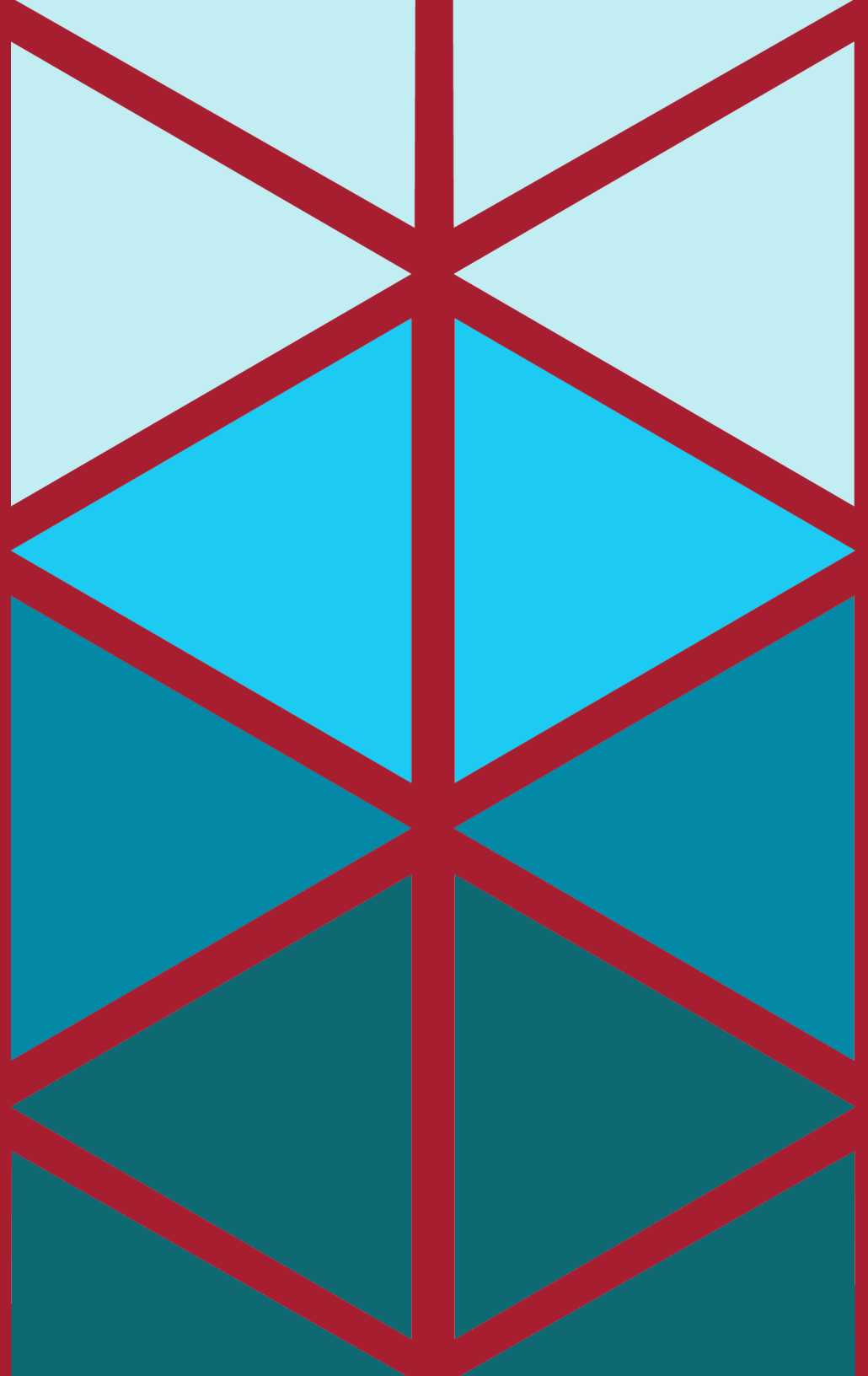
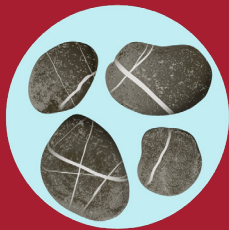




Step into the River:

Section One

- ▶ Acknowledgements
- ▶ A Note on Voice
- ▶ Beginning the Journey
in Ceremony



Acknowledgments

This work has been done for our children, grand-children and future descendants, as they are our legacy. Therefore it is our responsibility to work towards a future in which they can flourish. This work is also for our ancestors, who have suffered, endured, been extremely resilient, and who continue to find ways to heal, forgive and thrive. This is also for the generations of today, so that they can continue to move through this reconciliation journey with hope, capacity and more knowledge.

SFU CED acknowledges the unceded and treaty territories of the 204 First Nations on whose territory British Columbia is located, and whose communities represent 32 nation languages and close to 60 dialects. We acknowledge and recognize the diversity of Indigenous teachings, governance and lived experiences and that Indigenous peoples will have different interpretations and unique perspectives of this topic.

There are also many individuals who shared stories and experiences, connected us to others with knowledge, offered support and advice, reviewed documents, refined ideas, supplied information, provided resources, and brought heart to this work. Our deep gratitude goes out to all the participants in our engagement sessions, for your contributions to our process and for your dedication and commitment to the development of this Framework. We would like to thank the participants who devoted time to engage in this process.

- BC First Nations Business Development Association
- BC Assembly of First Nations
- Coast Funds
- Coast Mountain College
- Doig River First Nation
- Fireweed Fellowship
- First Nations Financial Management Board
- First Nations Technology Council
- Heiltsuk Tribal Council
- Ki'mola Indigenous Capital Ltd.
- Kitimat Valley Institute
- Ktunaxa Nation Council
- Men of the North Society
- Native Education College
- One Sparc Consulting
- RADIUS SFU
- Raven Capital Partners
- Reconciliation Canada
- SFU Morris J Wosk Centre for Dialogue
- SFU Beedie School of Business
- Skowkale First Nation
- Stó:lō Community Futures
- Tale'awtxw Aboriginal Capital Corporation
- Ulh'goh Bi'yoh Native Friendship Centre
- Vancity Credit Union
- National Consortium for Indigenous Economic Development

We thank our funding partners: the SFU Strategic Initiatives Priority Project and Vancity Community Investment. Without your funding, participation in the process, and ongoing support, we would not have created space for continuous dialogue, curiosity, hard and difficult conversations, and commitment to listening to the many Indigenous voices across the region. Additionally, funding from the BC Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development, and Competitiveness allowed us to engage in issues directly pertaining to investment readiness. We would also like to thank SFU's Faculty of Environment for your institutional administrative support. We'd especially like to thank the FENV's communications team, Laurie Wood and Julia McDonald for your patience and design expertise.

We are grateful for the journey and this road less traveled, despite the challenges that came up around this deeply complex issue. The intent of the work has always been the same, to listen to the Indigenous stakeholders and let our work be guided by their leadership. This took us down some deep, varied and sometimes uncertain paths of where things needed to go. All of which has led to what we know now, that this framework must be embedded in a cultural knowing, led by Indigenous values, beliefs and principles and be a road map of sorts towards a journey and not an end. Economic Reconciliation requires due diligence, hard work, commitment, action, unlearning, decolonizing, truth telling and much more.



Visual Credits:

Layout design: Julia McDonald and Ta7talíya Nahanee, Squamish

Photo contributions: Lily Raphael, Jeremy Stone, and Courtney Lust, unless otherwise credited.

Graphics: Lily Raphael, Julia McDonald

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A Note on Voice

This document was written in a collaborative effort by SFU CED team members Sxwpilemaát Siyám and Lily Raphael, with contributions from Jeremy Stone. Our multiple worldviews and life experiences have been embedded into the process and written work. There are many meanings behind the words “we” and “our” in the English language. Sometimes the writers speak collectively as “we” and sometimes Sxwpilemaát Siyám shares her experiences more personally and directly. Sometimes she also speaks from the collective voice of Indigenous peoples. For the writers, the more profound meaning of we and ours speaks to the collective responsibility and reciprocal relationships that people are required to uphold for the well-being of humanity, all living beings, communities, and Mother Earth. We hope that as readers you see yourself as part of that collective responsibility.

We also provide direct quotes from convening participants and external sources, and they are indicated as such:

- Direct quotes from convening participants are written in **red**.
- External quotes are written in **teal**.

As women of colour, this was not an easy document to write. It’s been a process of healing for us, full of many moments where we thought this may be a futile effort. While reading this document, you will encounter moments of our anger and frustration that not much has changed, as well as moments of hope and vision of what’s possible if we can embrace reconciliation at the core of who we are and how we move through the world. All of these feelings are part of “the work”, and we acknowledge that you will confront your own suite of feelings as you read through this document.



A few key terms

For a complete list of other terms, please see Appendix A. We use distinguished terms throughout the document. Below are some terms that come up frequently that you should become familiar with right away:

Settler - Being a settler in Canada means that you are non-Indigenous and that you or your ancestors voluntarily came and settled on land that had been inhabited by indigenous people.

Indigenous - relating to the earliest known inhabitants of a place and especially of a place that was colonized by a now-dominant group.

First Nations - any of the groups of indigenous peoples of Canada officially recognized as an administrative unit by the federal government or functioning as such without official status. The term is generally understood to exclude the Inuit and Metis.

Nation(s) - a larger body of Indigenous people united by common language, descent, history, culture, and inhabiting a particular territory.

Beginning the Journey in Ceremony

An invitation by Sxwpilemaát Siyám

Our Ancestors and Elders have always shared and taught us the following wisdom: It is important to begin valuable work in ceremony. Ceremony is a practice in Indigenous communities that is paramount for the people. It is the lifeblood of their identity, purpose, responsibilities, knowledge-sharing and spirituality.

Before you go into ceremony, you prepare yourself mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually. The work you set out to do is with good intentions, for the well-being of your people, your ancestors and the spirit world. You listen to the words of your Elders, family, leaders and take it into your heart. You walk together to support each other to achieve what you set out to do. To give, share, and be one with each other in the sacred space of ceremony. So when you walk in the door, your heart, mind, body and spirit are grounded in love and light so that the work ahead is done with that positive energy.

In ceremony, there is space for sharing knowledge in many forms, listening, learning, protocols, singing, dancing,

waking up your spirit and the spirit of the ground (land and the area in which you are hosting ceremony, e.g. Big House, Pit House, etc.), being in gratitude, acknowledging kinship ties and relations, and reaffirming purpose, identity, and connections.

The complexity of ceremony is also a good metaphor for the work of Reconciliation. To be 'in ceremony' requires a lot of work, time, energy, commitment, action of many and this is what it is going to take to transform our failing economic system through Economic Reconciliation. Ceremony requires intention.

I share the idea of ceremony to deepen your understanding of Indigenous ways of knowing and being, and ground this document through those teachings. This document is inviting you, the reader, to open your heart and mind to an Indigenous worldview, epistemology, or lens used in structuring this written framework, as the voices that informed it were of Indigenous peoples throughout British Columbia.

It is to set the intent and foundation of your thinking around Economic Reconciliation in a new space, to start from a place of decolonization and begin Indigenizing your work. Therefore, the idea is to ground yourself in this new knowing, use it as a foundation of moving through this document with intentionality and purpose through an open mind and heart to learn, listen and hopefully make a commitment to courageous and meaningful action.

Welcome your Discomfort

How are you arriving? Where are you in the journey of reconciling the truth of Canada's racist history and ongoing oppression of Indigenous Peoples in Canada? Where does your knowing of Indigenous people come from?

Acknowledge that as a reader you may experience discomfort, have an emotional reaction or be angry, be shocked or defensive to the truth. This is an important step in healing if we want to be in good relationship with one another. It's important to keep in mind that it was far more difficult for the multiple generations of Indigenous peoples that lived through it than it is to learn about it for the very first time. Being defensive about the truth telling is an important to name as this mindset generally represents a large segment of the Canadian population. As challenging as this learning is, the result of not knowing the history or truth and having not engaged in any reconciliation, leads to nothing being different for the next generations. When you experience discomfort, ask yourself why in that particular moment or section of the report? What does that mean you need to learn about or unpack further in your own life and work? You can choose to stay in the dark or work through the discomfort and educate yourself to the truth, the facts and history of Canada and Indigenous Peoples, as what is going to bring words into action is how we educate ourselves.

This Economic Reconciliation Framework is going to both confront and comfort the reader's uneasiness around Economic Reconciliation conversations and actions. Please take your time in reading this, exploring where your thoughts and discomfort shows up. Acknowledging and unpacking how it makes you feel is an important part of personal growth.



Set your Intention

In the spirit of being in ceremony, we the writers invite you to begin engaging with this document, and more so economic reconciliation. It's important to ask yourself honestly and completely: Why am I here? Is it to rectify historical wrongs? Is it to improve the relationships between myself and the Indigenous community adjacent to me? Is it just out of curiosity to learn more about economic reconciliation? All are welcome, but the deeper you go in this work, the more you have to open yourself up to the messages here. You have to open yourself up to deeper relationships with people around you, and be more and more willing to change yourself and your surroundings through that process. It may be uncomfortable, difficult and challenging, but this is an opportunity to grow as a person, and grow in allyship with the community around you.

We also invite you to center your children and your community's children in this work. Our Elders tell us that we are all connected, we are one family and we are committed to healing the 'spirit of the child', one child at a time. It is our children who will inherit the outcomes of this work. Having the children at the centre of this work commits everyone to their well-being and the requirements of all things to achieve that well-being.

In order to effectively engage with Indigenous people and communities, there are significant historical, cultural and

legal considerations that every Canadian must know and understand. SFU CED wants to serve all people residing in the province with awareness, sensitivity and understanding that comes from learning culturally-appropriate knowledge. Respecting the worldviews of Indigenous peoples in B.C. requires learning and development that focuses on Indigenous ways of knowing, doing and being, Indigenous history, current realities, and aspirations. Success in working with Indigenous Peoples and First Nation communities comes through this deeper understanding.

The Framework supports growing one's knowledge, curiosity and action towards Economic Reconciliation and putting the children at the centre of it all, as we are creating their legacy through the actions we take today. This is intergenerational work without any doubt. As Justice Murray Sinclair said, **“It took 125 years to create the problem — seven generations — so it may take generations to fix.”** Growing one's knowledge is going to take time, effort, energy and will to facilitate the personal and social change required to realize reconciliation in all spaces throughout our communities, in service of our children and the people yet to be.



“With economic equality, Indigenous peoples have the potential to unlock hundreds of billions of dollars for the Canadian economy. Without economic reconciliation, our unequal trade relationship will continue. We face a unique opportunity to remake the once-vibrant relationship between aboriginal peoples and businesses in the rest of Canada.”

Jean Paul Gladu