



**NORTHERN**  
DEVELOPMENT

# 2025 - 2027 STRATEGIC PLAN



Building a  
**Stronger North**



In 2004 and 2005, the Province of British Columbia created the Northern Development Initiative Trust, entrusting the region and its leaders with \$185 million to work together to build a stronger North. Northern Development's service area covers four regions that span nearly three quarters of the province and serves communities, First Nations, businesses and non-profit organizations.



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# WHAT DRIVES US

## Our Strategic Pillars

Deliver effective and impactful funding opportunities

Invest in a sustainable future for Northern B.C.

Catalyze community resilience through relationships and partnerships in our region

Advance corporate effectiveness and operational processes

## Our Vision, Mission and Values

### VISION STATEMENT

Northern British Columbia is recognized as a leader in innovative, inclusive rural development.

### MISSION STATEMENT

Northern Development is a catalyst for transformative development that stimulates entrepreneurial creativity and community resiliency.

### OUR VALUES

We strive to be trusted for our integrity, accountability, collaboration and passion. We are responsive, yet responsible.

## Our Ethics

**As stewards of a public trust incorporated under legislation by the Province of British Columbia, we promise to:**

- Dedicate ourselves to building economic capacity and sustainability throughout the Trust's service area
- Responsibly steward a capital base to support Trust area communities in perpetuity
- Develop strong partnerships throughout the region and uphold the values of the communities we serve

**But not to:**

- Favour one region, community or business over another
- Adopt or promote a political affiliation or put our interests ahead of central and northern B.C.'s

# Message from the Chair and CEO

Examining our strategic plan holds crucial significance for Northern Development Initiative Trust in its ongoing support and funding endeavors for northern communities. This grant funding fosters economic growth, inclusivity, and environmental sustainability, particularly amidst challenges like lumber mill closures and recurring fire and flood crises. With our Board of Directors representing the North, including 89 First Nation communities, ensuring comprehensive inclusion across all communities remains pivotal for the Trust's sustainability, thereby securing its role as a dependable organization for future generations.



**Margo Wagner**  
Board Chair

Northern Development's 2025 to 2027 strategic plan represents a tremendous effort on behalf of our Board, staff, regional advisors, and partners throughout Northern B.C. to ensure the organization remains responsive to community needs but responsible with its capital base. Looking forward, it's clear the Trust has built an enviable reputation throughout British Columbia as an innovative, accessible and business-minded economic development organization, yet times are changing. Amid ongoing concerns about stability in our natural resource sectors, the clear and present danger of climate change and the region's continual struggle to diversify, we can't afford to rest on the successes of the past. The Trust was built with the belief that the best economic decisions for the North should be made in the North. That won't change. Neither will our commitment to work alongside communities to support their success. Yet, as always, we must shift our priorities and where we focus our efforts to match the needs of the region today and tomorrow. This document represents the first step in that direction. Thank you to Monogram Communications and our partners for continuing to support the success of the Trust.



**Joel McKay**  
CEO



# Pillar 1

Deliver effective and impactful funding opportunities

## Objective 1

Create and maintain relevant programs to support community development, business development and capacity building

### Tactics - Year 1

- Review community development programs and determine relevancy/timeliness
- Create a funnel system to ensure most impactful projects get funding
- Develop new scoring matrix
- Review funding tiers for infrastructure programs with defined criteria

## Objective 2

Develop resilient and relevant programs that respond to community needs and changing priorities through Northern B.C.

### Tactics - Year 1

- Plan RAC engagement sessions
- Test program criteria with economic development officers and grant writers



# Pillar 2

Catalyze community resilience through relationships and partnerships in our region

## Objective 1

Refine the role of the Trust as a catalyst for economic development throughout Northern B.C.

### Tactics - Year 1

- Research opportunities to expand partner programs
- Expand reinvestment in the Trust to grow capital base

## Objective 2

Build meaningful associations with leaders across First Nations, local and provincial governments and communities to advance conditions that support success throughout Northern B.C.

### Tactics - Year 1

- Achieve a rating of 90% or greater on client satisfaction survey
- Monitor media coverage for stories/overall positive sentiment towards the Trust
- Attendance at RAC/board/committee meetings 75% or greater
- Track provincial engagements and meetings
- Develop external communications process with key partners

## Objective 3

Ensure Northern B.C. has access to economic and community development, and capacity-building initiatives

### Tactics - Year 1

- Implement regional economic development officer network



# Pillar 2

Catalyze community resilience through relationships and partnerships in our region

## Objective 4

Continue to build and sustain relationships with new and existing partners, and major project leaders throughout the region

### Tactics - Year 1

- Prioritize which partners to work with and how

## Objective 5

Work with regional districts, First Nations and local governments to align funding programs with community priorities and complementary external funding programs

### Tactics - Year 1

- Research inventory of complementary funding programs for economic development officers and grant writers





# Pillar 2

Catalyze community resilience through relationships and partnerships in our region

## Objective 6

Intentional attendance in communities to increase connections with current partners, build relationships with new partners, and understand local priorities

### Tactics - Year 1

- Develop an outcome-oriented communications plan that considers all partners
- Schedule and provide regular updates to the Province on the Trust's progress
- Develop communications strategy to attract more intern applicants

## Objective 7

Facilitate meaningful dialogue regarding rural economic development

### Tactics - Year 1

- Work with the Board and regional advisors to define what 'rural' means to the Trust, and our role supporting development in rural areas

## Objective 8

Build stronger relationships with First Nation communities and leaders

### Tactics - Year 1

- Determine First Nation communities to connect with based on consultants' reports
- Research governance structure, culture and key issues in First Nations to provide reference for staff
- Develop a model for better collaboration that focuses on rural development, specifically First Nation economic development
- Strive to achieve 20% of projects approved by a First Nation organization





# Pillar 2

Catalyze community resilience through relationships and partnerships in our region

## Objective 9

Work toward greater Indigenous representation on the Trust's board and regional advisory committees

### Tactics - Year 1

- Submission to Province of B.C., Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation (JEDI) to propose legislative change

## Objective 10

Build the Trust's reputation as a leader in rural economic development through community connection, building ambassadors and sharing successes

### Tactics - Year 1

- Empower economic development officers, grant writers and interns to facilitate community partnerships and act as ambassadors for the Trust



# Pillar 3

Invest in a sustainable future for Northern B.C.

## Objective 1

Support and enable business growth in existing and emerging sectors

### Tactics - Year 1

- Track and report on key metrics for the Business Façade Improvement program
- Track and report on community uptake and region dispersion

## Objective 2

Support businesses across various stages of growth or diversification

### Tactics - Year 1

- Research and develop initiatives that support businesses at the scale up phase

## Objective 3

Develop programs to support "future focused" businesses in sectors such as clean energy, technology and sustainable food production

### Tactics - Year 1

- Track and report on key metrics for the Northern Industries Innovation Fund

## Objective 4

Contribute to large, sustainable projects in the region

### Tactics - Year 1

- Attend key industry conferences
- Research and develop metrics for projects that support business scale up



# Pillar 4

Advance corporate effectiveness and operational processes

## Objective 1

Develop and improve processes to enable the Trust's Board, regional advisory committees and staff to work together effectively and efficiently to stimulate activity and create resiliency

### Tactics - Year 1

- Develop and implement a CEO succession plan
- Enhance staff retention and prepare for a changing workforce
- Continue to advance human resource practices that support diversity, equity and inclusion

## Objective 2

Invest in and reward internal innovations and process efficiencies to enhance the experience of working with the Trust

### Tactics - Year 1

- Continue development of Salesforce to expand functionality and increase innovation



# ABOUT NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

Northern Development Initiative Trust combines funding with smart thinking to help Northern British Columbia thrive. The Trust was created for the north and is led by the north. Northern Development is proud to work with communities and partners throughout central and northern B.C. to find ways to say “yes” to economic diversification in our region.



[www.northerndevelopment.bc.ca](http://www.northerndevelopment.bc.ca)