluded simply because they don't fit those traditional criteria. We launched a couple years ago a 153 million dollar Indigenous Growth Fund managed by NACA and supported by the government of Canada, BDC, EDC, FCC, and private sector investors as well. And through this Indigenous Growth Fund, additional capital is being deployed to IFIs to expand access to financing for Indigenous businesses across the country, this approach is not necessarily about taking, you know, on unreasonable risk. It's about better understanding the risk. Indigenous financial institutions maintain strong lending practices and have consistently achieved high repayment rates.

Magnolia Perron, 54:41-58:05

I think our repayment rate varies anywhere from 95 to 97% So we're always really proud of that stat. So you know, demonstrates that many Indigenous businesses that may be overlooked by conventional lending models are, in fact, you know, strong credit-worthy borrowers. So, by combining that, you know, due diligence that we do with local knowledge and again relationships with the clients, IFIs help ensure that viable businesses have that access to capital they need to scale and create jobs and pursue market opportunities and contribute to long-term economic prosperity in their communities in Canada. Of course, Indigenous businesses need access to a range of financial partners, whether that is commercial banks, crown corporations, private investors, Indigenous financial institutions. I think we all have an important role to play. I think we just find that often IFIs are uniquely positioned to support Indigenous businesses because of that criteria that often excludes them. Yeah, I mentioned that you know we established this Indigenous Growth Fund, and part of that was to also allow our IFIs to increase the amount of capital available, so that they could do larger loans and expand their financing options for their indigenous businesses and the clients that they support. So I think that's allowing us to support more entrepreneurs and support them with larger projects, and including those that are looking to expand outside of Canada. Since launching the Indigenous Growth Fund, we've done over 114.7 million dollars in investments across the IFIs, which has resulted more in more than 700 loans. So yeah, we're pretty excited about you know being still very early and how that will continue to make capital available to our indigenous

businesses that are including those that are looking to pursue opportunities in export and international markets, and I guess like the last thing I would say is you know access to capital is just you know one part of the equation. Businesses also need access to markets, networks, and relationships. And through NACA's growing work and trade and international partnerships, we're we're also building relationships with other indigenous organizations, institutions, business networks in countries such as New Zealand and Australia and Taiwan, so that we can help create relationships that then create pathways for knowledge sharing, business connections, trade opportunities, and market access for Indigenous businesses. So, yeah, I think it's really about you know combining the access to capital through our IFI, our Indigenous Financial Institution Network, with those strategic partners and trade relationships. That's how we create the conditions for Indigenous businesses to participate more fully in national and international trade.

Alicia Hussain, 58:08-58:38

Great, thank you, Magnolia. So what I'm hearing is, is getting the money is one thing to do what you need to do, but the other thing is there needs to be investment in strategy. How do we use the money? How do we connect with certain folks and organizations? Thank you very much, Matthew. When supports exist, but businesses still have difficulty accessing or using them, where is the disconnect usually?

Matthew Foss, 58:40-59:53

Thanks. There are lots of programs and services out there for businesses that want to get involved in export. That there needs to be many more, and and most of those programs need to be more heavily funded, and that particularly on the capital side. But nevertheless, there is plenty of programs and services out there available. The challenge is often navigating and finding it, and those businesses that have established good relationships with, particularly an institution like their IFI, and that, as Dawn mentioned, that have successfully identified someone who can advocate and support them and make some of those connections is tremendously wonderful and unlocks a lot of opportunities, but often because of the fractured nature of all of these supports that exist, it's hard to find, and it's very challenging for an entrepreneur to know who to reach out to, where to go, how to get answers for different aspects.

Matthew Foss, 59:53-1:00:33

Even often, what are even the questions that need to get asked, and that, and so getting involved with. And building and establishing those relationships with some of your lending institutions, obviously, but also with some of the national organizations or even some of the regional organizations or around to support businesses helps introduce you to folks that you need that are

able to make those connections that help introduce you to those supports and programs and services, but obviously, more assistance with respect to finding those would be helpful to a lot of entrepreneurs.

Alicia Hussain, 1:00:38-1:01:01

Thank you so much, Matthew. So Anthony has he had to leave a little bit early, so my apologies. But Patrick, I'd like to check in with you. What support arrived at the right time for you, or maybe just speak to any challenges that you had with finding support initially? What did that look like?

Patrick Hunter, 1:01:04-1:02:48

There has been no support whatsoever. It's been a lot of like huge swings and you know lots of home runs. I would say with with my business, and I I've honestly never have never navigated trying to find funding for things, so go me. But you know that's not everyone's case. I don't think for sure. And you know a lot of reaction to like what my counterparts on the panel had said as well, where I'm like, oh my gosh, like so cool, didn't know that. And I would say that my reaction is probably true to a lot of other entrepreneurs. We exist sometimes in silos where you know you're also shipping everything, you're making everything, you're doing the social media, you're also trying to learn Excel on the weekends. Like you know, there's just a lot going on where you know trying to navigate systems, or even I would say a lot of First Nations people are like financially risk averse. So you know, trying to find a loan to then support your business to go further. I would depending on what level you're at, like that might just not be something that's even on your radar. But all this said, what I do love about being a business in this country in this present time is, you know, like the amount of like emotional support or like B 2b support from other businesses that are actually just people. You know what I mean?

Patrick Hunter, 1:02:48-1:04:31

Like Indigo Arrows is just Destiny Seymour behind you know creating these beautiful rugs and you know houseware products. You just get to know people behind the businesses, and that's how you kind of lift each other up. I would say a lot of the time. Like, did you know that you know at this tax level, it is you know whatever little, not little, but like whatever thing you're going through with your business that is actually happening in real time, you're able to kind of like disseminate to your friends, and I would say to my other panelists on here, like there needs to be like a concerted effort to like disseminate that information that you all have within your I don't want to say silos, but like within your own organizations in a way that is accessible and digestible, readable. I would say to like, and you know, it's as silly as it does sound. Like an Instagram post does go a long way. An infographic is helpful. You know, there's lots of ways to kind of get the information out there so that

people aren't as like scared to discover what kind of things Waubetek can offer, or you know, people that never have never heard of Naka before, what happens over there? I think there's lots of obviously lots of reaction happening over here to all this, but it's all good. I'm grateful that I'm again on the call and really kind of experience this in real time.

Alicia Hussain, 1:04:35-1:05:24

Thank you so much, Patrick, for being so forthcoming about your experience, and you know we really appreciate that. And also, what I'm hearing, you know, like what I've been hearing in this, like on this project, is the value of mentorship in the business community, in the indigenous business community, in in just sharing, just having a space, or. Are a way, even if it's virtually, to share in experiences and what's worked for one type of business. You know, might be applicable to the next. And I wonder if CCIB or Waubetek is even is sort of involved in maybe building in mentorship opportunities and what that might be looking like these days.

Matthew Foss, 1:05:27-1:06:44

Yeah, certainly. We've got you know networking events and that allow people to make some of those connections. And I think we are also piloting a new program to help connect mentors and mentorees, and to help establish some of those more personal connections in for people that are looking for someone to assist them with certain aspects of their business, or looking for just that overall someone that can help guide them and shape them and so those that are interested in learning more about that are certainly welcome to reach out to us to follow how we how we progress with respect to that although sometimes it's not so easy to match the right people together. As one of the things we've heard quite frequently is, I don't need general business mentoring. I need somebody who understands my journey. I need somebody who has walked a similar path so that I can actually they know what challenges I'm facing.

Alicia Hussain, 1:06:49-1:06:51

Thank you, Matthew. Dawn, did you want to respond?

Dawn Madahbee Leach, 1:06:52-1:08:25

Sure, sure. I really appreciate that, Patrick. What you're saying there, and one of the things is you're absolutely right. Though we don't do enough in communications, we actually don't. We're small organizations, like a small staff in our area. We don't have a large group of people working for us. Usually, it's maybe eight people max for a large area. Half of them are business development

officers, but we don't advertise on Instagram, for example, and we need somebody to be able to do that. And we are looking at ways. That's one of the things that we've said, or our board of directors has said. We really need to have better communications, and I really think that that's important, especially to reach everyone, but I also want to say, and at the same time, I don't know where people are finding us, but we get calls from across Canada all the time, asking if we finance a business in you know other provinces and all of that. So honestly, probably two thirds of our inquiries that come in on our general line are from all other areas of Canada, and so we always respond to everyone and direct them to their local IFI, so that they know who the contact is. We always give them the email address and phone number, and we also direct them over to NACA's website, which shows where all the IFIs are located, so they can see that.

Dawn Madahbee Leach, 1:08:25-1:10:13

But we can we know exactly which IFI they should be talking to. We always ask them where their business is going to be located. So even though we don't do a lot of communications, we get a ton of inquiries from across Canada. So that's kind of interesting, and but we still have you know I see businesses being established in our region, and you know I think we've helped over 90% of the businesses, but there are some that go ahead without Waubetek support, which is perfectly fine. But usually they eventually come back to us in some capacity that we can help them, but so our communications are not strong as strong as they should be or could be, and so we are looking at that. And but it is the other thing is not all IFIs deliver the same level of programming that maybe Waubetek does. That's the other thing. So I'm not exactly sure which IFI you would be working with, but not all of them have. For example, we have we can access resources through NACA. NACA is a support for the IFIs. They don't deliver financing directly to businesses at all. They support the IFI network, so if we need money for Indigenous women entrepreneurs, we go to NACA and they help us. If we need money for Indigenous youth entrepreneurs, they've helped us. They've lobbied for the funds so IFIs can deliver these, and so we they give us marketing dollars for those programs for the women and, the youth, which is great, and sometimes that just opens up the door for others to come in too to meet with us. But not all IFIs deliver those programs, and not all IFIs may have the export supports that you need.

Dawn Madahbee Leach, 1:10:14-1:11:22

But most of them can still provide the supports for legal assistance, marketing assistance. So, if somebody wants to access funds for marketing projects, marketing materials to establish a website, all the IFIs I'm pretty sure across Canada can help with that, and you know those are contribution dollars, conditional contributions, so it's not loan dollars. So we can help with those kinds of things for the business support aspects. So a portion of that is conditional contribution, and then the client has to put some of their own funds towards the costs. But there are definitely you're right. There's not enough marketing going on in what we do, but we do. I think we provide a really strong national

referral service through what we honestly the inquiries we get all the time, and so hopefully we put people through to an IFI who can really help them meet their needs.

Alicia Hussain, 1:11:24-1:12:59

Wonderful, thank you so much, Dawn. All right, so I want to wrap up our discussion by focusing on reducing risk because we found it to be an ongoing theme in the project. So I have two questions for all panelists, and I invite you to take a minute or two to respond to one of these questions or both of these questions. From what I'm hearing, the first question has sort of you've like I've sort of have an idea of where your thoughts are with those, because it's come through in in the in your responses already. So if you wanted to focus on the second question, how might the 3d's placemat help surface and navigate the risks that can affect readiness decisions? Please, you know, by all means, you can focus on that one as well, and you know, Patrick. As I was, as you were, you you were speaking just now, and I started thinking. You know, I think we need another placemat with the where to go for certain things. I think, you know, in terms of resources and connections. So, yeah, you had my thinking hat going. So let's start with let's start with Patrick. What are your thoughts on this 3d's place map tool?

Patrick Hunter, 1:13:03-1:14:16

Initial thoughts as a designer. It's I don't know where to start, but like it is cool. I like I like that. There's things like this are you know helpful. I would say for sure. Again, I just I kind of I oscillate between like wanting to go a little bit harder with exporting and then wanting to just I'm fine with the way things are in my business, things are good, good. Like I don't know if I need to scale. There's times where I'm like, well, maybe I, maybe I should, or maybe I, you know, provide opportunities for other people to work in a design setting, kind of things, so I I really not struggle, but like I just I think about it, and yeah, I think at the moment, like I do a lot of collaborations with other companies, and you know businesses, and you know find opportunities through places like CCIB and their networking opportunities and whatnot, and yeah, I mean, like as an entrepreneur, like cell phone business, it's it.

Patrick Hunter, 1:14:16-1:15:20

At the end of the day, everything really comes down to like myself, and not only like the opportunities that come my way through working with larger places like CCIB, but like you know, it really is up to me. Like making creating my own opportunities. What can I offer? What can I put out there through the website? Offer through you know the connections I have through social media and whatnot. So you know the risk is always there, I guess, to business. But like it just depends on like how sometimes like how I'm feeling that week. If I really am feeling risky, like let's go. But. You know, it's

real every single day decisions that that really keep it interesting for sure. Like, if anyone wants to like go gray earlier in their life, then you should start a business. And if you're gonna get your artwork onto some mugs as soon as possible.

Alicia Hussain, 1:15:23-1:15:24

Patrick, thank you. All right, so Matthew, did you want to speak to one of these questions or both of them?

Matthew Foss, 1:15:35-1:16:51

I think you know, looking at this this placemat and that and the three the three key components to it is rather critical and it's a great presentation of how to navigate or identify really the how ready you are as a business. I think one of the challenges that that exist though is in having flexibility in interpretation with respect to what qualifies as ready with respect to you know demonstration. How much experience do you have to be able to demonstrate or show how much sales do you have to show with respect to, you know, can you can you meet some of these financial targets or that, and what's really holding you back from doing that and is it is it the fact that you just haven't gotten there yet or haven't put the effort into it as of yet, or is it that you're having actual challenges with respect to doing it in it? And same thing goes with respect to the durability in that.

Matthew Foss, 1:16:51-1:18:00

Of as we know, indigenous businesses tend to be smaller, they tend to be newer, and as such, they don't have the same demonstration, and so how do you how do you demonstrate your financial capacity in the same way that a business that's been around for 15 or 20 years is looking to scale? And again, you know some of those aspects with respect to is the market pulling you, and have you really established and identified buyers that want to buy your product, and that is a different measure of the durability that exists. And then on the same on the de-risking side, and I think part of the aspect with respect to de-risking is it is it is a challenge, and I think there needs to be a lot more supports in this space for businesses to tode-risk, particularly as you start looking into international marketplaces with respect to not only dealing with different.

Matthew Foss, 1:18:02-1:19:07

Customs and different ways of doing business, but also now you're dealing with different currencies and different payment schedules and that and different intellectual property regimes and different legal frameworks that then how does a small business navigate those? Small businesses are

challenged to navigate those even within Canada, and then and so having those supports and a larger amount of those supports in place to help de-risk those things and perhaps spread those out over more companies through portfolios that that allow a an agency like Export Development Canada or something to take on some of these things that because they are able to pool risk they can they can handle more aspects of that, whereas an individual entrepreneur is not going to be able to.

Alicia Hussain, 1:19:11-1:19:28

Well, thank you so much, Matthew. All right, so Dawn, could it help an advisor? Could the placemat help an advisor move beyond a general ready or not judgment, and identify the specific supports that are maybe needed.

Dawn Madahbee Leach, 1:19:30-1:20:44

I would I would change the placement to be a little bit more like it. It really puts more of the challenges there and in front of the individuals. To be honest, when I looked at it, I'd be afraid. I do. You mentioned I'm the I'm with I have my own company called Indigenous Business International, just doing contracting at some advisory contracting that I've done, and I've had to navigate. Different currencies too, and things like that, and legalities, and so when I read the placement, I almost take a deep breath. I'm a little afraid. I think we need something that's really more encouraging to help individuals, but maybe adding that that list of who to contact and who can provide what would be a huge, huge help to this. And you know, I'm thinking about that. And I think for Indigenous women in business, they can join that Canadian Women's International Network as a as a start. And it it really doesn't cost anything. You start to make connections there.

Dawn Madahbee Leach, 1:20:45-1:21:52

I also think that for businesses getting to know your EDC rep, Export Development Canada rep, also the Business Development Bank of Canada. I forgot that they've helped a lot of our clients with the financing they need when they're when they have product there already, and with shipping and things like that, so the Business Development Bank of Canada has helped as well. They have some export assistance as well. One of the best ways is connecting with other Indigenous exporters, and I think again, we accomplished part of that through the Indigenous Women in Industry networking and conference that we had recently. Indigenous women who are exporting already got to share some of the issues around that, but there was so much networking amongst the ladies there to help build off each other's knowledge, and even just the women from within Canada who'd never met each other before, they were able to really help each other out there.

Dawn Madahbee Leach, 1:21:52-1:22:41

So I was thinking of the CCIB networking, and I've definitely been. And you know, in earlier days, I was always afraid of those kind of networking events. I don't know how I didn't know how to network, and you're in a big forum. There's people you know you know you don't know who's in the same industry as you or the same sector as you. You don't know who the other exporters are, so it would be great at the CCIB events to have networking tables for people in the same industry, including the non-indigenous businesses there, because you go to an event and you don't know who's who except the other indigenous people you might have met before. But any kind of trade and export networking should definitely pull people in the same sectors together, I think that would be a huge.

Alicia Hussain, 1:22:42-1:23:10

These are these are fantastic ideas, Dawn. I really appreciate it, and also just to get the feedback about the placemat from folks who are working in it every day. So thank you for that. All right. So Magnolia, what are your thoughts on the placemat being used as a tool in in your in in your area at Nat.

Magnolia Perron, 1:23:10-1:24:42

Yeah, sure. Thank you. I haven't had quite as much time to spend on the materials, just getting pulled into this this morning. But you know, taking a quick peek at it. I think from a NACA and IFI perspective, the 3D framework I think does provide a helpful approach for looking at you know business export readiness. I think like what I liked about it, it recognizes that you know success is not solely determined by the quality of the opportunity, but it recognizes that the opportunity, you know, can it be demonstrated, sustained over time, supported through like different risk mitigation method measures. So I think for like lenders, it could provide a practical framework for assessing growth potential. I like that it kind of moves the conversation beyond like simply whether like a business is ready, export ready or not, because I think yeah, readiness could exist on a continuum, which I think this placemat kind of gets at, you know, they could have that strong opportunity, but there's still a need for that additional capacity, financing, relationships, market validation, so on and so forth. And also, I feel like it's not just about, or hopefully, wouldn't be used in a way that is just like focused on like screening out a business or not, but more about like how can we identify maybe some gaps and areas where we can help them move forward with that opportunity, which I think is very much aligned with like an IFI approach.

Alicia Hussain, 1:24:42-1:25:34

Right, and so like it's the gaps that we were hoping to. Sort of, you know, really like use the placemat to highlight like where are the gaps in your business or where are the gaps in a business that you're working with. So yeah, thank you so much. I don't mean to cut you off, but I just want I'm just mindful of the time, and I just want to leave some time for questions from the audience. So thank you all so very much. I'm going to move on to some time with the audience. So if anybody has any questions for our panelists today, that would be very welcomed.

Dawn Madahbee Leach, 1:25:41-1:26:36

While they're putting those up, Alicia, is it okay if I just say one of the things that I I really wanted to leave with in this session today is that I I really feel that Canada needs to put some supports behind the implementation of the Indigenous Peoples Economic trade and cooperation arrangements, and to implement the free trade agreements, as well, which include usually indigenous adders and the indigenous chapter or indigenous clauses. We need the supports to be able to implement. Right now, there's nothing in place to help implement these. They're all beautiful words. We got all these agreements signed, and but you know, taking action on them is pretty limited. So we need the supports. So I just wanted to leave that here today as well. Thank you.

Alicia Hussain, 1:26:36-1:26:53

Thank you so much, Dawn. So I'm just thinking if it would be okay for us to share your email address as panelists with the audience in case they wanted to reach out to you. No pressure. You can decide.

Matthew Foss, 1:26:56-1:26:57

Yeah, absolutely.

Alicia Hussain, 1:26:58-1:27:00

Okay, wonderful.

Matthew Foss, 1:27:01-1:27:34

Further, Dawn’s point that the capacity development for Indigenous people to participate in trade and that just has been underfunded, and that and as Dawn mentions, like so many wonderful

provisions that get into these trade agreements to help and assist, and then there is no funding attached to them to actually allow them to germinate and so.

Alicia Hussain, 1:27:34-1:27:35

Right.

Dawn Madahbee Leach, 1:27:37-1:27:43

There needs to be more contests like an un one to to make it to her Asian partners.

Alicia Hussain, 1:27:44-1:27:46

Right. All right.

Alicia Hussain, 1:27:49-1:27:53

Any questions? As Sarah, are there any questions in the Q and A for us?

Sarah (S49 Staff Member), 1:27:55-1:27:55

No, there are not.

Alicia Hussain, 1:27:55-1:28:23

Okay. Thank you so much. Well, a key takeaway, I think, is that readiness is not a single checklist. It is shaped by experience, lots of experience sometimes, sometimes not that much experience. Relationships are a huge, huge thing. Continue to be a huge thing, and our panelists have confirmed that. And of course, it's shaped by risk, and it can look very different for every business.

Alicia Hussain, 1:28:23-1:29:24

So I just want to give a huge thank you to our panelists Anthony, Patrick, Dawn, Magnolia, Matthew, for sharing your perspectives on what export readiness looks like in practice, and for just contributing so wholeheartedly to this project and to the work that you're doing, the amazing work that you're each doing in your various positions. So thank you so much for being with us today. Thank you as

well to everyone who joined us and shared interest and in in this webinar and in this topic and the work that you are doing as well. I'm sure. So the webinar has been recorded and will be made publicly available. If you would like to continue the conversation, of course, or you have follow-up questions, please feel free to reach out to me. My email address is at the bottom, and I can connect you with the panelists if that's what you would like. All right. Any last?

Dawn Madahbee Leach, 1:29:24-1:30:33

Thank you for this opportunity. Yes, I really appreciate this, and I look forward to seeing a lot more Indigenous entrepreneurs. They're primarily small, medium-sized businesses. They're not the ones selling LNG, or we do have some large ones that are involved in LNG, but large community-owned businesses. We are involved in forest products being sold internationally, but the bulk of the businesses that we work with are small, medium-sized businesses, and there are many export opportunities for them. So again, if we can. Provide those supports. We can provide the advisory support and some level of the financing, but I think the bigger costs around the involvement in trade missions would be huge support to a lot of our entrepreneurs. Even if it's partially subsidized, it would be a huge, huge help to them. And I just want to say thank you for this opportunity, it really means a lot, and I look forward to seeing more indigenous exporters in the days and years to come. Miguetch.

Alicia Hussain, 1:30:33-1:30:35

So do I. Yeah. Thank you all.

Matthew Foss, 1:30:35-1:30:37

Very well said, Dawn, and thank you, Alicia.

Alicia Hussain, 1:30:38-1:30:40

You're welcome. Thanks. Thanks.

Matthew Foss, 1:30:40-1:30:42

Thank you, Maury. Great to see you.

Alicia Hussain, 1:30:42-1:30:43

You too. Take good care.

Magnolia Perron, 1:30:43-1:30:47

Thank you. Bye. Bye.