

co-operatives first

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# Indigenous Co-operatives in Canada

## CURRENT STATE AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES



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A group of people are gathered around a wooden table, focused on reviewing documents. One person's hand is visible, holding a silver pen and pointing at a specific area on a document. Another person's hand is also visible, pointing at the same area. A metal mug with a black handle is in the foreground, slightly out of focus. The background is blurred, showing other people and what appears to be a meeting or collaborative work environment.

**What is a co-operative?**



## What is a co-operative?

- A versatile business model
- Equitable governance and distribution of benefits
- Connection to community
- Scalable



## Types of co-operatives

- Worker
- Consumer
- Housing Co-ops
- Producer/Marketing Co-op



### Benefits

- Profits & wealth stay local
- Creates jobs
- Increases community capacity
- Reflects group's needs



A group of people are gathered around a wooden table, looking at documents. One person is pointing at a document with a pen. In the foreground, a coffee cup is visible, slightly out of focus. The scene suggests a collaborative meeting or workshop.

# Indigenous Co-operative





## Indigenous Co-operatives

- Difficult to define
- Indigenous members or shareholders
- Ratio of membership
- Ad Hoc



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[http://www.sask.coop/images/learn\\_more/docs/SFNEDN\\_SCA\\_FN\\_Coop\\_Guide\\_2015.pdf](http://www.sask.coop/images/learn_more/docs/SFNEDN_SCA_FN_Coop_Guide_2015.pdf)



### History

- 1945 – Kinoosao Fishers Co-op on Reindeer Lake, SK
- 1961 – LaRonge Childcare Co-op Ltd
- 1972 – Canadian Arctic Co-operative Federation
- 1995 – Many Nations Co-op Ltd.



### Current State

- 2001 – 133 Indigenous Co-ops as suggested by Lou Hammond-Ketilson and Ian MacPherson
- 2012 - Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA) identified 123
- 2000 - federal Co-operatives Secretariat estimates 24,000 members of Indigenous co-operatives with sales of approximately \$250 million



### Current State

- Fishing and Trapping
- Financial Services
- Wholesale and Distribution
- Indigenous Co-ops and Retail
- Agriculture
- Utilities and community services
- Food Security
- Art Marketing
- Renewable Energy



A close-up photograph of several people's hands and forearms gathered around a wooden table. They are looking at and pointing to documents or blueprints. One person is holding a silver pen. A stainless steel mug is in the foreground, slightly out of focus. The background is blurred, showing more people and what appears to be a meeting or collaborative work environment.

# Indigenous Co-operatives at Work



## Old Crow Co-op

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0coiDDXVPs8>



## Northern Star Worker Co-op

- First Nation and Metis women in Winnipeg
- Started sewing together in a resource centre
- Collaborate craftsmanship and workplace culture
- Online marketing





A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of several people's hands and arms gathered around a wooden table. They are looking at and pointing to documents or blueprints. One person is holding a silver pen. In the foreground, a pair of glasses is out of focus. The overall scene suggests a collaborative work environment.

# Co-operatives First Projects



## First Nations Technical Services Co-op

- Initiated by the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations
- Created in response to the federal government recommendations of provincial fire, housing and infrastructure standards followed on reserve
- Membership includes a number of tribal councils and individual nations



## First Nations Technical Services Co-op

- Started with providing housing inspections for member nations
- Co-operatives First helped revise bylaws and provide support for the first AGM



## Manitoba Commercial Fishing

- Concerned of the end of the monopoly held by the Freshwater Fish Corporation
- Northern fishers are predominately Metis and First Nation



## Turtle Island Commercial Fishers Co-op

- Over 100 fishers met in Winnipeg to address the concerns of the end of the monopoly
- Steering committee formed to include regional representation
- Turtle Island Commercial Fishers has received confirmation of Incorporation



# The Village of Cumberland House



## Ministik Co-op

- Limited access to fresh foods
- Northern Store is the local grocer
- Community members identified the need for a good food box program and gathering space instead of a traditional retail store



## Food Forest and Learning Centre

[https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=food+forest+cooperatives+first](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=food+forest+cooperatives+first)





A group of people are gathered around a wooden table, focused on reviewing documents. One person is pointing at a specific area on a page while another holds a pen. In the foreground, a blurred coffee cup is visible. The scene conveys a sense of collaborative work and assistance.

How we're helping



## Support for co-operatives

- Online governance course
- Resource website
- Workshops and training
- Policy development and reviews
- Business Plan Support



A group of people are gathered around a wooden table in a meeting. Several hands are visible, some pointing at documents or blueprints spread across the table. One hand is holding a silver pen. In the foreground, a blurred coffee cup is visible. The background is softly blurred, showing more people and office equipment.

**Thank You!  
Questions?**



## Stay in touch

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## Co-operatives First

- <https://www.thebackroaddiaries.ca/>
- <https://cooperativesfirst.com/>
- <https://cooperativesfirst.com/common-share-podcast/>



### Next steps

- Form a steering committee
- Initial research
- Incorporate
- Business planning
- Finance
- Build



## Financing your co-op

- Common shares:
  - Usually attached to voting rights
  - Lower cost to attract members
- Preferred shares:
  - Typically issued to investors
  - Rights need to be defined
  - Return on investment is pre-determined
- Loans

