

Final Research Abstract

Indigenous Relations:

A scan of strategic benchmarks for the
Vancouver Fraser Port Authority

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SUSTAINABILITY SCHOLARS DISCLAIMER

This report was produced as part of the UBC Sustainability Scholars Program, a partnership between the University of British Columbia and various local governments and organizations in support of providing graduate students with opportunities to do applied research on projects that advance sustainability across the region.

This project was conducted under the mentorship of the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority (VFPA) staff. The opinions and recommendations in this report and any errors are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the VFPA and the University of British Columbia.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AIM OF STUDY

The Vancouver Fraser Port Authority (VFPA) has a vision to be the world's most sustainable port. This research report supports VFPA's existing body of work in Indigenous relations, by providing an environmental scan of common practices relevant to strengthening port relationships with Indigenous communities. Such research findings will provide VFPA with strategic benchmarks to evaluate progress, identify gaps and opportunities, and inform the development of aspirational goals and objectives.

METHODOLOGY

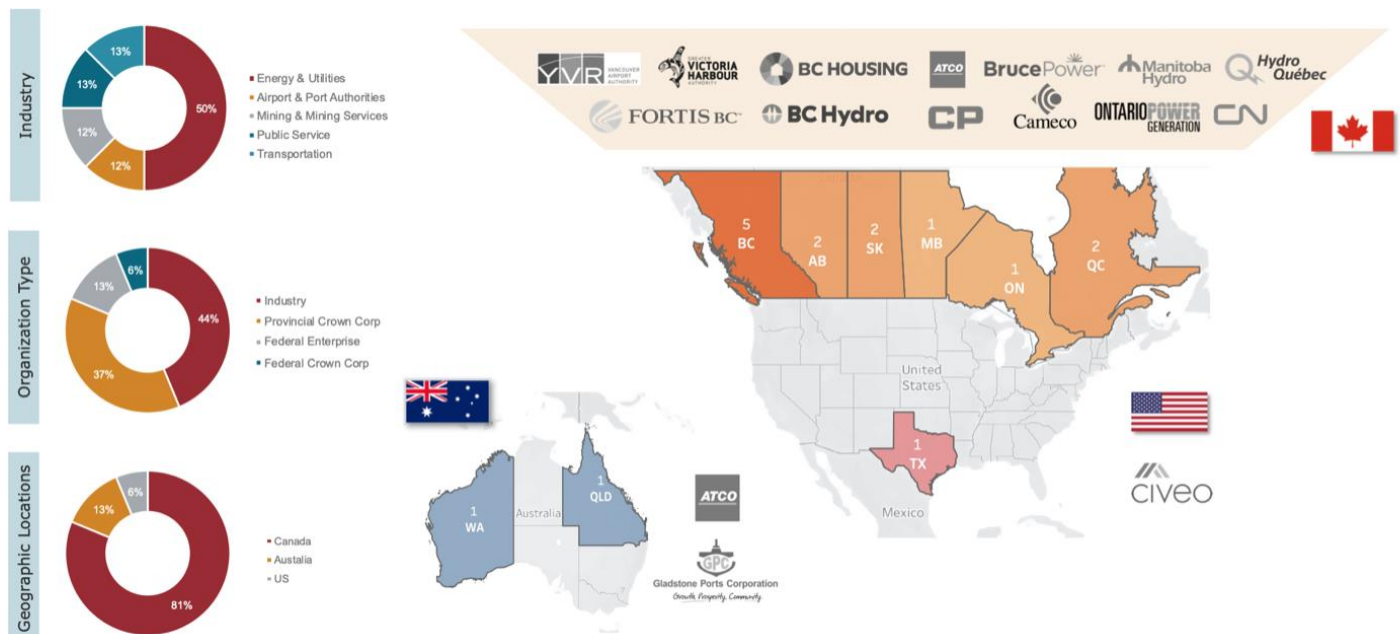
The report compiles qualitative data gathered through desk-based secondary research of publicly available information, including corporate websites, corporate reports (i.e. annual reports, diversity reports, sustainability reports and such), government reports, research papers and scholarly journals. Conversations with university professors and VFPA staff also supported the synthesis of information and research findings. Specifically, the methodologies include:

- Identifying and selecting strategic benchmarks;
- Compiling common practices and indicators;
- Writing detailed case studies; and,
- Formulating conclusions.

STRATEGIC BENCHMARKS

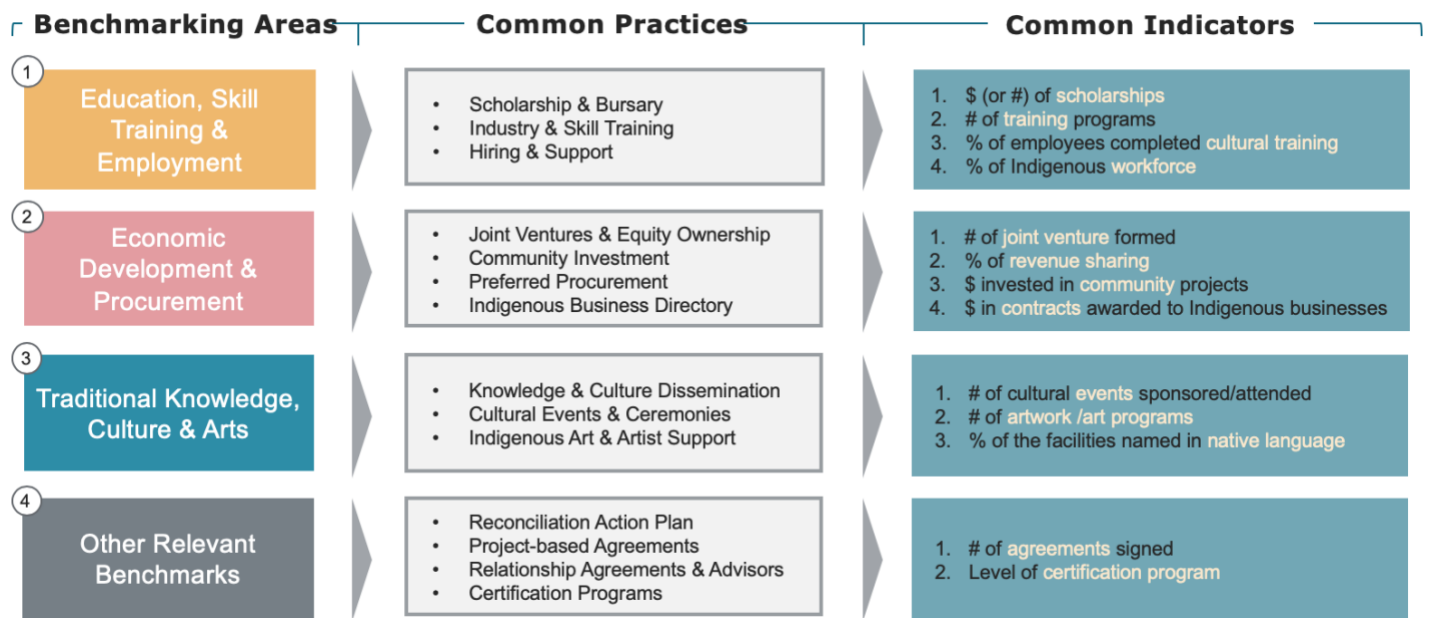
Research identified an initial inventory of 46 organizations with documented Indigenous relations practices. These organizations were subsequently down-selected to **16 strategic comparators**, including representation from diverse industries, organization types, and geographic locations (Figure S1).

Figure S1: Selected Comparator Overview



While researching the selected comparators, four common themes (or “**benchmarking areas**”) emerged among the observed Indigenous relations practices. These benchmarking areas are outlined below and have been used to structure research findings and enable comparison of practices across the selected comparators (Figure S2).

Figure S2: Benchmarking Areas Overview



SUMMARY: CHANGING PRACTICES IN PORT-INDIGENOUS RELATIONS

The relevance and level of maturity in developing formal relationships with Indigenous communities varies greatly among port authorities and the other comparators researched in-depth. This is reflective of both the unique cultures and interests of Indigenous communities, and the variation in the operations and community impacts of trading ports.

Comparatively, there is limited public reporting on Indigenous relations’ practices and progress among the port authorities reviewed. Of the organizations reviewed, only two port authorities were found to have publicly discoverable Indigenous relations practices. Other industries were discovered to offer valuable insights into how port authorities might further strengthen relationships with Indigenous communities to support developing sustainable operations and mutual prosperity. Most notably, all of the selected comparators have made public commitments to strengthening relationships with Indigenous communities.

There is an emerging interest among public and private organizations in how best to contribute to Indigenous-focused public policies and strategies to the benefit of Indigenous communities. For instance, the Port of Gladstone and the Southern Ports Authority are participating in Reconciliation Australia’s Reconciliation Action Plan Framework. In Canada, the Government of Canada has adopted both the United Nations’ resolution “Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” and the United Nations’ Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP). Canadian port authorities have a considerable opportunity to establish themselves as leaders in the Canadian business landscape.

A summary of the most commonly reported practices and indicators are outlined in Table S1:

Table S1: Most commonly reported practices and indicators

Benchmarking Areas	Common Practices	% of Comparators Reporting
Education, Skill Training & Employment	Hiring & Support	100%
	Scholarship & Bursary	88%
	Industry & Skill Training	81%
Economic & Community Development	Community Investment	94%
	Procurement	81%
	Indigenous Business Directory	75%
	Joint Ventures & Equity Ownership	56%
Traditional Knowledge, Culture & Arts	Cultural Event & Ceremony	69%
	Knowledge & Culture Dissemination	56%
	Indigenous Art & Artist Support	38%
Other Relevant Benchmarks	Certification Program	88%
	Project-based Agreement	81%
	Relationship Agreement & Advisor	56%
	Reconciliation Action Plan	13%

Benchmarking Areas	Common Indicators	% of Comparators Reporting
Education, Skill Training & Employment	\$ (or #) of scholarships	88%
	# of training programs	81%
	% of Indigenous workforce	44%
	% of employees completed cultural training	44%
Economic & Community Development	\$ (or # of) in contracts awarded to Indigenous businesses	56%
	# of joint venture formed	44%
	\$ invested in community projects	38%
	% of revenue sharing	38%
Traditional Knowledge, Culture & Arts	# of cultural events sponsored /attended	31%
	% of the facilities named in native	19%
	# of artworks /programs	19%
Other Relevant Benchmarks	level of certification program	88%
	# of agreements signed	38%