

# New Partnership to Expand Aboriginal Business in Public and Private Sector Procurement: Memorandum of Understanding amongst Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB) and Offset Market Exchange Inc. (OMX), and the Saskatchewan First Nations Natural Resource Centre of Excellence (SFNNRCE).

**NOVEMBER 26th, 2015, SASKATOON, SK:** The Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB), Offset Market Exchange Inc. (OMX) and the Saskatchewan First Nations Natural Resource Centre of Excellence (SFNNRCE) announced today a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to promote Aboriginal business opportunities and Aboriginal employment in Canada.

This is the first partnership of its kind in Canada, linking Aboriginal owned businesses to procurement opportunities in the public and private sectors. This announcement will support the development and implementation of Aboriginal procurement strategies, and benefit CCAB Certified Aboriginal Businesses (CAB certified companies), Aboriginal Business Members, Aboriginal Economic Development Corporations, and Aboriginal communities. The OMX is Canada's platform for Government contractors to connect with suppliers and partners, as well as manage and track the economic impacts from their projects with Government. The Centre of Excellence works to create opportunities for innovative, sustainable and environmentally responsible development through their employment and procurement platform, EXPORT.

"By linking our organizations, we will be able to maximize the opportunities for Aboriginal businesses to compete and win new procurements. We are also excited to collaborate with CCAB on research studies, demonstrating the ability and capacity of Aboriginal owned business to succeed in the global supply chain of defence procurements. This MOU will match needs from Government contracts to the many diverse service facilities of Aboriginal owned businesses," said Nicole Verkindt, President of OMX.

"The Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business is committed to expanding the reach and potential of Aboriginal business. We are excited to engage with OMX on this unique opportunity that signals Aboriginal participation in an important sector of the economy. As well CCAB sees partnering with the Saskatchewan First Nations Natural Resource Centre of Excellence (SFNNRCE) as further proof that Aboriginal business innovation is on the move. We are confident that Aboriginal business in Canada can compete and secure business in this massive market." stated CCAB President and CEO JP Gladu.

"EXPORT is the new information intelligence tool which is a "game changer" in terms of creating advanced connectivity between work and procurement opportunities, the Aboriginal community and industry. Ultimately, the goal is to increase the participation of the Aboriginal community in employment and procurement opportunities creating more wealth, autonomy and empowerment. This partnership with CCAB and OMX is a tremendous opportunity to take Aboriginal Business to the next level. The partnership elevates all of us and allows for far greater visibility of our organizations as well as our intention to work together to create more Aboriginal inclusion in the economy," highlighted Sheldon Wuttunee, President and CEO of the Centre of Excellence.

**About OMX:**

The OMX platform provides access to over 60,000 international defence, aerospace and shipbuilding companies by region, size, local content, certifications and capability, with effective web-based software tools to manage supplier and customer relationships collaboratively across an organization. It consolidates all of the related information required to complete a project, which will make defence contractors more competitive in a sector where there tends to be a lot at stake and entry costs can be heavy.

Major features include:

- Connect with organizations: search, filter, map and compare, and track;
- Secure internal messaging and document sharing between companies;
- Robust, offset-specific, collaborative project and transaction management and tracking;
- Downloadable data for efficient reporting;
- Secure document repository and external email integration for causality tracking
- A dedicated space for clients to solicit goods and services from suppliers, academia and R&D institutions by posting on our "Opportunities Feed";
- B2B Request For Proposal (RFP) engine for buyers and suppliers;
- Data analytics: demonstrate economic impact from government procurements.

### **About CCAB**

The Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB) is committed to the full participation of Aboriginal peoples in Canada's economy. A national non-profit, non-partisan association, CCAB offers knowledge, resources, and programs to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal owned companies that foster economic opportunities for Aboriginal peoples and businesses across Canada.

CCAB programs include Progressive Aboriginal Relations (PAR), Certified Aboriginal Business (CAB), and the Aboriginal Business Mentorship Program (ABMP). CCAB confers four awards each year: the Aboriginal Business Hall of Fame (ABHF) Lifetime Achievement Award, the ABHF National Youth Entrepreneur Award, the Aboriginal Economic Development Corporation Award, and the Award for Excellence in Aboriginal Relations. These are given to recipients at our Annual Toronto, Calgary, and Vancouver Galas.

CCAB is also a leader in national research on the Aboriginal economy, developing the most comprehensive data available on Aboriginal entrepreneurs and community owned economic development corporations.

### **The Saskatchewan First Nation Natural Resource Center of Excellence**

Established in 2009, the Saskatchewan First Nation Natural Resource Center Excellence works to advance First Nation interests in the natural resource sector as well as build capacity to manage natural resource development in a responsible manner. The Center is dedicated to supporting initiatives that engage more First Nation people in business, education and employment programs as well as creating meaningful collaborative relationships among First Nations, industry, educational institutions and all levels of government. The Center provides business and enterprise development support and identifies training needs as well as works with communities in the negotiation of lease/royalty agreements and negotiation of mineral rights etc.

“EXPORT”, an innovative database management system recently developed by the Center of Excellence, has become the new platform for operations. EXPORT has the capacity to create intelligence concerning the Aboriginal workforce and the Aboriginal private sector interested in seeking both labor market and procurement opportunities. With the ability to match skills, education and procurement opportunities EXPORT will increasingly become a mechanism to build capacity and connectivity as well as aggregate critically important data for community and industry planning. Currently focused on the resource sector, the platform will be built out into other sectors and create even more efficiencies in connecting the Aboriginal population with the provincial economy.

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