Building Knowledge, Measuring Well-being

Developing Sustainability Indicators for Winnipeg's First Nations Community

Christa Rust, MNRM

Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs

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International Institute for Sustainable Development

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Introduction

The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) is engaged in a project with the International Institute for Sustainable Development to develop sustainability indicators for Winnipeg's urban First Nations community. Indicators are being proposed to help understand the current state of the urban First Nations community, what course it is on, and how far the community is from where it wants to be. In essence, the sustainability indicators are expected to help the AMC move closer to the following objectives:

- o build an improved understanding of the challenges facing Winnipeg's First Nations community for both the First Nations and non-First Nation public and decision-makers;
- o help identify critical problems and vulnerabilities and their underlying causes where policy action by First Nations and/or other actors is necessary, as well as to address these vulnerabilities;
- o help identify the past successes of Winnipeg's First Nations community and factors that made such success possible;
- o through dialogue and engagement develop a set of goals, specific targets and building on past successes develop policies and actions that will help meet these goals; and
- o build capacity at AMC and within the First Nations community of Winnipeg so as to better diagnose its problems, to realize its successes and develop confidence in envisioning, planning and implementing collective and individual action in the interest of achieving a positive future and enhancing well-being.

This literature review will provide a brief assessment of the relevant literature as it relates to this project. The review is intended to identify and examine past research, conceptual frameworks, methods and practical experience with indicator systems in the First Nations context. It will also highlight important findings, available data sources and determine gaps in available research. Given the mandate of the AMC, the focus of the literature

review concentrates only on Winnipeg's urban First Nations population. The literature review does not attempt to identify, nor draw conclusions, on the status of the Métis or Inuit population in the urban context. In order to avoid confusion and to fully understand the focus of the literature reviewed, it is essential to differentiate between what is meant by Aboriginal, North American Indian, Status Indian and Non-Status Indian, as these terms will be used in this review.

Aboriginal refers to a people who self-identify with one or more of the three Aboriginal groups recognized in Canada's *Constitution*—North American Indians, Métis and Inuit—or are registered under the *Indian Act*.

North American Indian refers to a people who self-identify as "First Nation" or "Indian" people(s) and are members of a particular nation such as Ojibway, Cree, Dakota or Dene.

Status Indian refers to "First Nation" or "North American Indian" people(s) registered under the *Indian Act*, including those reinstated under the terms of *Bill C-31*, 1985.

Non-Status Indians refers to "North American Indian", "First Nation" or 'Indian' people(s) not registered under the *Indian Act*.

Literature Overview

The amount of recent literature on urban First Nations' peoples in Winnipeg, or any other large metropolitan city in Canada for that matter, is not keeping pace with the growth of the population. It is very difficult to obtain recent statistics focusing on First Nations' peoples separately. Instead, the available statistics group First Nations' peoples with the Métis and Inuit, despite the fact that their leadership systems do not operate as one and these groups view themselves as separate and distinct peoples. "*Manitoba is one of several provinces and territories with a significant Aboriginal population... Almost one in six Canadian Aboriginal people reside in Manitoba*" (Service Canada 2006, 13). From this review, it can be ascertained that there are three reasons why the literature does not adequately distinguish each group individually.

First is the common viewpoint presented in the literature, that there is a lack of consistent and adequate data collection on First Nations' peoples in Canada (Kastes 1993; Peters 1996; Clatworthy *et al.* 1997; Peters and Starchenko 2005; Cardinal and Adin 2005). Statistics Canada census data indicates there are a number of issues that impact the comparability of past surveys. *"Protocols for data collection are oriented towards the general population and may not be suited to the social context and spatial behaviour of Indigenous peoples"* (Distasio *et al.* 2005, 26). As well the definition of who is considered an Indian has been altered; administration methods and census questions have changed; and the patterns of self-identification have varied (Peters and Starchenko 2005). Additionally, census enumeration is an issue. People residing in personal care homes, prisons, rooming-houses and those that call the street home are not counted. This is *"...problematic given...that in urban centres there tend to be very high concentrations of Aboriginal people who are either living in rooming houses, because of lower rent, or who are homeless*" (Distasio *et al.* 2005, 27). All of that has made it difficult to derive accurate and comparable data on the broader group as a whole, let alone distinguish one segment.

Second, a large proportion of the literature available is dated and therefore does not anticipate the reassertion of First Nations' identities, which began in the past half-century. The perceived course of First Nations has been transformed by rapid growth, increasing urbanization, the movement towards self-government, an increase in First Nation students obtaining higher education, the impact of Bill C-31 and the expansion of Constitutional and Treaty Rights (Cassidy 2005). Assimilation efforts of the past did not work as envisioned. Rather, efforts and their impacts have essentially motivated First Nations to strive for the protection of their culture, heritage, land, traditions and rights in response to the large-scale loss of cultural heritage and identity and the rapid erosion of traditional livelihoods and skills.

The third reason arises from the complications of government jurisdiction. First Nations fall under and are affected by multiple jurisdictions that put many, often competing or contradictory, demands on them; this leads to uncertainty, inefficiency and confusion. By law the federal government is responsible for fulfilling treaty and fiduciary obligations to First Nations' peoples—lawful obligations arising from the treaties, the *Indian Act*, and other relevant legislation (Rowinski and Falco 2007). Complicating factors arise when First Nations' peoples leave their reserve communities and migrate to urban areas. The federal government usually takes the position that once First Nations' peoples leave reserves, they are no longer a federal responsibility. Yet most provincial authorities argue that status Indians remain the legal responsibility of the federal government regardless of where they reside (Graham and Peters 2002). The failure of federal and provincial governments to accept, clarify and coordinate their jurisdictional roles and responsibilities with respect to First Nations' peoples has resulted in a policy void (Price 1979; Peters 1996; Graham and Peters 2002; Peters 2006; Cooke and Belanger 2006). The literature suggests that this debate has been ongoing for more than five decades now (Peters 2006):

> *Wrangling over jurisdiction has impeded urban Aboriginal people's access to services. Intergovernmental disputes, federal and provincial offloading, lack of program coordination, exclusion of municipal*

governments and urban Aboriginal groups from discussions and negotiations on policy and jurisdictional issues, and confusion regarding the political representation of Aboriginal people in cities have all contributed to a situation that has had serious adverse effects on the ability of Aboriginal people to gain access to appropriate services in urban centres (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples 1996, 551).

Given these three complicating factors and the response to the problems of the past, First Nations are becoming increasingly assertive in securing their rights in negotiations with other levels of government and building capacity for self-government. Obviously, this direction shift requires a thorough understanding of key facts about the status and trends of First Nations both in the urban context and beyond. The need for such information is in many ways not unique to First Nations, as other communities worldwide share the same aspirations, but it has to be rooted in and reflect unique First Nations' values, problems and visions for a positive future. The literature identifies a significant information gap in the minds of Canadian society and First Nations themselves, which is impeding our ability to understand and address the needs of the urban First Nations population. We need to fill the gap, deal with the jurisdictional issues and pay attention to the needs and service coordination to ensure a smooth transition from reserve to urban life.

Historical Context

For many Canadians, it is difficult to understand why there is still a strained relationship between First Nations and government, and why First Nations' peoples have a special status and rights. The Honourable Lincoln M. Alexander writes, "*most public opinion surveys show that Canadians are ignorant about Aboriginal affairs,*" (Alexander 2000, 3). Historically, the Canadian education system has been largely to blame for this lack of understanding. The system has not done an adequate job of teaching a history curriculum that encompasses First Nations' perspectives (Paul 2000). Very little history in fact has been taught in secondary schools in the last few decades. When it is taught, the historical presentation reflects the European perspective that in many cases downplays the severity and brutality of certain events, giving little credence to First Nations' peoples (Paul 2000). Understanding the situation today requires that one has a basic knowledge of the historical relationship between First Nations and government at least since the time of the treaties. The aforementioned statement is a consistent theme in almost all the literature reviewed. This historic relationship is a very important consideration, as the way things are today are a direct reflection of the decisions of the past.

[Erasmus and Sanders (2002) describe the most pervasive strain to the relationship between First Nations non-First Nations people as Treaty interpretation.] Before contact, First Nations' peoples treated or established treaties with other (Indian) nations to settle territorial disputes and negotiate peaceful outcomes leading to coexistence. When the Europeans wanted to enter into the first few of the numbered treaties,[1] First Nations believed the nature of the treaty was to be the same as the sacred Treaties which they signed with their neighbouring nations, allowing for a peaceful sharing of the land. Price states: "*the British created treaties on the model of state-to-state legal relationships, imposed them on the small Indian societies, and used these documents to rationalize the displacement of the Native people from their land*" (Price 1979, 214). When it became

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1 Numbered treaties refers to the series of 11 treaties, each baring a number reflective of their negotiated order, signed by Crown representatives and First Nation leaders between 1871 to 1921. These treaties encompass lands in Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and the Northwest Territories.

apparent to First Nations that the intentions of the Europeans were not as they seemed and differing interpretations of the treaty significantly altered intent, relationships suffered dramatically.

> *The history of the settlement of Canada shows that non-native people, represented by federal, provincial and local governments, have continued to break the original agreements. Hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering sections of treaties that were intended to protect the Aboriginal way of life have continued to be changed by Canadian Government policies, regulations and legislation. The original land base agreed to at treaty time has and continues to be expropriated for bridges, municipal expansion, military exercises, and railway and highway right-of-ways, generally without compensation. In many cases, First Nations are still waiting to have the land entitlement of one-hundred-year-old treaties fulfilled* (Erasmus and Saunders 2002, 5).

With resources running scarce and an impending famine, many of the First Nations were pressured into signing the remaining numbered Treaties. The Canadian government responded to the increasingly desperate situation of the First Nations by following its own timetable and paying little attention to the needs of the people (Ray 1996). The treaties resulted in displacement, poverty and isolation on reserves (Brownlie 2002). When the majority of First Nations were signatories to the numbered treaties, parliament passed the first *Indian Act* in 1876, providing Canada's federal government with exclusive authority to legislate "*Indians, and lands reserved for the Indians*" (Constitution Act of Canada 1867, S. 91[24]). The Act governed almost all aspects of the lives of First Nations' peoples, giving the Department of Indian Affairs[2] wide ranging powers over property, land use, health regulations, elections and justice (Price 1979). The *Indian Act* consolidated all existing legislation and further pushed the government-policy focus of First Nation assimilation. The Act placed First Nations' peoples in a different legal category from all other Canadians in an effort to pressure them to renounce their

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[2] Know today as "*Indian and Northern Affairs Canada*."

rights and privileges and assimilate into mainstream society, a process called enfranchisement (Ray 1996; Brownlie 2002). Those who did not enfranchise were forced to abide by the racially discriminating laws laid out in the _Indian Act_. "*There is very little in the Act that is positive, that is culture-enhancing*" (Price 1979, 219). A selection of some of the more oppressive and controversial laws in the Act included the following:

- First Nations' peoples were treated as minors requiring protection from exploitation and lessons in civilization (Palys 1993);
- the government had the power to define who was a "legal" Indian within the Act, and who was not. Status-Indian women who married outside the status-Indian community were stripped of their status, along with their offspring from that union (Price 1979; Palys 1993; Ray 1996);
- the English system of governance was imposed upon First Nations' peoples in an effort to erode traditional native structures (Palys 1993). In keeping with the paternalistic nature of the Act, First Nations' peoples were not given the right to vote federally and only "legal" males were allowed to vote in band council elections (Palys 1993; Erasmus and Sanders 2002);
- strict rules and penalties were put in place making the manufacture, sale and consumption of alcohol on reserves illegal (Ray 1996);
- the pass-system made it illegal to leave the reserve without the permission of an Indian Agent[3] (Palys 1993; Erasmus and Sanders 2002; Brownlie 2002);
- the Act made it an offence for an Indian to retain a lawyer for the purpose of advancing an action on Aboriginal rights or land claims (Ray 1996; Palys 1993); and
- the Act banned traditional ceremonies such as the Potlatch, Thirst Dance and the Sun Dance because they were viewed as savage and hedonistic by the church (Palys 1993).

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[3] The Indian Agent was a representative of the crown responsible for upholding the _Indian Act_ on reserves. They played an active role in the assimilations of First Nations people and held a great deal of power over many aspects their lives.

From the time of contact, the church took a dominant role in educating the Indians. First Nations' peoples were perceived as "savages" and the church felt that they needed to become civilized Christians and learn the ways of the white man (Ray 1996; Schouls 2002). With the development and administration of the residential school system, the federal government took over that role as early as 1874 in order to meet their legal obligations under the *Indian Act* (Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada 2001)*.* In 1920, school attendance became mandatory and all First Nation children were forcibly removed from their homes by priests, Indian Agents, and police officers (Palys 1993; Assembly of First Nations 2007). In residential schools children often endured the trauma of abuse- they were taught to despise their culture, forbidden to speak their native language and were barred from contact with their families or communities, often for long periods of time (Ray 1996; Assembly of First Nations 2007). In effect, residential schools served to displace thousands of children, cause irrevocable harm to many generations and further tarnish the First Nations' and government relationship.

Residential schools were introduced in the late 1800's and were not fully dismantled until in the 1970's with the last school closed in 1996 (Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada 2001). There were a total of 130 residential schools with a total attendance at these schools estimated to include over 150,000 Aboriginal Canadians (Prentice 2007). "*There are 80,000 aboriginal Canadians alive today who attended these schools. The descendants of those people number somewhere between 250,000 and 350,000 Canadians*" (ibid). The year 1990 marked the beginning of the first lawsuits filed against the Government of Canada with respect to the treatment endured by residential school survivors. In response to the growing number of lawsuits and the recommendations made by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, a national resolution framework was launched in 2003 to help contribute to reconciliation (Prentice 2007; Assembly of First Nations 2006).

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples was launched by the federal government in 1991 with the following comprehensive mandate:

The Commission of Inquiry should investigate the evolution of the relationship among aboriginal peoples (Indian, Inuit and Métis), the Canadian government, and Canadian society as a whole. It should propose specific solutions, rooted in domestic and international experience, to the problems which have plagued those relationships and which confront aboriginal peoples today. The Commission should examine all issues which it deems to be relevant to any or all of the aboriginal peoples of Canada... (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples 1996, V.1 p. 23).

The purpose of the commission was to explore the contentious issues and challenges facing Aboriginal communities through national public consultations. The commission was compelled to do so for four reasons:

o Canada's claim to be a fair and enlightened society depends on it;
o the life chances of Aboriginal people, which are still shamefully low, must be improved;
o negotiation, as conducted under the current rules, has proved unequal to the task of settling grievances; and
o continued failure may well lead to violence (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples 1996, xi).

Land (2002, 133) identifies three key points that emerged from the commission's report:

o Canada's attempts to assimilate Aboriginal people (so they become "just like" other Canadians) have been disastrous in the past, and will not work in the future;
o the problems in the political and social relationship between Aboriginal people and the rest of Canada require fundamental change—merely tinkering with existing Aboriginal policy will not work; and

o   reforming the land-claims process and ensuring that Aboriginal communities have control over natural and other resources is the key to everything else: self-government, economic development, and building healthy communities.

The Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples was released as five volumes in 1996. The 35,000-page report pointed out areas that required attention and made 444 recommendations for change based on the consultation (Dussault 2005). Ten years after the Royal Commission was initiated, the Assembly of First Nations produced a report card on the Canadian government's performance: "*based on our assessment, Canada has failed in terms of its action to date*" (Assembly of First Nations 2006, 2). What is defeating to Canada's Aboriginal peoples is the fact that these same issues have and continue to be identified without sufficient action or funding in place to deal with the quality-of-life gap between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations.

Framework Methodologies

Indicators are not a new phenomenon, although they are increasingly receiving more attention and use. In 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development set forth the sustainability indicators movement by calling for: "*…the development of new ways to measure and assess progress towards sustainable development*" (Hardi and Zdan 1997, 1). The popularity of indicators is akin to the fact that they: "*…are a necessary part of the stream of information we use to understand the world, make decisions, and plan our actions*" (Meadows 1998, 19). The identification and monitoring of indicators consequently becomes a tool for change and/ or learning (ibid.). Indicator systems have been developed by a broad spectrum of organizations around the world on many different scales ranging from local communities to national or provincial governments, tribes or international organizations to guide policies and decisions (United Nations 1992; Bossel 1999).

> *Indicators of sustainable development need to be developed to provide*
> *solid bases for decision-making at all levels and to contribute to a self-*

regulating sustainability of integrated environment and development systems (United Nations 1992, 284).

The Compendium of Sustainable Development Indicator Initiatives is evidence of the growing popularity of sustainability indicators and the vast number of practical applications they serve. Since 1995 the International Institute for Sustainable Development has housed the compendium. With over 600 entries, it is one of the most extensive sources of information on sustainable development indicator initiatives around the world.

Given the vast array of uses for indicators, it is not a surprise that there are many different types of indicator frameworks. Typically, sustainable development indicator frameworks focus on the three domains of sustainability—social, environmental and economic. The review of the available literature on sustainability indicator frameworks or systems suggests that framework selection should depend on what one is trying to measure and the audience targeted. This is an important consideration for work that involves First Nations, as cultural relevancy needs to be incorporated into the framework. A culturally relevant or ethnically specific framework is essentially tailored to suit a particular people's emotional, physical, environmental and/ or spiritual needs. To narrow the scope on this broad topic, this review will only focus on the conceptual frameworks that have been developed and/ or used in the First Nations context.

In First Nations culture there is a holistic belief that all aspects of life are interconnected and delicately balanced (Brownlie 2001; Clarkson *et al.* 1992). The traditional medicine wheel is symbolic of this belief. The medicine wheel is a circle without ends that is divided into four parts. The more commonly recognized relationships that the medicine wheel depicts include the four symbolic races—white, red, yellow and black; the four directions—north, south, east and west; the four elements of the physical world—fire, earth, air and water; and the four aspects of our human nature—mental, spiritual, emotional and physical (Bopp *et al.* 1984). The medicine wheel is a map that can be used for a variety of purposes to express relationships. More recently, the medicine wheel has

been used as a tool for the development, assessment and measurement of indicators. The medicine wheel *"...helps us with our 'Vision,' to see exactly where we are and in which areas we need to develop in order to realize and become our potentials*" (Tree-Song no date).

Cardinal and Adin (2005) developed quality-of-life indicators for urban Aboriginals in the Greater Vancouver Region. Their report is a valuable resource, as there has not been a lot of work that focuses on the urban Aboriginal population in Canada and the creation of indicator systems. The authors adapted their methodology from the UNESCO Goal-to-Indicator system and incorporated traditional Aboriginal beliefs, teachings and concepts used in the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada medicine wheel framework. By utilizing this combined methodology, the authors state that it is possible to encompass the holistic aspects and relationships critical to overcoming the traditional fragmentation of conventional indicator frameworks (Figure 1).

*Figure 1: Framework – An Urban Aboriginal Life*
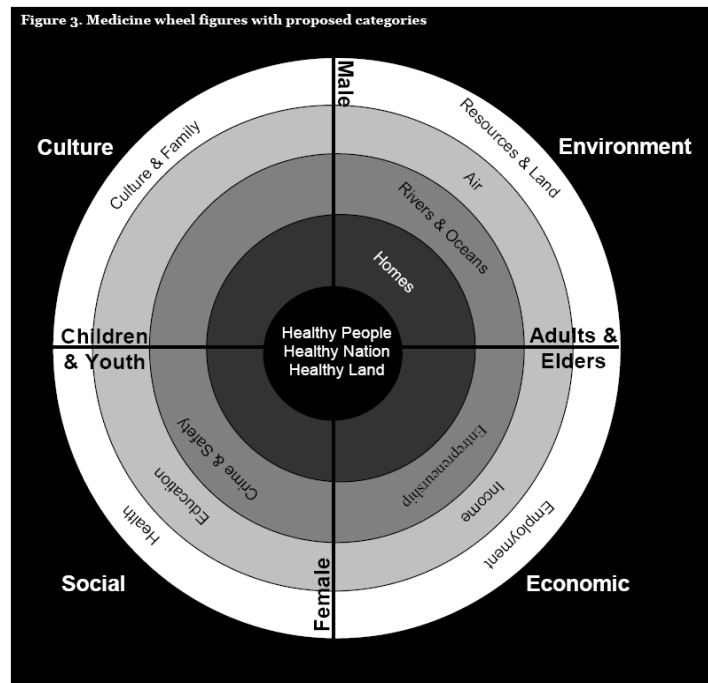
(Cardinal and Adin 2005)

The Aboriginal Task Group (2005) produced a report based on an adaptation of the medicine wheel as the framework for an environmental scan of the Aboriginal community in Winnipeg—The Aboriginal Life Promotion Framework (Figure 2). The framework was created by Judith G. Bartlett in a manner that guides the layout of the foci of the report with the holistic inclusion of all aspects of Aboriginal life. The framework is not an indicator framework, yet it is noteworthy because it is culturally relevant and shows another adaptation of the traditional medicine wheel which has the potential to be used as an indicator framework.

Figure 2: Framework – Eagle's Eye View
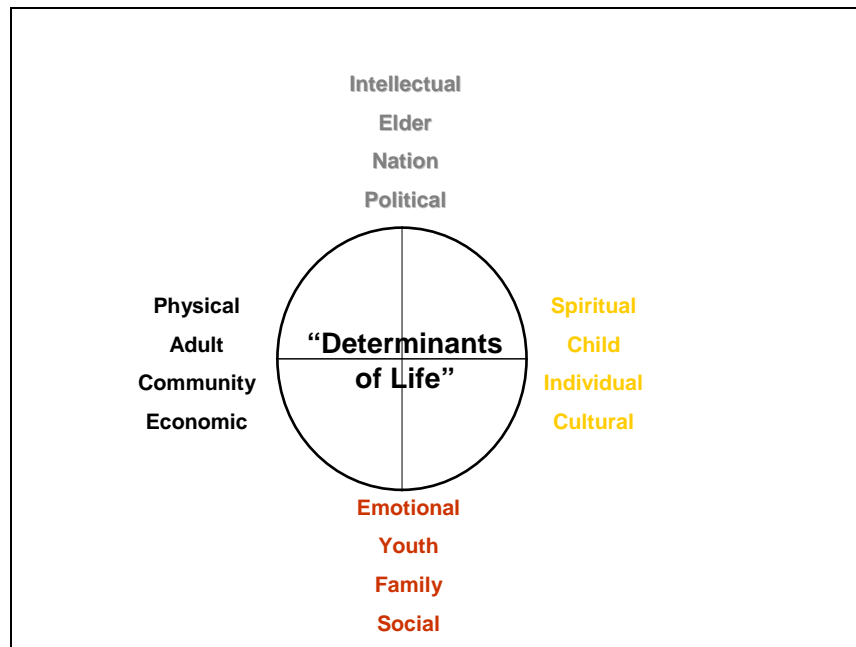
(Aboriginal Task Group 2005)

The selection of the framework is essential to the success of indicator projects and the usefulness of the indicators. There are many frameworks that employ the medicine wheel approach for indicators more typically found in health-related works. Even though these frameworks focus on a more specific area of concern, the literature available on them was reviewed to further explore the Aboriginal context with regards to indicator systems.

With the objective of developing community health indicators, Henry Lickers, in a multi-year project with reserve communities in Ontario, created a model based on the medicine wheel which was used to integrate and assess the four linkages expressed by the wheel and develop indicators of community health that were both measurable and quantifiable (Institute of the Environment 2002). The research essentially took descriptive population statistics and fed them into the wheel to show the interconnectedness of the community health issues and holistically map out solutions that could then be deployed to help remedy the growing issues. In order to keep human health indicators in balance, the community must maintain a balanced approach to life, as represented by the life indicators (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Framework – Community Health Indicators
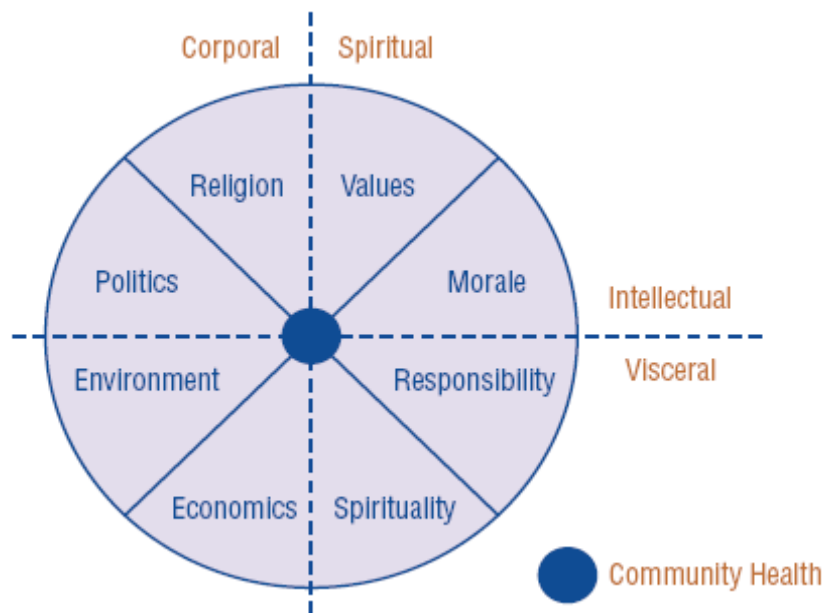
(Institute of the Environment 2002)

Given the number of available frameworks it is recommended that one consider peer-reviewed guidelines for framework selection and indicator design and the interpretation and communication of the results at the outset of the project. The 1996 Bellagio Principles were created to serve that purpose and provide a link between theory and

practice (Hardi and Zdan 1997). These principles recommend that frameworks be built upon the following 10 key principles:

1. Guiding Vision And Goals;
2. Holistic Perspective;
3. Essential Elements;
4. Adequate Scope;
5. Practical Focus;
6. Openness;
7. Effective Communication;
8. Broad Participation;
9. Ongoing Assessment; and
10. Institutional Capacity.

Cardinal and Adin (2005) build on these principles and stress the need for a holistic and interactive structure in keeping with the Aboriginal context of their research. Significant importance is placed on building a series of feedbacks into the framework design, category selection and indicator identification to ensure the system is representative of the concerns and values of the people (ibid.). Selection of the framework therefore needs to consider and integrate the sometimes competing views and opinions of one's audience. The framework itself is best created and maintained with the continual involvement of that audience.

Data Sources

Data and indicators are two very different things. Data are defined as *"individual facts, statistics, or items of information"* (Random House 2006). Indicators by contrast, are defined as *"an index"* providing *"an indication of the condition or [a] direction"* (The American Heritage 2006). Data sources are very important in the context of indicators, as data fed into indicators categories translate into indicators or indices of conditions.

There are two problems that have plagued the accurate assessment of available data sources for First Nations' peoples. First, the 1985 amendments to the <u>*Indian Act*</u> commonly referred to as Bill C-31 have had a significant effect on Aboriginal demographics over the past 20 years. Bill C-31 provided a reinstatement of Indian Status, enabling women marrying non-Indians and children of these unions to regain their status that was previously stripped away by the <u>*Indian Act*</u>. A significant number of the reinstatements occurred during 1986–1991, and a small number continue to be registered every year (Service Canada 2006). Second, many of the data sources have not been around that long, which presents a problem when you are trying to get an accurate picture of population changes. When considering the Statistics Canada Census in particular, reliability is questioned given the significant changes it has undergone over the years. The administration of the census, the questions asked and the definition of Aboriginal have all undergone change. It was not until the 1980's that Statistics Canada began to ask a specific question about Aboriginal Identity.

Currently, Statistics Canada collects demographic information on Canada's Aboriginal population from the following data sources: the Census of Population, the Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS), the Aboriginal Children's Survey (ACS), the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS). The following provides a summary description of each of these active data sources, along with a brief note about the issues that affect the accuracy of the results.

Census of Population

The census of Population is the main and oldest source of data collected in Canada. Additionally, it is also the oldest source of data available on Aboriginal peoples in Canada. The census provides a demographic and socio-economic snapshot of the population once every five years. Separate and collective information is available for North American Indian, Inuit and Métis, Registered and non-Registered Indians and for members of an Indian Band or First Nation. It is important to note that there are some issues affecting the true picture of the population in addition to the general issues, Bill C-31 and the reliability of data sources, mentioned in the opening of this section. The census is subject to issues of under-coverage and incompletely enumerated reserves where enumeration is either not permitted or halted before completion (Statistics Canada 2007). In addition, counts do not include Aboriginal persons residing in institutions such as: hospitals, senior care homes, jails, shelters, or those living outside Canada on census day (ibid.).

Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS)

In 1991 the first Aboriginal Peoples Survey was enumerated post-census. The survey covered First Nations' peoples residing on and off-reserve, Métis and Inuit. There have been three enumerated surveys thus far. The last survey done in 2006 was conducted in two parts. So far only the off-reserve population has been surveyed. The survey provides additional data on social and economic conditions, but its main focus is identifying the needs of Aboriginal peoples by focusing on issues such as health, language, employment, income, schooling, housing and mobility. This survey, as with the census, can also be affected by issues of under-coverage and incomplete reserve enumeration (ibid.).

Aboriginal Children's Survey (ACS)

After the 2006 Census of Population, the Aboriginal Children's Survey was carried out for the first time. The survey was designed to provide a more accurate picture of early childhood development for Aboriginal children under the age of six who reside off-reserve. The data collected includes a wide range of topics, including health, sleep, nutrition, development, nurturing, child care, school, language, behaviour, activities and environment. A second survey is expected to follow for on-reserve Aboriginal children.

The survey is also subject to issues of under-coverage and incomplete reserve enumeration (ibid.).

Labour Force Survey (LFS)

In 2004, an Aboriginal identity question was added to the Labour Force Survey so that Aboriginal peoples living off-reserve in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia, and all people living in the three territories could self-identify. As of January 2007, the survey-scope of labour market conditions for off-reserve Aboriginal peoples was altered to allow Aboriginal people in Eastern Canada the ability to self-identify (ibid.).

Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS)

In 2005, the Canadian Community Health Survey included an Aboriginal identity question in addition to an ethnic origin question. The purpose of the survey is to gather health-related data for the Canadian population ages 12 years and older residing off-reserve in all provinces and territories (ibid.).

The movement towards data collection that independently identifies each group is still in its infancy, having only recently become a focus of assessment in 2000 (ibid.). Government surveys, for the most part, examine the demographic situation using quantitative methods, which only provides us with half the picture. Research projects and community-level surveys are needed to understand why people make the choices they do, especially for a project such as this.

Even in the urban context attention must be paid to environment and environmental health matters. The Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation dataset provides data for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal households all throughout Canada, definable by on or off-reserve status and location.

Housing in Canada Online (HiCO)

This database incorporates data from the sample years of 2001, 1996 and 1991. The data allow for the comparison of housing conditions of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal households. The gaps arising from that comparison can be examined over time by key

characteristics such as location, household type, income and shelter costs (Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation 2007). Data are available on whether households live in dwellings that meet Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation housing standards. Those that do not meet the standards are broken-down further based on average income, percent below affordability standard, per cent below adequacy standard and percent below suitability standard (ibid.).

The review of the literature did not yield many qualitative sources of data that can be drawn upon for Winnipeg's urban First Nations' peoples, nor did it reveal substantial environment or environmental health data beyond the available Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation data. Most of the literature provides a briefing on research surveys that have been conducted, but generally these surveys are not very comprehensive in both their focus and sample size. Research by Peters (1996, 2002; 2006) provides the main source of survey data which will be explored in various sections of this literature review. Johnston (1979) noted the availability of data from social agencies, a source that would provide detail on environment and environmental health, is limited as agencies most often do not separate statistics for First Nation and non-First Nation clients. Recently enacted privacy laws may also serve to limit access to this data.

Profile of the First Nations Population

In order to provide an accurate picture of the urban First Nations population in Winnipeg, it is important to explore the literature more broadly and understand the profile of the people as a whole. It is necessary to understand what factors are fuelling urban population growth, so some attention must be paid to understanding the status of First Nations and the rural reserve communities in Manitoba. Understanding where First Nations peoples are migrating from and why helps to provide a context for the dynamics and needs of the population during the rural-urban transitional stages.

As a whole, First Nations in Canada face epidemic rates of diabetes, heart disease, weight problems and poor nutritional status (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples 1996). First Nations are overrepresented in nearly every health category when compared to non-First Nation Canadians (Figure 4). Statistics place this group at greater risk for many chronic health issues and find that First Nation children are more commonly exposed to fetal alcohol syndrome, poor nutrition, and acute illness (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples 1996; Young *et al.* 1998). In addition, the population also faces high rates of addiction, mental health problems and suicide (ibid.).

Figure 4: Risk of Chronic Health Conditions

Diagnosis	First Nation / Canadian Ratio
Arthritis / Rheumatism	1.7
Hypertension	2.7
Heart Problems	2.9
Diabetes (Males)	3.7
Diabetes (Females)	5.3
Tuberculosis	6.5
HIV	10.7

(Service Canada 2006)

In keeping with holistic beliefs, the profile of First Nations should not view health in isolation from the non-medical factors that impact the people inclusive of education,

employment, housing, water quality and sewage treatment (Health Canada 2000). These factors must be considered as they have a significant bearing on the health of the individual, the family and the community as referenced by *Henry Zoe in People to People, Nation to Nation*.

> *For a person to be healthy [he or she] must be adequately fed, be educated, have access to medical facilities, have access to spiritual comfort, live in a warm and comfortable house with clean water and safe sewage disposal, be secure in cultural identity, have an opportunity to excel in a meaningful endeavour, and so on. These are not separate needs; they are all aspects of a whole* (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples 1996, 72).

Manitoba

According to the 2001 Census, there were 90,340 North American Indians residing in the province of Manitoba (Statistics Canada 2001). Of that number, 56 percent lived on-reserve and 44 percent resided off-reserve (Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2001). The on-reserve population is spread amongst 64 reserve communities or bands located throughout the province of Manitoba (Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs 2007). Approximately 20 of those communities, for nine or 10 months a year, are accessible only by air (Chartrand *et al.* 2001). Those reserves located closer in proximity to the City of Winnipeg tend to have a higher proportion of their members living off-reserve (Johnston 1979).

The Treaty bands residing in Manitoba have signed or adhered to Treaties 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 10 between 1871 and 1910 (Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs 2007; Indian and Northern Affairs Canada 2007). The First Nations of Manitoba are made up of a number of distinct nations: the Cree, Ojibway, Dakota, Ojibway-Cree and Dene (Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs 2007). These five nations have distinct territories throughout the province. The Dene territory is found in northernmost parts of the province; the Cree territory in the north (Swampy Cree in the Northwest and Oji-Cree of Island Lake in the northeast); the Ojibway territory in the central and eastern regions; and the Dakota territory in the south

and western regions (Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs 2007; Price 1979). These nations form three very different linguistic groups—the Athapaskan, the Siouan and the Algonquian. Athapaskan is the linguistic group of the Dene people; the Siouan is the linguistic group of the Dakota people; and the largest linguistic group found in Manitoba is the Algonquian (ibid.). The Algonquian linguistic group encompasses the Cree, Ojibway and Ojibway-Cree nations (ibid.).
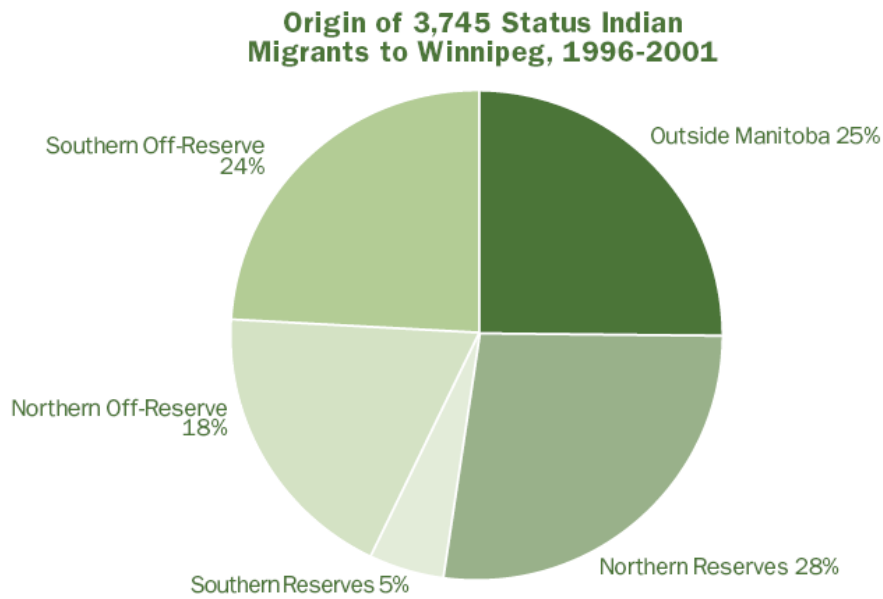
The living conditions in First Nation reserve communities are well hidden from the eyes of the majority of the Canadian population. Many visitors to reserve communities describe the situation as "fourth world" because you do not expect to find even third world conditions in a first world country (Preston 2007). Manitoba reserve communities possess the most crowded housing conditions in all of Canada (Chartrand *et al.* 2001). The majority of these overcrowded homes are heated by wood stoves and less than half have indoor plumbing (Marks 2007). First Nations' peoples in Manitoba "…are twice as likely as other Manitobans to have less than a grade nine education, three times less likely to complete high school and six times less likely to receive a university degree (Chartrand *et al.* 2007). The unemployment rate for First Nations' peoples in Manitoba is four times higher than for non-First Nations' peoples (Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs 2007). Manitoba's reserve communities have one of the highest rates of welfare dependency among First Nations' communities in Canada, at close to 80 percent (Chartrand *et al.* 2007).

Winnipeg

The First Nations population of Winnipeg can best be described as young, growing and increasingly urbanized. In Manitoba, approximately 55 percent of the population living off-reserve is under the age of 25 (Aboriginal People Survey 2001). With the current level of urban migration, the City of Winnipeg has become home to one of the fastest growing urban First Nations populations in Canada. The 2001 Census population for Winnipeg was 676,594 people. Of that number, 22,950 were North American Indian (ibid.). Employment, geography of migration and the importance of services and housing are all crucial factors assisting in the decisions to migrate to an urban centre (Cooke and Belanger 2006). "*Winnipeg is believed to be the principal destination of most natives*

leaving reserves in Manitoba as well as reserves from eastern Saskatchewan and north-western Ontario" (Johnston 1979, 108). Cooke and Belanger report that the most prevailing factor in the decision for First Nations' peoples to move to an urban area was personal networks and relationships (Cooke and Belanger 2006). Interestingly, the absence of these networks and relationships is also the leading cause for people's internal mobility in the city or the ultimate decision to return to the reserve (Institute of Urban Studies 2004). Of the Status-Indian migrants to Winnipeg from 1996 to 2001 (Figure 5), 42 percent arrived from other off-reserve locations, 33 percent from reserves, and 25 percent came from outside the province, most significantly northwestern Ontario (Service Canada 2006).

Figure 5: Origin of 3,745 Status-Indian Migrants to Winnipeg, 1996–2001

Origin of 3,745 Status Indian Migrants to Winnipeg, 1996-2001

- Outside Manitoba 25%
- Southern Off-Reserve 24%
- Northern Off-Reserve 18%
- Southern Reserves 5%
- Northern Reserves 28%

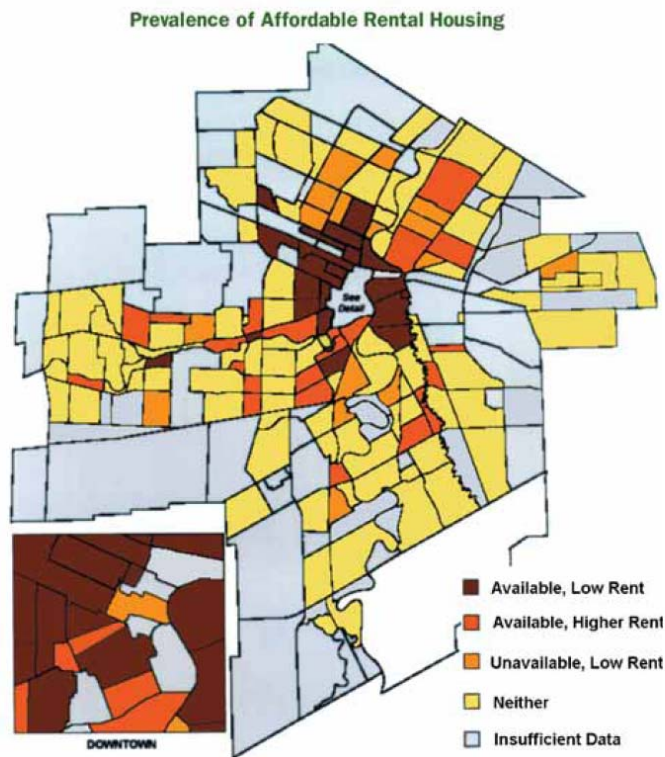*(Service Canada 2006)*

Urban Migration

Canada has been undergoing a dynamic transformation with the rapid rate of urbanization. First Nation urbanization has been increasing since the 1950's and is forecasted to continue at increasing rates (Peters 1996). Urban life is now becoming an integral part of First Nations lives in Canada and is beginning to raise many questions and concerns.

> *Any poorly prepared individual from a rural background will undergo cultural shock and trauma on migrating into the city, unless there is an excellent system of institutions to receive and educate that person in the urban area* (Price 1979, 229).

There has been a great deal of attention focused on the increased migration from reserve to urban environments since the 1960s. Early literature on this migration viewed Aboriginal urbanization as problematic, assuming that the migration was in response to poor economic and social conditions in the reserve community. The "push" factors that bring First Nations to urban areas "…*include high levels of unemployment on reserve, poor housing, and an increasing reserve population faced with sharing a fixed supply of land*" (Johnston 1979, 109). The "pull" factors *"…include the hope of employment, the search for education, the desire of younger Indians to demonstrate independence and the belief that they will 'make it' in the city*" (Johnston 1979, 109). The old assumption of the 1960s was that the Aboriginal population would behave in: much the same way that the turn of the century immigrant groups did, they would move in to the inner city and disperse to suburban areas as they assimilated (Peters and Oksana 2005). Such theories did not take into account the unique characteristics of the population, the fact that First Nations are not immigrants, and little attempt was made to understand the motivations contributing to their desire to move to the urban centre. Recent research has tried more explicitly to understand what motivates First Nations peoples to move to urban centres, where they choose to live and why. Current research generally agrees that access to education and employment are seen as the primary motivators for migration to urban

centres. Cooke and Belanger (2006) note that personal and institutional links also play an important role and must not be overlooked. Those motivators are consistent with the Mobility Study conducted in Winnipeg (Institute of Urban Studies 2004). The research shows that new migrants are more likely to locate or stay with acquaintances where possible while obtaining employment and housing or reside in areas with available low-cost housing (Institute of Urban Studies 2004; Peters and Starchenkon 2005). Comparative research focusing on the urban areas in both Winnipeg and Edmonton, where two of the largest Aboriginal metropolitan populations are found, shows very different settlement patterns for Aboriginal migrant populations (ibid.). In Edmonton, policies were developed to encourage developers to provide a diverse range of housing types, thereby ensuring a distribution of low income housing throughout the city. In contrast, the majority of Winnipeg's the low-cost housing can be found in the city's core or inner city because the low-cost or subsidized housing programs are predominantly located there (Figure 6).

Figure 6: City of Winnipeg Prevalence of Affordable Housing

There are no municipal policies to encourage developers to build a range of housing options. It is important to dispel the stereotype that all urban First Nations peoples live in the inner city. The 2001 Census Metropolitan Area for Winnipeg shows that the First Nations population of Winnipeg is dispersed, albeit the largest concentration is found in the inner city (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Aboriginal Identity, City of Winnipeg Census 2001
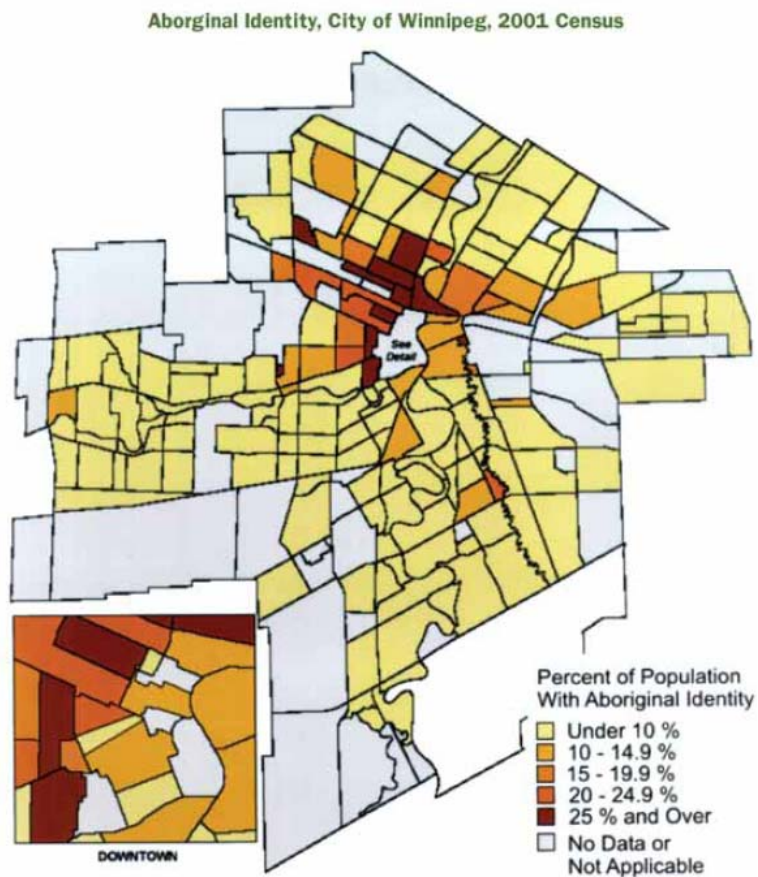
The results of the Mobility Study (2004) offer the most recent perspective on the profile of the Aboriginal migrant to the City of Winnipeg. From the 525 people surveyed, we can discern that a significant portion, approximately 70 percent of the migrating population can be characterised as single, between the ages of 20–39, and with a yearly income of

less than $15,000 in the community from which they came (Institute of Urban Studies 2004). The majority of this population moved to the city without information on housing options or any formal housing arrangements (ibid.). As such, dissatisfaction with the housing situation is a major driver of high mobility both within the urban area and to and from the reserve community. Individuals transitioning to the urban setting heavily depend on friends and family for information and support, including housing. The literature assumes that the return mobility, or return to the reserve community, takes place when new urban resident have difficulties securing employment or adapting to life in the urban centre (Cooke and Belanger 2006). Housing and employment are identified as the single-most important services needed for people migrating to the city (Institute of Urban Studies 2004).

Understanding the dynamics of the urban First Nations population has become a very important policy issue for both reserve and urban communities. Understanding the membership base and their needs determines available funding and where it should be used. The funding, if secured, is in turn used to create or enhance programs that serve to fulfill the identified needs of the people. The federal and provincial jurisdictional void hinders the efforts of First Nations governments to alleviate the situation for both reserve and urban communities.

Needs and Services

Understanding the needs of Winnipeg's urban First Nations population is not an easy undertaking. The population is a very diverse mix of nations, each with their own unique identity, traditions, language and culture. We know from the previous section that First Nations' peoples are dispersed all over the city and that the highest concentration of population in any one area is found in the inner city. The inner city is also typically where the negative impacts of poverty and economic marginalization abound (Peters and Starchenko, 2005; Graham and Peters, 2002). To combat the effects of those impacts, a strong sense of community cohesion needs to be fostered within the urban First Nations population with mechanisms in place to protect individual ties to their community, culture and traditions (Peters 1996). Such community empowerment gives First Nations an increased sense of control and self-sufficiency—improving the health of the individual, the family and the community.

There are inferences within the literature that suggest many of the existing federal programs and services for urban First Nations are deficient (Peters 2006; EAGLE Urban Transition Centre 2007). The programs and services are typically framed in terms of special needs rather than First Nations and treaty rights (Peters 2006). An additional factor to consider is the organizations funding relationships. The literature suggests that this relationship may constrain the activities and programs offered depending on who is funding the services (Peters 1996; EAGLE Urban Transition Centre 2007). "*Jurisdictional issues between the three levels of government may be contributing to the in-effectiveness and lack of far reaching scope of programs and services that Aboriginal people residing in and moving to the City of Winnipeg need*" (EAGLE Urban Transition Centre 2007, 62). In the City of Winnipeg there are over 80 different urban Aboriginal programs delivered by various levels of government in various departments (EAGLE Urban Transition Centre 2007). Yet at the same time, there are programs and services that are delivered by community-service organizations that receive funding from all three levels of government (ibid.). Understanding this diversity of needs and coordinating the

services to meet them is one of the biggest issues and challenges for the City of Winnipeg (Institute of Urban Studies 2004; EAGLE Urban Transition Centre 2007).

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Annex: Project Terms of Reference

Context and Rationale

This proposal was prepared by the Measurement and Assessment Program of the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), following preliminary discussions with representatives of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC).

Over the course of these discussions, the AMC, acting on behalf of Grand Chief Ron Evans, expressed strategic interest in strengthening the evidence-base of its role in governance related to the well-being of First Nations communities around the province. In particular, the AMC is interested in the statistics on Winnipeg's First Nations population, which is the largest urban population in the Province. It is also rapidly growing, and is facing critical challenges. These challenges, whether related to public health, education, employment or other issues, are well-known, but their dynamics are poorly understood. As a result, policy responses are often ineffective.

Sustainability indicator systems help track progress over time and are seen as essential for good governance by an increasing number of communities around the world. These indicator systems can help track economic, social, cultural and environmental change; help recognize achievements and challenges; and develop programs to move towards a positive vision of the future.

As communications tools, sustainable development indicators can be used to reach not only members of the community, but also external partners, whether at the provincial and federal level or internationally. Sustainability indicator systems are holistic, and typically address key economic, environmental, social and cultural issues. While they have many common elements, community indicators can be as different as communities themselves. Manitoba's First Nations communities have unique traditions and histories that need to be reflected in sustainability measures.

Developing indicators involves a process of appreciation, discovery, learning and engagement. IISD approaches this as part of a community's journey; where engagement builds ownership and lasting capacity that is embedded in governance and ultimately culture. The goals of this journey are consistent with IISD's vision and mission and values, and the organization views this work as a first step in a potentially long-term partnership with the AMC.

Objectives of this Process

It is expected that sustainability indicators with regard to Winnipeg's First Nations community will help the AMC move closer to the following objectives:

1.   build an improved understanding of the challenges facing Winnipeg's First Nations community for both the First Nation and non-First Nation public, and decision-makers;

2.   help identify critical problems and vulnerabilities, their underlying causes, and in doing so help determine where policy action by First Nation and/or other actors is necessary;

3.   help identify past successes of Winnipeg's First Nations community and factors that made success possible;

4.   through dialogue and engagement develop a set of goals, specific targets and building on past successes develop policies and actions that will help meet those goals; and

5.   build capacity at the AMC and in the First Nations community of Winnipeg to better diagnose problems, to realize successes and develop confidence in envisioning, planning and implementing collective and individual action in the interests of achieving a positive future.

Through the research process and products developed, this project will provide facts, raise awareness, create linkages and dialogue between institutions and individuals, and strengthen the AMC ability to serve and represent the interests of Winnipeg's urban First Nations.

Overall Approach

In order to meet the AMC objectives, this project will be based on and combine IISD's experience with developing community indicator systems.

Community indicator systems are developed in a participatory process aimed at building ownership of measures and linking indicators to values dear to and understood by the community. Indicators are typically developed around a conceptual framework, which in the context of sustainability may include economic, environmental, social and cultural factors. In order to give indicators direction, they are often linked to elements of a vision or specific targets. Based on this, actual trends can be compared with where the community wants to be and help realize the need for adjustment. In order to be effective, indicator systems are ideally integrated into existing governance mechanisms.

Workplan and Timeline Overview

Step 1: Preparatory Work and Project Initiation:
- finalize contract, establish joint project management team and prepare detailed implementation plan.

   (May and June 2007)

Step 2: Background Research:
- identification and review of relevant published and grey literature (consulting and government reports, etc.) and data sources focused on Winnipeg's First Nations population (this publication); and
- development of draft conceptual framework for the indicator system that integrates the concept of sustainability with the values of First Nation.

   (July and August)

Step 3: Issue Selection and Indicator Development:
- based on conceptual framework, identify priority issues for Winnipeg's First Nations community;
- develop communication strategy;

- taking into account indicator-selection criteria, develop draft indicator set through engagement with Winnipeg's urban First Nations community and First Nations service-delivery sectors; and
- establish and hold first meeting of high-level Advisory Committee.

(September and October 2007)

Step 4: Database Development and Data Collection:

- hold second meeting of the Advisory Committee to present conceptual framework and draft-indicator set;
- develop database and internet portal for presenting the indicators;
- collect required data, identify critical data gaps and provide recommendations for filling them (conduct limited surveys to fill key data gaps, if resources permit); and
- taking into account indicator-selection criteria, develop draft indicator set through engagement with thematic experts.

(November 2007 through January 2008)

Step 5: Data Analysis and Interpretation:

- analyze data and identify areas of high risk and vulnerability on the one hand and areas of strength on the other; and
- describe and verify causal factors in risk/vulnerability on the one hand and strengths and success on the other.

(January through February 2008)

Step 6: Goal Setting and Development of Policy Responses:

- in consultation with AMC and urban First Nations community and service delivery practitioners, identify specific goals and outcomes, including where possible time-bound indicator-specific targets, to tackle high-priority risks and vulnerabilities; and
- in consultation with the same groups, prepare a draft set of realistic policy recommendations, responsible actors and capacity requirements to tackle these priorities.

(March 2008)

Step 7: Development and Delivery of Assessment Products:

- prepare printed and electronic products to be used for communicating results, linking goals and expected outcomes with policy recommendations and performance indicators;

- presentation of draft results at third meeting of the Advisory Committee;

- engagement session with AMC and community leaders to discuss main findings and recommendations; and

- evaluation and review of project results and management, lessons for the future.

(April 2008)