



# Investing in First Nations in British Columbia

NRT Strategic Plan 2019–2022





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## **HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2019 - 2022**

In 2018, the New Relationship Trust (NRT) Board of Directors reviewed the organization's core mandate to support capacity-building of First Nations in British Columbia (BC). From this review the NRT Board recognized the importance of focusing funding support to assist communities to become self-determining Nations, which led to the development of a new NRT funding initiative called "Nation Governance."

Outcomes of NRT's enhanced approach to Nation-building has been integrated into the 2019 – 2022 Strategic Plan, including changes to NRT's Mission and Vision, and a new strategy to develop a perpetual fund so NRT may serve many generations to come. These changes made by the NRT Board and staff help to address the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Principles of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

We believe NRT will continue to play an important role in BC to support the inherent rights of First Nations to assert their authority and jurisdiction to govern over their lands, waters, resources, services and citizens in the modern era.

## **BACKGROUND**

In 2005, the First Nations Leadership of BC and the Province of BC entered into a new relationship based on respect, recognition and accommodation of Aboriginal title and rights. The following year, the NRT was established through the New Relationship Trust Act, which was designed to assist First Nations in BC to build their capacity. Taking its authority and direction from the Act, NRT supports capacity-building in areas of priority as determined by the Board in collaboration with First Nations in BC.

## **VISION**

Self-determined, self-sustaining, First Nations with effective governments and healthy empowered citizens.

## **MISSION**

NRT invests in the capacity development and transformation of First Nations governments and their citizens.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

We believe in the spirit of cooperation and collaboration that respects and advances First Nations' decision-making, traditional teachings and laws.

To achieve our Vision and Mission, the following Guiding Principles will inform our shared work:

- Supporting First Nations in their capacity development efforts as they pursue individual and communal self-sufficiency
- Engaging in effective communications and engagement with those that we serve to strengthen and inform our activities
- Ensuring fair and equitable access to our services through the creation of transparent criteria that focus on initiatives that lead to measurable change at the individual, community and Nation levels
- Increasing the investment fund through responsible management, leveraging of our assets and pursuit of additional resources while not duplicating or replacing existing government or First Nations programs

# INTRODUCTION

The New Relationship Trust (NRT) was created in 2006 as a response to the call for a new relationship between First Nations and the government of BC. In its inaugural year, NRT set the stage for future strategic direction by engaging with First Nations communities around the province regarding their needs and priorities. Subsequent Regional Engagement Sessions were held in 2009, 2012, 2015 and 2018.

NRT's Strategic Plan is directly based on community feedback, which has consistently established a clear mandate and strategic direction for NRT. To date, NRT has been directed to:

- Ensure the NRT Fund is available to support future generations by balancing spending with investment; and
- Support capacity building for First Nations communities in five priority areas:
  - » Governance Capacity
  - » Economic Development
  - » Education
  - » Language
  - » Youth & Elders

The 2019 - 2022 Strategic Plan builds on the successes of NRT to date and maintaining ongoing initiatives under each of the five strategic areas of priority. In 2019, NRT will continue to explore a shift in focus from supporting capacity-building to one of supporting Nation-building for First Nations in BC.

Annual NRT spending has been set at \$4.84 million for 2019 - 2020 and will be evaluated each year against NRT's spending and investment strategies to help ensure the NRT fund remains available in perpetuity. This spending level considers the slow market growth in recent years and the requests from the majority of First Nations leaders and community members that the NRT Fund be available for future generations.

The bulk of NRT spending is dispensed through initiatives that directly impact communities. NRT will maintain our goal of keeping administration costs to less than 2% of our annual investment portfolio value.

## **JOINT MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR AND CEO**

On behalf of the Board and staff at the New Relationship Trust (NRT), we are pleased to present our 2019 - 2022 Strategic Plan. This document outlines NRT's strategic focus for the next three years and details the funding we will provide in continued support of building stronger, more self-sufficient First Nations in BC.

Since NRT's inception in 2006, and under the directive established by the New Relationship Act, NRT has focused its efforts and resources on supporting the 203 First Nations in BC with their immediate capacity needs. We provide funding support under five strategic umbrellas, each of which has been identified as a priority by First Nations communities. And we have continually expanded on and refined our funding initiatives to better serve the capacity needs of First Nations in BC. Today, NRT supports 12 distinct initiatives, and to date we have funneled more than \$63 million directly to First Nations communities, organizations and individuals.

In the same timeframe, considerable progress has been made globally and locally towards achieving reconciliation and advancing the rights of Indigenous peoples. In 2007, the United Nations released its Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Canada officially adopted UNDRIP in 2016, just one year after releasing the final report and Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Further, our current federal government has expressed a clear intention to work toward building Nation-to-Nation relationships with Indigenous governments.

This is both an exciting and a critical time in the history of Indigenous peoples, and NRT is well-positioned to take a leading role in the movement towards self-determination for First Nations in BC. Our organization has a solid and strong reputation amongst First Nations, federal and provincial governments, and NRT's mandate supports 11 of the 94 Calls to Action of the TRC, and 20 of the 46 Articles of UNDRIP. Considering this, the NRT Board of Directors have determined that it's an optimal time to update the organization's strategic focus, and to implement a shift from our previous directive of supporting capacity-building to one that supports the strengthening of Nations.

The question the Board asked is: how do we best do this?

To determine the answer to this question, the NRT Board has directed staff to explore the issue of Nation-building, and to identify how NRT can best support First Nations

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in this area. To that end, 2018 was a transitional year for NRT. We maintained existing funding initiatives and implemented new funding for communities called Nation Governance Initiative to help First Nations in BC advance their self-determination goals.

As we move forward in supporting the critical work of rebuilding First Nations governments, it's important that we have a solid understanding of the impact of our work in order to ensure that NRT funding is optimized. Accordingly, we undertook a review of our performance measures framework and developed new quantitative and qualitative metrics to measure the impact of our capacity and Nation-building initiatives.

It is important to NRT that we work to ensure funding is available for future generations. We are seeking new funding to increase the NRT fund to a level where it is available in perpetuity. We have delivered a presentation to the provincial government asking for \$100 million to expand on NRT's existing capacity-building support to First Nations in BC. Of this, \$25 million would go directly to the New Relationship Trust Foundation as an endowment, thus allowing the foundation to become a self-sustaining organization that will provide bursaries and scholarships to First Nations students in perpetuity. We will be presenting similar proposals to the federal government and to foundations in 2018.

In addition to requesting additional funds, the proposal to the province suggests changes to the NRT Act that would allow First Nations in BC to invest alongside NRT's investment portfolios. This would bolster the NRT fund and benefit First Nations by giving them access to NRT's investment advisors and lowering their investment fees.

And we are requesting that the province transfer the management of the First Citizens Fund to NRT. Created in 1969 by the provincial government, the First Citizens Fund is a perpetual fund that supports cultural, educational and economic development for Indigenous people, communities and businesses in BC. Having it transferred to NRT would create a stronger collective fund, thus allowing NRT to maximize our investment returns. It would also ensure that funds for Indigenous peoples are administered by an Indigenous organization.



Hugh Braker  
Chair



Cliff Fregin  
CEO



## 2019 - 2022 STRATEGIC DIRECTION

NRT will continue to invest in First Nations in BC by supporting efforts in five key areas. In 2019 - 2022, NRT will support First Nations capacity-building by:

- Enhancing First Nations' **governance capacity**
- Fostering and advancing **economic development** opportunities
- Supporting student success in **education and training**
- Assisting First Nations in BC to protect and revive their **languages**
- Funding initiatives that engage **youth and Elders**

## **GOVERNANCE CAPACITY**

*“Enhancing capacity within First Nations governments”*

NRT defines governance capacity as the knowledge, abilities, skills, and processes First Nations require to become self-determined, self-sustaining communities with effective governments and healthy empowered citizens.

NRT’s governance capacity strategy has the following components:

- Nation Governance Initiative to support First Nations self-determination
- Direct Support Initiative to support First Nations capacity development
- Tribal Council Policy Initiative that enables multi-Nation policy development
- Tools and Resources

### **Nation Governance**

NRT supports First Nations to complete Nation-building and self-determination projects to research, explore, and assert First Nations rights and title, and their authority and jurisdiction to decide over their lands, waters, resources, citizens, and services. First Nations that have not been funded by NRT previously will be given priority.

Eligible projects include:

- Facilitating how to enact traditional laws in modern era
- Process to draft and approve laws
- Monitoring and enforcement of laws (e.g. addressing infringements)
- Ratifying community engagement protocols
- Developing citizenship codes
- Territory and natural resource management codes / laws / taxes
- Defining territory / shared territory
- Defining relationship with other First Nations and governments (e.g. BC, Canada)
- Dispute resolution (e.g. fund independent arbitration with other First Nation)
- Assertion of title and rights practices
- Negotiating Nation to Nation agreements
- Creating leasing review / approval processes

### **Direct Support for First Nations**

NRT will provide direct support to First Nations communities for local capacity building and policy development. Preference may be given to initiatives that facilitate

collaboration amongst communities where feasible, and therefore support Nation-building. First Nations that have not been funded by NRT previously will be given priority.

Eligible projects include:

- Governance capacity development, including governance policies and financial systems and controls required to build strong governments
- Land and marine use planning, including traditional use studies
- Economic development planning
- Negotiating agreements in relation to governance and business development
- Implementation of agreements with government and/or the private sector
- Creating a strategy for self-determination

### **Tribal Council Policy Initiative**

The Tribal Councils Policy Initiative supports policy development at the Tribal Council level and promotes information and resource sharing. Funds are provided to Tribal Councils to explore policy development issues within NRT's five strategic areas of focus.

Support may include:

- Research and business case development to support policy and legislative initiatives
- Models / principles to organize Nation Councils / Tribal Councils, government and industry, and to support business partnerships, negotiations, and revenue and benefit sharing
- Support for policy development in other areas of importance to First Nations

### **Tools & Resources**

NRT will continue to support the development and dissemination of tools and resources that help First Nations communities in BC build capacity. Examples of capacity building resources may include:

- Best Practices
- Negotiating tools and templates
- Case Studies
- Specific studies and research
- Workshops and information sessions
- Skills, trades development / coordination

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

*“Fostering and advancing economic development opportunities”*

Healthy First Nations communities require a sustainable level of prosperity to achieve their goals and support their programs. By taking advantage of economic development opportunities First Nations can prosper.

NRT’s Economic Development strategy has the following focus areas:

- Entrepreneur and Community Equity Matching
- Other economic development opportunities

### Equity Matching Initiatives

In 2010, NRT launched the Entrepreneur Equity Matching Initiative (EEMI) to support First Nations entrepreneurs in BC by partnering with BC Aboriginal financial institutions (AFIs) to provide matching equity for new or expanding businesses in the province. This exciting opportunity assists entrepreneurs in obtaining financing for their businesses, as well as assisting AFIs in identifying new lending opportunities in their service areas. In 2011, NRT expanded the EEMI to First Nation community business projects in BC by introducing the Community Equity Matching Initiative (CEMI).

NRT will continue to offer equity matching to both entrepreneur and community-owned businesses and will expand outreach efforts in partnership with AFIs to ensure potential applicants are aware of this opportunity.

### Other Economic Initiatives

NRT seeks public and private partnerships to support capacity building for First Nations in the economic and business development sector. In addition, NRT is researching “access to capital” opportunities, which allow First Nations in BC to participate in viable economic opportunities.



## **LANGUAGE**

*“Protecting and reviving languages”*

Sixty percent of the First Nations languages in Canada are spoken in BC. With 34 First Nations languages and more than 60 dialects, BC has the most diverse array of Indigenous languages in the country. However, many of these dialects are in danger of being lost. Preservation of First Nations languages supports self-identity and enhances cultural pride. Under this strategic direction, NRT has prioritized language revitalization due to the current crisis facing First Nations languages in BC.

NRT’s language strategy will support preservation and revitalization of First Nations languages.

### **Language Support**

In 2018-2019, the BC Government announced it would allocate a \$50 million grant to First Peoples Cultural Council to help revitalize Indigenous languages in BC. In consideration of NRT’s policy to not duplicate government funding, NRT’s language funding was redirected to First Nations youth groups for language revitalization projects.

## EDUCATION

*“Encouraging access to education”*

Education is a key to independence for First Nations. Assisting First Nations individuals to pursue and complete their education and training goals is a high priority for NRT.

The NRT education strategy currently has the following components:

- Support for the NRT Foundation to attract private and public contributions
- Provide scholarships and bursaries for First Nations post-secondary students
- Support for First Nations communities for K-12 initiatives

### **New Relationship Trust Foundation**

In 2011, NRT created the New Relationship Trust Foundation. This strategic decision allows the Foundation to use its charitable status to attract additional support for scholarship and bursary initiatives, and issues tax receipts to companies and individuals that contribute funds.

The mission of the New Relationship Trust Foundation is:

*“To assist Indigenous peoples in BC separately and collectively to meet their education goals, and to support the educational components of Indigenous language revitalization.”*

To date, the Foundation has leveraged in excess of \$2.79 million in education funding from new partners. In the short term, the Foundation will seek donations of \$1.5 million over the next three years from corporations, organizations, First Nations, public and private scholarship organizations to increase the number of scholarship and bursary awards provided each year.

### **NRT Scholarships & Bursaries**

NRT will continue to provide scholarships and bursaries to assist First Nations students in achieving post-secondary education and training goals. This initiative awards funding based on qualification criteria and the student’s proposed contribution back to First Nations communities.

- Scholarships are awarded to students pursuing undergraduate, masters and doctorate degrees
- Bursaries are awarded for certificate, diploma, associate degree and trades programs

## **Supporting K - 12 Initiatives**

NRT supports initiatives that increase the First Nations high school graduation rate. In 2012, NRT created the K-12 Education Grants initiative, which provides funds to First Nations in BC to deliver K-12 projects at the community level. Eligible projects fall into three categories: English & literacy, math, and science.

## **YOUTH & ELDERS**

*“Supporting initiatives that engage youth and Elders”*

The inclusion of youth and Elders is essential to strong, healthy First Nations. Elders hold the wisdom of past generations; youth provide the key to a healthy and vital future.

Based on feedback received from community members, we will focus support on community-based projects, activities and events for youth and Elders.

### **Youth**

NRT will continue to support projects for youth at the community and provincial levels that:

- Strengthen youth leadership and governance
- Support youth entrepreneurship, including the annual national Young Entrepreneurs Symposium (YES)
- Build capacity for youth
- Promote mentorship for youth
- Provide networking opportunities for youth

### **Elders**

NRT will continue to support projects for Elders that:

- Assist groups, communities and organizations representing First Nations Elders in BC
- Develop and deliver projects at the First Nations community level
- Benefit and build capacity for Elders
- Assist Elder groups to attend the annual Elders Gathering

## INVESTMENT

Community feedback received at First Nations leadership meetings, NRT Regional Engagements and through online surveys has consistently stated that NRT should maintain the fund in perpetuity so that future generations will also benefit from it.

NRT's investment strategy is based on feedback from First Nations leaders and community members and supported by insight and analysis from investment professionals regarding market trends and opportunities. NRT continually reviews its investment strategy to ensure that it both reflects current economic issues and optimizes return on investment.

### Investing Strategy

NRT's investment strategy consists of short-term and long-term investments. The short-term investment strategy preserves capital by investing in safe and liquid investments. This in turn allows for funding stability. The long-term investments are allocated according to the following range of target asset mixes:

### Fund Benchmark And Asset Allocation Ranges

<i>Fund Benchmark and Asset Allocation Ranges</i>			
<b>Asset Type</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Benchmark</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
Fixed (bonds) (DEX Universe Bond Index)	5%	15%	25%
Alternative Assets	10%	15%	20%
Canadian Equity (S&P/TSX Capped Composite Index)	20%	30%	45%
Global Equity (MSCI World Index)	30%	40%	55%
		<b>100%</b>	

A key goal of NRT's investment strategy going forward is to support sustainable and ongoing self-determination project funding for First Nations. Fund growth will be accomplished by establishing collaborative partnerships, leveraging program funds from government and other organizations, and other capital growth activities.



## Spending Strategy

NRT’s spending strategy is based on returns on investment, leveraging and fund growth, all of which differ from year-to-year. Spending levels are determined each year during the annual strategic planning session to support the needs of First Nations with the expressed priority of maintaining the fund for future generations.

In 2019-2020, NRT strategic spending will be \$4.84 million, an amount comprised of interest and potentially a small amount of principal, in anticipation of lower market returns and to address the growing desire to extend the NRT fund’s lifespan. Spending amounts will be reviewed as part of the next annual strategic planning exercise.

NRT’s 2019 - 2020 program spending strategy is as follows:

Strategy Funding	2019/20
Governance Capacity	\$2,415,000
Economic Development	875,000
Language	200,000
Education	850,000
Youth & Elders	500,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$4,840,000</b>

NRT’s continued goal is to limit annual administrative costs to less than 2% of the investment portfolio.

## Investment Governance

To establish transparency and accountability, NRT implements governance policies and procedures for the strategic investment of funds. Components of the investment framework are as follows:

- An independent, professional investment advisory firm was initially engaged to develop an investment policy and strategy and to assist in the selection of investment managers. An investment advisory firm reports to NRT quarterly regarding portfolio performance and investment manager changes

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- A custodian firm has been engaged to hold the NRT investments and provide independent accounting of portfolio transactions
- Expertise: three professional investment managers were selected to manage the investment portfolio. Each investment manager administers one of the long-term components of the NRT investment fund: Fixed Income, Global Equities and Canadian Equities
- Diversification: the investments are diversified amongst companies, geographic regions, strategies and investment managers
- Re-balancing: the long-term portfolio is re-balanced quarterly, if necessary, to maintain NRT's long-term target asset diversification mix

NRT reviews its investment strategy on an ongoing basis to determine if improvements can be made to the overall return on investment. For example, in 2019 NRT will enhance its diversification strategy by introducing delegated investment services, which will introduce a broader spectrum of investment options and mitigate exposure within each asset class.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

Accountability is one of NRT's guiding principles. In keeping with this principle, we perform several communications activities throughout the year to maintain a high level of transparency to all First Nations in BC and the province.

NRT's areas of focus are the leaders and community members of First Nations in BC, and the leadership of the Province of BC.

NRT will maintain a Communications Strategy that complements the Strategic Plan. The Communications Strategy is updated annually.

### **Communication Delivery**

NRT employs a multi-faceted approach to communications to raise awareness and knowledge about NRT activities. Specifically, NRT:

- Publishes and distributes a three-year Strategic Plan
- Publishes an Annual Report containing the audited financial statements and annual performance target results
- Promotes and creates awareness of opportunities for First Nations to benefit from NRT initiatives through print and online newsletters sent to the NRT database of contacts
- Informs First Nations and government leaders about NRT vision, mission and strategic initiatives through presentations at leadership gatherings
- Maintains a user-friendly website ([www.newrelationshiptrust.ca](http://www.newrelationshiptrust.ca)) to improve the overall effectiveness of NRT communications
- Utilizes social media platforms (Facebook, YouTube and Twitter) to keep constituents informed of NRT news and activities

In addition to the above, the NRT Foundation:

- Publishes an annual recipient brochure for the NRT Scholarship and Bursary Initiative
- Maintains a website with a focus on donor opportunities

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### **Feedback Gathering**

As part of its annual strategic planning activity, NRT solicits feedback from First Nations in BC regarding program and funding priorities as well as management of the investment fund and spending strategy. Feedback is integrated into the Strategic Plan each year and is posted to the NRT website for public information purposes.

Specific feedback gathering strategies are as follows:

- NRT performs a province wide engagement process every three years. Regional Engagement meetings and surveys were conducted in 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015 and 2018, and will be held again 2021
- NRT will use its website and social media platforms to solicit comments from NRT followers



## **RELATIONSHIP BUILDING**

Several NRT's guiding principles speak to the need for relationship building, both amongst First Nations, and between First Nations, agencies and governments. These principles include:

- Reflecting the intent and purpose of the new relationship vision
- Supporting Nation-building
- Not replacing or duplicating existing government or First Nations programs
- Encouraging inter-community cooperation and partnerships

Accordingly, NRT's strategy for relationship building includes the following approaches:

### **Partnering**

NRT will establish and maintain partnerships with First Nations, public and private organizations that share common goals and values in order to leverage funds and minimize administrative costs. NRT's current partners are:

- All Nations Trust Company (ANTCO)
- Nuuchahnulth Economic Development Corporation (NEDC)
- Tale'awtxw Aboriginal Capital Corporation (TACC)
- Tribal Resource Investment Corporation (TRICORP)
- Community Futures Development Corporation of Central Interior First Nations (CFDCCIFN)
- Stó:lō Community Futures
- BC Treaty Commission
- First Nations Health Authority
- Native Fishing Association
- Department of Indigenous Services Canada (DISC) – Strategic Partnerships Initiative
- Western Economic Diversification Canada
- First Nations Leadership Council:
  - » First Nations Summit (FNS)
  - » BC Association of First Nations (BCAFN)
  - » Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC)

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### **Nation-Building**

In order to support Nation-building and cooperation amongst First Nations communities in BC, NRT will:

- Where possible within the existing strategic priorities, provide incentives through support to initiatives that foster cooperation between communities
- Where practical, ensure that information and outcomes of NRT support are shared amongst Nations

Although NRT is not an agent of the provincial government or the First Nations Leadership Council, communication and cooperation with the Province of BC and with BC's First Nations leadership is integral to NRT's operating policies and procedures as well as to its ongoing evolution.

## 2019 - 2022 PERFORMANCE TARGETS

### Short Term (1 - 3 years)

#### Governance

- Fund up to 12 community projects per year in each of the following areas: Land Use Planning, Traditional Land Use Planning, Economic Development Planning, Negotiations and Impact Benefit Agreements

#### Education

- Create and distribute an annual brochure that showcases NRT scholarship and bursary recipients
- Assist up to 40 First Nations students per year with funding toward completion of post-secondary degrees and up to 60 First Nations students per year toward completion of diploma, certificate, associate degree and/or trades programs
- Support the New Relationship Trust Foundation to attract an additional \$1.5 million over the next three years for scholarships and bursaries for First Nations in BC through partnerships and leveraging
- Continue to update the database of NRT Scholarship recipients to be used in conjunction with the NRT Foundation to promote the hiring of First Nations graduates and post-secondary students

#### Language

- Provide funding for up to 40 Youth Language projects per year

#### Youth and Elders

- Provide funding for up to 60 youth projects per year
- Provide funding for up to 80 Elders projects per year
- Provide financial support to an annual gathering or initiative that builds capacity for BC First Nations Youth

#### Economic Development

- In partnership with BC Aboriginal financial institutions, support up to 50 First Nations entrepreneurs, and 10 First Nations communities in BC each year by matching equity for business start-ups and/or expansion of businesses within BC

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### **Administration**

- Limit annual administrative costs to less than 2% of the investment portfolio

### **Partnerships**

- Create a stand-alone Venture Capital fund with First Nations partners by 2022
- Develop and maintain at least 6 partnerships / protocols with other First Nations organizations in order to promote collaboration and prevent duplication of products and services

### **Medium Term (3 - 5 years)**

- By March 2022, increase annual NRT project funding to \$5.5 million
- Grow the NRT Investment Fund to \$150 million by 2024 through investment and contributions

### **Long Term (5 + years)**

- NRT has launched the perpetual investment fund at \$80 million in 2019, which will grow by inflation at a minimum on an annual basis
- NRT will continue to apply the NRT spending strategy and NRT investment strategy to ensure the NRT Fund is stabilized so that it may be available for future generations as a perpetual fund





