



# **FIRST NATIONS INFORMATION SUPPORT SERVICES**

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## **Project Overview**

There are 203 First Nations communities in BC. Approximately 75% of them have fewer than 250 members. Most do not have dedicated staff working in cultural, land and marine resource management. Many First Nations in BC are situated in remote regions, and many have unique challenges to services, infrastructure and human resources. The First Nations Technology Council, recognizing these challenges, sought and received the mandate from the Chiefs of the First Nations Summit, the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, and the BC Assembly of First Nations to create a 'common service' organization that would support the delivery of information management and information technology (IM/IT) to First Nations in BC. Other mandates of the FNTC are to ensure that all 203 First Nations in BC:

- Are connected with high speed broadband;
- Have access to affordable, qualified technical support;
- Have the skills needed to access technologies that can improve their lives;
- Develop an Integrated Information Management Strategy;
- Develop the Fully Integrated Technologies (FIT) Community Model.

The FNTC has become a non-profit Society with its own Board of Directors but continues to get its mandate from the First Nations Chiefs. FNTC is committed to working strategically with guidance from the First Nations Leadership Council and in coordination with other First Nations Councils and organizations.

## **Supporting Natural Resource Management Information Management / Information Technology (IM/IT)**

In 2007 the FNTC began working with several First Nations to explore how a collaborative approach might improve IM/IT support First Nations need for natural resource management (cultural, land and marine resource management). Key elements in building this collaborative approach have been the following projects and workshops:

- *First Nations Land Referrals Forum* (September 2007), co-organized with the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council and supported by GeoConnections and the New Relationship Trust;
- *Land Referral Workshop: How First Nations, Government and Industry Might Work Better Together* (February 2008), supported by GeoConnections and the ILMB;
- ILMB/FNTC Memorandum of Understanding (March 2007) – which outlines an agreement between FNTC and ILMB to work together for the benefit of all First Nations in BC;



## Project Overview

*Complementary projects led by ILMB include:*

- *First Nations GeoBC Gateway – User Needs Assessment* (March 2008), Phase 2 (design and build) has been supported by GeoConnections;
- *Pilot Training Sessions for First Nations Users of ILMB E-Tools and Services* (March 2008).

As part of its efforts to establish a common services organization, the FNTC has begun work on developing a Program to support IM/IT needed in cultural, land and marine resource management. With the support of an Advisory Group representing 45 First Nations, a Strategy and Action Plan was developed to define the following 7 strategies that would support First Nations IM/IT services needed in cultural, land and marine resource management: (see [http://www.fntc.info/files/documents/Strategy\\_and\\_Action\\_Plan\\_-\\_Shared\\_Cultural\\_Land\\_\\_Marine\\_Resource\\_Info\\_Service\\_Dec\\_8\\_2008.pdf](http://www.fntc.info/files/documents/Strategy_and_Action_Plan_-_Shared_Cultural_Land__Marine_Resource_Info_Service_Dec_8_2008.pdf))

1. Shared Service
2. Infrastructure
3. Applications and Tools
4. Data
5. Policies, Standards and Guidelines
6. Capacity
7. Communications

Each Strategy has a number of action items. The following projects have recently been completed, which address specific Actions outlined in each Strategy noted above:

- **Community Needs Assessment** – Provides an understanding of First Nations current capacity and need for data, applications, software, human resources and training. This will inform the FNTC Program development for IM/IT support services in cultural, land and marine resource management;
- **First Nations Operational Process Analysis (building on a previous First Nations System Analysis)** – Examines the operational processes of some First Nations that have developed their own system for managing cultural, land and marine resources. This document will assist other First Nations in determining if they have organized their information processes in ways which make it easy to use one or several of the existing systems;
- **Scan of IM/IT Capacity Building Initiatives** – Outlines existing training and capacity building courses related to IM/IT used in cultural, land and marine resource management.
- **FNTC Communications Plan** – Provides strategic approaches and actions for FNTC communications related to its Program development for



Project Overview  
IM/IT support services needed in cultural, land and marine resource management;

To build on a collaborative approach, FNTC is working with other First Nations organizations including the First Nations Forestry Council, the First Nations Fisheries Council, and the First Nations Energy Council to provide strategic support for IM/IT.

In First Nations communities, information management and information technology cannot be limited to the natural resources sector. FNTC sees technology (especially broadband connectivity) as a road into the communities upon which all programs and services will ride. Information management is all-encompassing (see the FNTC IM model CRIMSIN (Comprehensive Resource and Information Management System for Indigenous Nations) below. To be useful as a tool for planning and decision making, First Nations need the ability to take information that has been traditionally held in silos by governments and integrate that information with their own First Nations government information.



### Information Management Solution : **CRIMSIN**





## Project Overview

Over the next 2-3 years, the FNTC will be developing its Information Management/Information Technology Programs. This project, focusing on providing support and services to First Nations in the natural resource sector, will:

- Create a Program Business Plan for IM/IT services and support for First Nations natural resource management;
- Develop and implement a Capacity Plan for Natural Resource IM/IT Skills;
- Advocate for improved data access from government and industry;
- Advocate for the development of First Nations Data Standards;
- Improve First Nations understanding of IM/IT requirements (e.g., skills and operational) for natural resource management;
- Improve costs for software and applications needed by First Nations for natural resource management through negotiation of better licensing agreements.

A cornerstone of the FNTC approach has been collaboration with several government agencies including GeoConnections, BC's Integrated Land Management Bureau, and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, as well as organizations such as the New Relationship Trust. The FNTC remains committed to ensuring that the work it does is important to First Nations and will continue to seek advice and support from its Advisory Group.