

Suggestions for a Title: Our Community
 Who We Are
 Life as We Know It
 Our Community Story

This document will serve as your community-based Community Profile. Part of your discussions with your planning group could include what you want to call this report on your community. This document, or the information in it, will also become part of your final CCP.

This Annotated Table of Contents (TOC) is a tool that will help you organize and fill in the details of this report.

INTRODUCTION TO GATHERING INFORMATION

In the early stages of the community planning process, we gather background information on who we are as a community to help us set goals for the future and to make informed decisions. A written profile document is an outcome of this step and it can serve as a reference tool as you continue on with your planning efforts.

Deciding what to look for and what to report on and include in the profile document can seem overwhelming at times – there is so much to include! While we want to have enough information to make good decisions, we also don't want to be paralysed into making no decisions until we have every last detail. Determining which details are essential and which can be added later is an ongoing process filled with opportunity and challenge. The amount of effort invested into this process of information gathering may depend on your own community's situation and values, and be influenced by the amount of time, money, skills and degree of political will. This annotated TOC can help you focus your research and highlight important information for your report.

To keep a holistic approach to community planning, sustainability and its four pillars have been used to organize this annotated TOC. The four broad categories environment, society, culture and economy are the basic elements that define a community and background information can be organized accordingly.

Gathering and organizing background information is essential for a comprehensive understanding of your First Nation's current status or situation. It helps to identify gaps in knowledge and any missing pieces that are required before effective decision-making can take place. This understanding can direct where you should focus your research efforts in cases where knowledge gaps need to be filled in order to achieve your planning goals. This information also allows us to begin a community analysis to identify areas of strength, to preserve, and areas of weakness, to improve or eliminate.

The subheadings in the table of contents are CIER's suggestions. You may find that additional headings or wording variations are necessary to better reflect your community and facilitated planning. This TOC is a guide and should be adapted to suit your own First Nation's needs.

ENVIRONMENT

Information under environment relates to the physical environment. Its purpose is to describe where your First Nation is located and identify the characteristics of the landscape and the community's eco-system.

Natural Environment

What is the natural environment like in your First Nation? This section describes the land, water, and animals.

Ideas for Reporting: photographs illustrating key environmental features and important plants/animals/fish; a table summarizing these features in addition to short written sections for easier reading.

Landscape

- What is the topography in the area (land form, soil type, geology, etc.)?
- Which areas are sensitive (e.g. because of ecosystem function, erosion risk, special plants/animals)? * You could link to, or you the same map for sensitive habitat areas; or could link to the cultural sensitive areas map

Vegetation and Wildlife

- What plant life is present (forest composition; traditional/medicinal plants, etc.)?
- What terrestrial species are present (mammals, birds, etc. habitat areas, protected areas, animals in the area – at risk/endangered or healthy populations – culturally significant species)?
- What aquatic species are present (habitat areas, protected areas, fish/muskrats etc. in the area – at risk/endangered or healthy populations – culturally significant species)?

Water

- Does the community get its drinking water from groundwater or surface water? Where and how? What are the other bodies of water nearby (rivers, lakes, creeks, etc.) and how are they important to the community (e.g. travel, commercial activities, subsistence fishing, spiritual). What is known about the health of these water bodies?
- Include information on drainage (local drainage issues; regional drainage – watershed or sub-watershed information)
 - Looking for information? Try: government reports on water quality, local land-use studies, industry environmental assessments, local knowledge, reports done/commissioned by the First Nation, etc. (this type of information is very valuable!)

Air Quality

- Is air quality an issue in the community? If so, what are the sources of pollution and what pollutants/toxins are of concern? Has this affected human health,

environmental health and if yes, how? Make linkages to the Social section of the document

- Looking for information? Try: the National Pollutant Release Inventory with Environment Canada (<http://www.ec.gc.ca/pdb/>), in industry reports, in reports by environmental non-profit organizations in your areas

Climate

- What are the characteristics of the local climate? What is the annual precipitation? Hours and days of sunlight? Average temperature, etc.? How have these patterns changed over the past several years?

Human Environment

What does the human environment and the built environment look like in your community?

Land

- What does the natural and human environmental look like together? Create a community context map (e.g., roads, buildings, rivers and streams, etc.)
 - Regional context map
 - Local context map (note: how does your First Nation fit into the larger regional context. How is it connected ecologically through river and streams, and socially to outside urban centres and adjacent rural communities?)
- What are the First Nation's land holdings?
 - Land under specific claims
 - Land under Treaty Land Entitlement
 - Land Set Aside
 - Fee Simple Lands
- Does the First Nation have land use designations or zoning (e.g. residential, commercial zones; protected areas, development areas, etc.)? Describe these here and refer to other reports or documents that exist.

Ideas for Reporting: maps (reader-friendly and technical); aerial photographs showing the landscape and built community

Settlement

- What has been built on the land? Introduce this section with a general overview of the settlement area of the First Nation.
 - Include community facilities (buildings, housing, recreational areas, cultural areas, commercial building, industrial buildings or areas, etc.)

*Ideas for Reporting: a sketch or map of the settlement area of the First Nation. *If you don't currently have this it can be created during your planning process and included later.*

- Existing Infrastructure (Hard Infrastructure)

Describe the infrastructure that exists in the First Nation in subsections on the following topics:

- Roads (winter / all season, paved, gravel; who is responsible for maintenance; which are First Nation, provincial, private, etc.)
- Existing water and wastewater infrastructure; sewage (waste treatment systems) lagoon; pipes; etc.
- Heating and energy system infrastructure and capacity
- Communications and telecommunications infrastructure
- Recreation facilities (field; play structures)
- Transportation infrastructure
- Existing buildings (and their status, e.g. in need of repair; good condition, etc.); community building; housing; commercial (e.g. gas bar, store), industry (e.g. sawmill), etc. * *You could decide to give an overview of building here and go into more detail on housing in the Social section and on commercial building in the Economic section, etc.*

Ideas for Reporting: *photographs showing examples of infrastructure*

- Local Land Use Patterns
 - Has there been any land-use planning; are there any maps, policies; are there any informal plans?
 - If these plans / policies exist do they suggest a future development plan?
 - Does housing exist in the core area or outside or both? Is there land available for future growth?
- Serviceable and Developable Areas
 - What areas in the First Nation do water, sewer, electricity, and roads already service? First Nation and non-First Nation communities alike face challenges due to population growth. Some of the challenges include maintaining, improving and extending roads, water lines and sewer pipes. In order to be cost-effective, sustainable and proactive decisions about new development should consider future growth of the community and environmental and cost implications of growth. * *You can work with a planner and a GIS technician to develop a map of the serviceable area.*
 - Some areas in your community will be more developable than others, and some areas should be left untouched altogether (e.g., cultural areas, environmentally sensitive areas). Developable areas imply areas where services such as water and sewer lines can be easily extended. This lowers costs and is often less destructive to the environment and landscape. Again these areas should exclude any area designated as sensitive or at risk. Producing a map that illustrates this is useful in making planning decisions. **If you have done some planning and land-use planning you may already have this information. If you don't, then this is one area where you will be making decisions as part of your planning process. When these decisions have been made you can work with a planner and/or a GIS expert to outline this information in your plan and policies and create a developable areas map.*

Ideas for Reporting: *a serviceable areas map; a developable areas map*

SOCIETY

Information gathered on society or the social aspects of the community include the demographic (i.e. population, future growth, age and gender distribution), education, health and well-being, and governance make-up of your community. You can also include your First Nation's history here, in the cultural section or both.

While the environment section, under human environment, highlighted the hard infrastructure in the community, this section highlights the soft infrastructure (governance, education, health care) that is essential for community coherence and engagement.

Demographics

- What is the current population, gender, and age distribution in your community? What is the current and projected family household size? What are the current and projected in and outmigration rates? Statistics Canada has information on some First Nations ([Aboriginal peoples data](#)) but because this isn't necessarily accurate or current consider enhancing this by doing a community survey. The First Nation may also already have gathered its own data on demographics.
http://cansim2.statcan.ca/cgi-win/cnsmcgi.pgm?Lang=E&SP_Action=Theme&SP_ID=10000
- First consider the validity of the government data. Does it seem close to what you know about the First Nations? Does the Planning Team want to use this data? What areas need additional information, if any?
- Understanding the current and projected age and gender structure of the community is an important factor in determining the future needs of the community. For example, if there is an increase in Elder population, then planning for housing and programs for Elders is important. Similarly, if there is growing youth population planning for larger schools, youth activities and additional housing is a potential priority.

Ideas for Reporting: pie-graphs, population pyramids, photographs

- Looking for Information? Try: reports in the Band or Administrative Office, school office, health office, conduct community research, interviews, Statistics Canada (Aboriginal peoples data).

Human Health

- How healthy is the community? Physically? Mentally? Emotionally?
- What are some of the issues facing community members related to health (e.g. smoking, obesity, diabetes, etc.)?
- What physical health programs or activities are available in the community (e.g. walking trails, nutritional programs, planned recreational activities/tournaments)?
- What mental/emotional programs or activities are available in the community (e.g. counselling, healing sessions, etc.)?

- Looking for information? Try: the Health Centre/Office staff and reports, conduct community research, Health Canada, Statistics Canada

Education

- What educational opportunities exist in the community (e.g. primary school, high school, adult education, distance education, language classes, other training courses)? Are there extra-curricular activities for children and youth (e.g., after school programs) associated with the school(s)?
 - What is the level of education of the First Nation community members? What percentage of the population (indicate whether on or on & off reserve) has a high school diploma, a post-secondary degree, a Masters degree?
 - What educational resources are available in the community? Are there enough teachers and do they have the right training (e.g. second language, special needs)? Are there local or Aboriginal teachers? Is there a high turnover of teachers in the school or is it stable? Are there enough materials and are they relevant and in good condition? (Teachers, materials)
 - What is the general attitude in the community towards education? Are the school building and staff respected in the community, a part of the community (e.g. free from graffiti or vandalism, teachers/staff included and participate in community events)
- Looking for Information? Try the School office or the INAC region for recent reports, interview the Principal, teachers and students, include this information on a community survey.

Governance and Administration

Summarize the existing governance structure and related soft infrastructure. How does the First Nation govern itself? Do all or part of the Indian Act apply? Does the First Nations Land Management Act apply? Is it a self-governing Nation? Where and how do traditional governance structures come into play (e.g. are there family heads or traditional/hereditary chiefs as well as elected chiefs)?

- **Band office departments**

What positions exist in the Band office and are they occupied or vacant? What political positions exist? What portfolios exist within the council? Is there an Executive Director or a Band Manager position? When are the regular Band meetings? **You could include a text box with the meeting information to encourage community members to attend. Include community planning on an upcoming Council meeting agenda that is open to the public!*

- **Administrative departments**

What administrative departments exist and what are the key positions and responsibilities in each? (e.g. is there a lands department, an environment department, is there a Director of Operations, etc.).

- **Governance Tools**

What protocols, policies, plans, bylaws, guidelines and decision tools etc. exist? Are these written down and accessible? Are they enforced?

- Committees

What standing committees (e.g. long-term committees) exist? Are there regular meetings and are they open to the public? What topic-based committees are currently meeting? What committees were important in the past but haven't been active lately? Accessing these resources may become important as you move forward in the planning process. For example, economic development committees, education committees, language/culture committees, etc.

- Other stakeholder groups

Are there other groups that meet on a regular basis that you should include? These could include parent groups, co-management groups, sports groups, etc.

** Some of this information may seem obvious to you but remember that you may also choose to use this report outside of the First Nation as part of negotiations, business partnerships, etc. The political and administrative structures in First Nations can be quite different across Canada so this can help other communities, governments, or business partners understand your situation.*

CULTURE

Knowing the history and culture of the community - both past and present - will help you understand your First Nation community's current situation and make decisions for the future.

Cultural history and practices

- What are the key milestones in the development of your First Nation and your culture?
- What practices or activities do people participate in?
- What are the key cultural symbols and or icons in the community?

Ideas for Reporting: photographs, links to websites for more information, a list of community group or committees focusing on culture

Cultural sensitive areas map

- Which areas are culturally sensitive in your First Nation? Any future development must be sensitive to cultural sites, burial grounds, traditional use areas, recreation areas, etc.

Ideas for Reporting: reader-friendly map; link this to or build on the environmentally sensitive map

Indigenous knowledge / local knowledge

- Has your community been active in keeping Indigenous knowledge a part of everyday life, passed on to the next generation, etc.? There may be programs, activities (e.g. a bush camp for youth), or projects (e.g. working with industry or an environmental assessment using IK) that you can highlight here.
- Who in your community participates in traditional practices (e.g., hunting, gathering, arts and culture, etc)? Who are the knowledge keepers? It may not be necessary to identify names but remember that if you choose to do this you can also create a community and a public version of the report to keep personal information confidential.

Aboriginal Language Use

- What is the original language of your First Nation? Are there stories or history to include here?
- Do people speak their language? What percentage of people? Of Elders, adults, youth (if you have this information)? Are there language classes or programs available?

Ideas for Reporting: pie graphs, photographs, a text box with local words and English translations or pictures.

ECONOMY

Building an economic profile of your First Nation outlines the current economic activities and may help determine if the community is economically sustainable. It is important to evaluate the strength of the local economy, since a sustainable economy helps to take care of financial needs and future development in your First Nation.

Economic Development

- What is the economic history of the First Nation? What employment industries and sectors have been key in the past, present and foreseeable future?
- What are the current economic development activities and trends? What percentage of money spent by community members stays in the community to support the local economy? What are people spending money on locally / outside the community?
 - What are the local resources and sources of economic production?
 - Look for or complete an inventory of businesses.
 - Look for or complete a study on economic leakage.
- What are the future economic developing activities and trends (if this information is available)?
 - Looking for Information? Try: reports in the Band Office or Economic Development department; Statistics Canada data as a starting point enhanced through community research (local interpretations of employment can vary; will you include unpaid employment as a category?)

Economy and People

- What are the current employment rates by age, gender, sector, industry? What are the barriers to employment? By age, by gender?
- What are the current individual and household income levels?
- Are there enough people to do the jobs required in the community? Do people have the training to do these jobs or do they need more/different opportunities for work or training?
 - Look for or conduct a human resource inventory. Link this to education.

Financial Base of the First Nation Government

- What is the total operating revenue / budget by department and category?
- What are the total revenue sources?
- What are the total annual costs by category?
- Does the First Nation have existing arrangements with any financial lending institutions (e.g. for business, for housing, etc.)? Do private business or people have relationships with lending institutions?