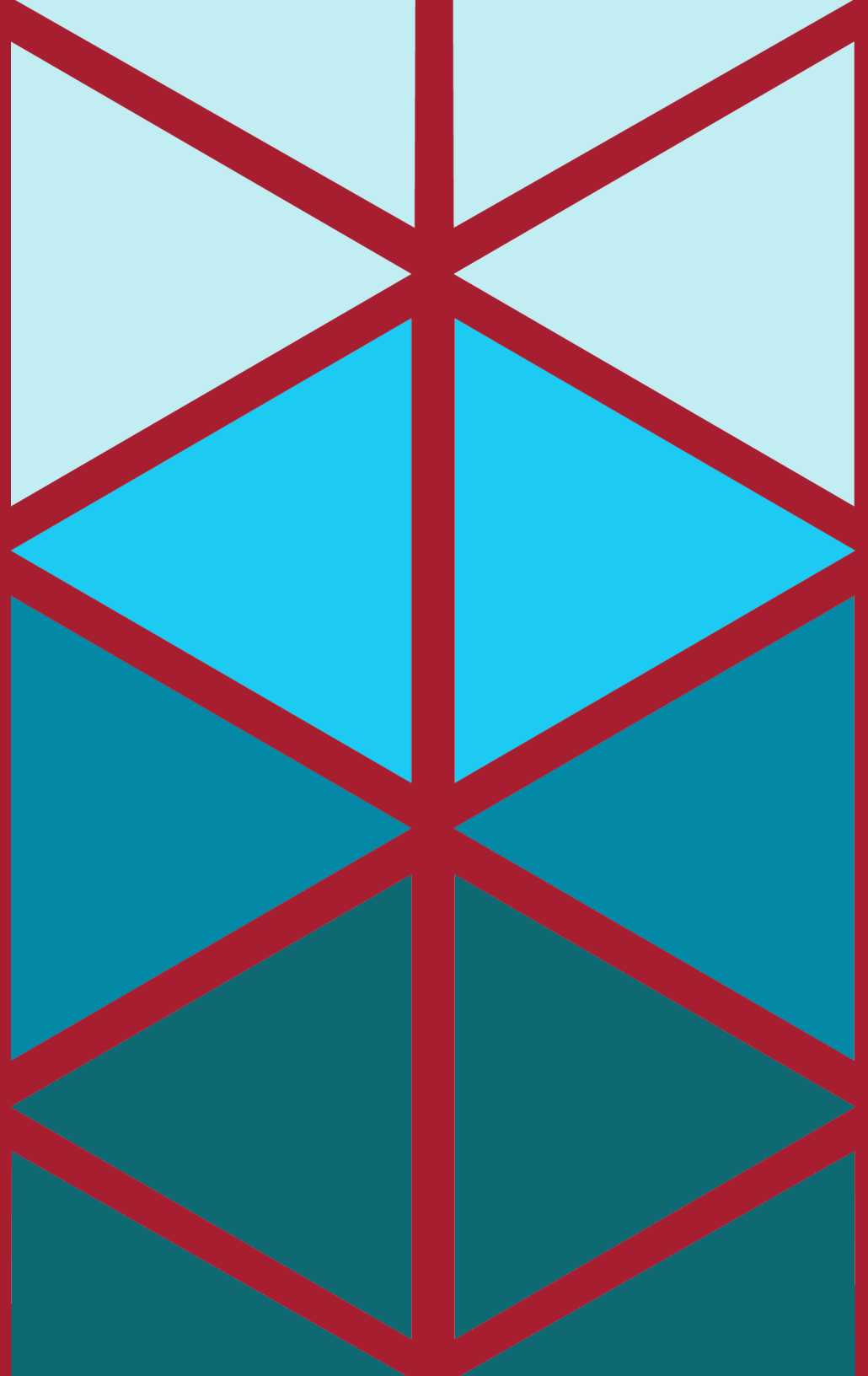
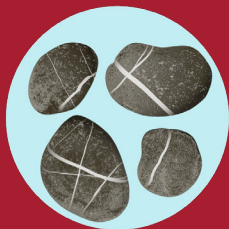




Step into the River:

Section Five

- ▶ **Journeying to a
Desired Future State:
Framework for
Economic Reconciliation**



Journeying to a Desired Future State: Framework for Economic Reconciliation

The values that drive the current economic system only serve to further inequities, accelerate climate change and disconnect us from what matters most in relation to our well-being. What we need is an economic system that helps all life thrive. The future of a Well-being Economy has been largely envisioned worldwide, and there are many ways of knowing, and economic models put forth to imagine that future state. There are shifts happening across the world towards re-positioning the economy from a mechanism driven by profit and growth to a means of fostering human flourishing, social cohesion, cultural continuity, and the well-being of land, all of which closely align to principles of Community Economic Development. New economic systems that are grounded in these cultural values are resurging and emerging.

In this section, we identify how to move from our current state to a desired future state. Considering the bigger picture, economic reconciliation is not only about changing relationships to Indigenous people alone, but completely reforming the economy by recognizing and adopting

Indigenous knowledge. It requires shifting our mindsets, for example:

- **Indigenous people are rights holders, not stakeholders.** First Nations communities and people are original rights holders to this land and equal partners in the economy. Rather than considering Indigenous individuals as dependent on the economy, they are drivers of economic growth and stewards of natural resources and other inputs that non-Indigenous people depend on for survival.

Quick reference:

Centre for First Nations Governance provides a [timeline and document on the Indigenous Inherent Rights to Self-Governance](#).

- **Economic Reconciliation is an ongoing journey, not an end point.** Economic Reconciliation is not an item on a list of obligations for government and businesses. It is also not a clear destination, but rather an ongoing practice. Economic Reconciliation requires commitment, discomfort, unlearning, re-learning, and willingness to grow and imagine other possible realities.
- **Capacity-building is multi-directional.** As shown in the previous sections, in some cases there exist major gaps in capacity for First Nations communities and people to participate in the current economic system. At the same time, Indigenous people have a wealth of knowledge and capacity to offer non-Indigenous people and partners. First Nations have significant natural, physical, cultural, monetary and human assets and capabilities that could be leveraged in right relationship with the community. More fundamentally, Indigenous values systems, ways of being, knowing and doing have much to offer non-Indigenous people and organizations in reframing humans' relationship to land, resources, one another and all beings that are necessary for our current and future generations to thrive.
- **Indigenous knowledge applies to more than environmental concerns.** There is a tendency in land-related research and professions to only refer to and recognize Indigenous Knowledge as applicable to environmental concerns. Indigenous Knowledge is often used interchangeably with Traditional Ecological Knowledge, which risks furthering the habit of reducing or limiting the depth of knowing of Indigenous ways of

being.⁵¹ Given that seeing the environment as separate from other aspects of life such as livelihood or the economy is in itself a colonial viewpoint, non-Indigenous people need to shift their understanding that Indigenous Knowledge is a much more encompassing way of being, knowing and doing that has infinite applications, including in our transition away from this current economic system.

“We need to shift our thinking to seeing land as identity, our sense of belonging, our sustainer, land as residence for not only ourselves for all other living beings, ancestral connection, source of knowledge, a healer, enspirited, as home and not as a place for which we claim property rights but as a place where we enact moral responsibility to all of life. Because the land is sacred! It’s not just more knowledge that we need right now, IT’S WISDOM...”

Robin Wall Kimmerer, Restoration and Reciprocity:
Healing Relationships with the Natural World

51 Inuit Qaujimagajatuqangit: Social history, politics and the practice of resistance. Frank James Tester and Peter Irniq. 2008. Arctic 61 (Suppl 1): 48-61.

Step into the River: The Economic Reconciliation Framework

Rivers have existed much longer than humans have, and will be around long after we are gone. They are also in a state of constant change. To step into the river is to become a part of something much greater than yourself. Rather than standing still or fighting against the current, to go in the direction of the river is to be in a positive relationship with change.

As we have said elsewhere, economic reconciliation is a journey, not an endpoint. Reconciliation is not about having more seats at the current table, but rather transforming the ways in which we are in relation to one another and make decisions about our collective future. Therefore, a framework for economic reconciliation is not a checklist of actions to be achieved, but rather a journey in transformation.

We see economic reconciliation as a commitment to being in the river. It requires shifting our mindsets, deepening relationships and embedding values of transformation into our systems. To communicate what committing to reconciliation looks like, we've illustrated the following pieces: The Riverbed (Values of Economic Reconciliation); Stepping Stones (Individual Practices); and Creating Ripples (spaces of economic reconciliation).



Step into the River:

The Economic Reconciliation Framework

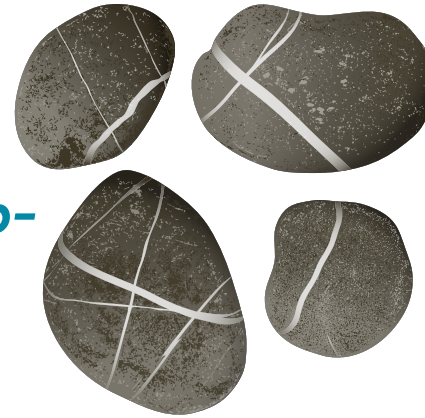
The riverbed holds the transformative values of economic reconciliation. The stepping stones are different spaces you might be walking in, held up by the practices that support you to stay on course within the flow of the river.

Self-reflection & Awareness

Questioning & (un)learning

Relationship-building

Deep Listening



Accountability and Truth-telling

Recognition and Respect for Title & Rights

Regenerative Living

Connected to Land and Place

Reciprocal Relationships

Anti-racism, Equity and Solidarity

Rematriation

Self-determination, Cultural Sovereignty and Indigenization

Embraces and Celebrates Diverse Knowings and Ways of Being

The Riverbed: The Values of Economic Reconciliation

Reconciliation needs to be accompanied by purposeful actions in all spaces of society. In the economic sector, this means practical commitments to equal access for Indigenous Peoples and First Nations to financial services, capital and other business supports, adequate community infrastructure and housing, and connectivity for Indigenous communities, as well as equal access to quality education and training. These actions should happen through Indigenized approaches and processes.

The riverbed is the channel in which a river flows. It helps guide the river's course. As seen through an Indigenous worldview, these values are interconnected and reinforce one another - none of them can be adopted on its own or ranked higher than the others. While Indigenous Peoples already largely live by and embody these values, all people and organizations need to adopt and enact these values as it is only through our collective efforts that we can protect and care for what matters most for current and future generations.

- Accountability and truth-telling
- Recognition and respect for title & rights
- Regenerative living
- Connected to land and place
- Reciprocal relationships

- Anti-racism, equity and solidarity
- Self-determination, cultural sovereignty and Indigenization
- Rematriation
- Embraces and celebrates diverse knowings and ways of being

Accountability and truth-telling

Taking responsibility includes our accountability to our children, the land and its creatures, and future generations. It also includes taking responsibility for past and ongoing impacts of settler colonialism on Indigenous ways of being, knowing and doing in Canada. It is a commitment to truth-telling and taking actions that are accountable to the truth. The values of accountability and truth-telling is applicable to all human and planetary systems.

For First Nations and more broadly, Indigenous Peoples, storytelling is the foundation of articulating lived values that form the basis for Indigenous governance and regeneration. The sharing of this experiential knowledge and living histories through storytelling, comprises part of the core teachings that Indigenous families transmit to future generations. Canada's version of history is very different from Canada's Indigenous Peoples' lived experience. This is demonstrated by Paulette Regan, Euro-Canadian scholar and academic liaison to Truth and Reconciliation Commission:

“Settler violence against Indigenous peoples is woven into the fabric of Canadian history in an unbroken thread from past to present that we must now unravel, unsettling our comfortable assumptions about the past. At the same time, we must work as Indigenous allies to “restory” the dominant culture version of history; that is, we must make decolonizing space for Indigenous history—counter-narratives of diplomacy, law, and peacemaking practices—as told by Indigenous peoples themselves.”⁵²

We must stop the colonial story from being the only story of Indigenous lives. Meaningful reconciliation efforts, commitments and actions must confront colonialism not only from a historical perspective but as part of an ongoing process that continues to impact present generations of Indigenous youth and families. We need narratives based in truth--and a willingness to reckon with this truth--that shed light on Indigenous peoples' resilience and resurgence.

Recognition and respect

Practicing openness to different perspectives and experiences, including Indigenous ways of being, knowing and doing. Respect is a foundational piece to all the other values and aspects of this framework, and all the work required for economic reconciliation. It looks like honouring that Indigenous peoples are Title and Rights

holders to their traditional territories and have the right to self-determination and self-government. This includes committing to actions and principles of Land Back and Cash Back (Yellowhead Institute), and upholding the rights of individuals whether they live on or off-reserve.

Government, industries and institutions have emphasized building respectful relationships with Indigenous peoples and First Nations, which is absolutely necessary for meaningful economic reconciliation. However, how serious are you about uplifting and supporting Indigenous sovereignty? It seems that there is a limit to settlers' recognition of Indigenous peoples so long as it does not disturb their own comfort. We are recommending that we have to be uncomfortable in order to move through the painful parts of Canadian history and enact Indigenous Title and Rights and sovereignty.

Regenerative Living

“Indigenous” refers to how living things learned a way of inter-relating within a specific place to achieve the dynamic optimum efficiency ensuring constant renewal.”

Dr. Jeanette Armstrong

52 Unsettling the Settler Within, Paulette Regan: <https://www.ubcpres.ca/asset/9215/1/9780774817776.pdf>

As Dr. Jeanette Armstrong has emphasized, to live regeneratively requires that our whole society does things in such a way that we do not destroy the land's and all beings' ability for constant renewal.⁵³ A circular and regenerative economy is one that is iterative and gets better over time as we learn. It is based on ecological restoration, land protection, equitable relationships and partnerships, justice, and fair participatory processes. Rather than extract from the land and each other, how do we do things that are consistent with the rights of nature, valuing the health and well-being of Mother Earth by producing, consuming, and redistributing resources in harmony with the planet and all its creatures? Embracing a culture of spiritual, mental, emotional and physical well-being, our desired economic system encourages and generates collective healing.

Quick reference:

Dr. Eva Jewel through her webinar, [From Structural Racism to Personal Practices: Embodying Anti-Oppression for Reconciliation](#) shares that without behavioural change, knowledge of structural racism can only lead to apathy and immobilization.

Connected to land and place

For Indigenous Peoples, the land does not belong to them, but rather they belong to the land. This inherent connection to place since time immemorial is the foundation of their societal laws and ways of being. The knowledge and spiritual connection that comes from being tied to the land creates respect, recognition and the ability to be in reciprocity with it.

An economic system that is connected to land and place is locally designed to redistribute goods so that all organisms can thrive and provide for future generations. It requires re-localization and democratization of how we produce and consume goods, ensuring all have full access to healthy food, renewable energy, clean air and water, good jobs, and healthy living environments.

This value asks us to move away from treating the land solely as something to be used, manipulated, and extracted from to treating the land as a part of ourselves, where we are rooted and understand the relationship to family, community and land through our responsibility and accountability to it and all those connected to it.

53 Jeannette Armstrong: Indigenous Economics. IFG Teach-In: Techno-Utopianism & The Fate of the Earth Great Hall of the Cooper Union, New York City, October 26, 2014 https://ratical.org/many_worlds/JArmstrong102614.html



Reciprocal relationships

Relationships are built on respect and in the spirit of exchange. For Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals, communities, organizations and institutions, this means that knowledge, capacity and wisdom is not one-sided or hierarchical. Collaboration and partnership with Indigenous Peoples and communities can generate transformative spaces and can shift us away from dominant western ways of being. This is about working side by side as equal partners in the economy, in partnership with Indigenous communities in every aspect of economic development. This is particularly important in BC because most of the land is unceded territory.

This reciprocal relationship also extends to how we as humans relate to the land and other creatures. Interlinked with the value of Connected to Land and Place, each place has its own system of reciprocity to be respected.

Justice, liberation, anti-racism and solidarity

A just world means that all children, families and communities are thriving, not just surviving. Injustices experienced by Indigenous people are not separate from other injustices. We honour the resilience of Indigenous, Women identifying, Black and all People of Colour, as well as LGBTQIA2S+ community members who have endured this system of oppression and continue to be leaders in dismantling it. We are committed to social and ecological liberation and learning to move away from performative or token allyship towards true solidarity with one another as we move forward together.

Self-determination, cultural sovereignty, Indigenization

Indigenous worldviews, culture, values, protocols, practices, are embedded in decisions, processes and outcomes across various contexts of community economic development. By learning from Indigenous ways of being, knowing and doing, communities across BC can make decisions that reflect the original peoples of this land and honour their inseparable relationship to the land, committing to transformation through decolonization and Indigenization.

Rematriation

Rematriation is a core value of economic reconciliation, which involves acknowledging, respecting and supporting patriarchy in our everyday roles and responsibilities personally and professionally. This comes about through centering and restoring relationships of care, equity work, decolonization, destruction of male sexism, toxicity, abuse and violence, continuation of revamping laws and policies to create greater access to women for equality in employment and compensation, board positions, access to capital, and so much more. This is about the rebalance of responsibility in our communities and not about power and control. This work is required internally within our communities and more importantly, externally throughout non-Indigenous communities.

It is through the process of Rematriation that Indigenous peoples and Nations reclaim their identity, culture and ways of being. Indigenous women's spiritual connection to matrilineal ancestors and relations that extend beyond this world, and their role as life givers means that they are in a unique position to lead in a way that consistently places children and families at the center. Honouring and supporting women to lead in their fullest potential is required not only to enable the full sovereign expression of all Indigenous relatives, but also for the benefit of all communities by helping people overcome fear and move towards love.

Stepping Stones: Practices for being in the flow

As we have mentioned, being in a river means allowing oneself to transform. Water is constant; no matter where you might stand in a river, it will flow around you. Committing to transformative reconciliation is a practice, meaning that you live out the following actions daily in order to become whole and contribute to the larger shifts that are needed.

Self-reflection and awareness

As you learn more, you are constantly in the space of reflecting on your sense of self, in what ways you have benefited from the current system, and in what ways you can work to change it. Self awareness includes learning

more about your ancestry, your relationship to the land you grew up on or currently live on. Practicing self-awareness helps to instill what you value into your everyday life, so that you are aware of what you are accountable to and responsible for beyond yourself. It acts as a compass that guides you in your actions, reminding you of what matters to you, what resources you have in order to contribute to change, and what you pledge to. Being self aware and reflective will deepen your ability to meaningfully contribute to your community, neighbours, and family's well-being.

Deep listening

Deep listening is needed urgently at this time in humanity, including in the economic sector where there is so often an imbalance of power and lack of any real listening. To listen deeply is to listen from a receptive and compassionate place in oneself. It involves being generous with your time, empathic to the person speaking, and trusting that whatever that person says comes from the truth of what they experience. Deep listening is a practice of de-centering oneself, quieting the urge to react, and allowing oneself to be open to the unknown. This is an especially important practice when truth-telling is needed. When it comes to this truth-telling, deep listening means accepting and acknowledging what that person has experienced to be true.



Questioning & (un)learning

The purpose of questioning is to become aware of the aspects of the current economic system and what you have learnt to be true. It involves recognizing what narratives you have been taught in school, work and the news that reinforce complacency and complicity in the colonial system. It begins with each Canadian taking the initiative to question what they know or have been taught about the history of Canada and ongoing settler colonialism. It also involves questioning and reflecting on your own role, in what ways you may be complicit and complacent with upholding the current system. This process of learning and unlearning helps to cultivate curiosity about what else could be possible if we center the perspectives and knowledge of Indigenous Peoples to transform our systems.

Relationship-building

No matter where you are in the river, you will more than likely be in relationship with Indigenous Peoples and communities as it is their traditional territory in which your work is being done. If you do not have a relationship established with your neighbouring First Nation community(s) and urban Indigenous population, it is imperative to reach out and begin the relationship building. It needs to be built on all of the values we have shared to create a foundation of trust, safe space for healing and reconciliation. Then honouring the relationship through transparency, patience and a genuine commitment to the relationship.

Creating Ripples

From wherever you are standing in the river, your actions can create ripples of impact through your community or region—ripples spanning outward from each point in the ecosystem. There are many facets of the economic reconciliation ecosystem, but some spaces that we have identified include: Procurement, Education, Financing, Management, Land Use and Planning. From whichever spaces you find yourself in, you can ask yourself how you can enact the values of the riverbed.

There are no prescriptive actions that we can provide for working in these spaces, as actions will be unique to each relationship with neighboring First Nation(s). However, we have provided a guidebook in the next section, along with some case studies, to create ideas for momentum building.



“Reconciliation is not just a statement or a gesture. It is a commitment to take responsibility for the past and move forward in partnership with Indigenous Peoples to support the reclamation of their identity, culture and livelihood,”

Arzeena Hamir,
CVRD Vice-Chair