



## Report on First Nations Technology Council Strategic Planning Workshop

June 12 – June 13, 2006

### I. Executive summary

The First Nations Technology Council (FNTC) held a two-day strategic planning workshop, June 12-13, 2006 in Vancouver. This Report summarizes the session activities, discussions, and outcomes of the workshop. The Report is also intended to provide direction to FNTC as the Council moves forward with implementing the FNTC Strategic Plan.

#### Overview

The First Nations Technology Council was formed in 2002 by resolution of the First Nations Summit Chiefs in Assembly. At the outset, FNTC was given the mandate of developing a technology plan for the First Nations of British Columbia to address broadband connectivity, technical support for communities and technical user skills for all citizens. Other Summit Resolutions have expanded the mandate of the Council and the vision has progressed from “connectivity” to a FIT (Fully Integrated Technologies) Community model for all BC First Nations. FNTC completed the First Nations Technology Council Strategic Plan in March 2006. The Plan has been endorsed by the First Nations Leadership Council and the First Nations Summit. The FNTC Strategic Plan can be viewed online at the FNTC website: [www.fntc.info](http://www.fntc.info).

FNTC has now been mandated to implement the Strategic Plan, and one of the primary purposes for the workshop was to begin planning for a Stakeholders’ meeting. The Council has received feedback from many communities indicating their concerns about managing a local ISP service. These concerns are significant and would suggest that the Council should consider how common tools and services could support the successful implementation of broadband infrastructure. The Council must also determine what technical capacity building issues are most pressing and how the technical needs of communities will be met.

The Strategic Plan describes a significant number of large and smaller scale projects that must be completed as part of the overall effort by FNTC and others to build ICT (information and communications technologies) infrastructure capacity and user skills capacity toward eliminating the digital divide and improving life for community members. To be successful, these projects require funding, manpower, community support, and coordination. Putting these resources in place will require careful planning by the Council, in collaboration with individual project stakeholders. The workshop was intended to allow the full Council to discuss ways to identify and secure the required ICT project resources and to discuss the roles and responsibilities that FNTC should have within these projects.

## Workshop sessions

The workshop was broken into five sessions:

1. FNTC Strategic Plan implementation: For this session, the FNTC Technology Coordinator had previously prepared strategic planning maps that set out each significant ICT capacity-building project identified in the Strategic Plan. The projects were organized by area of activity:
  - Infrastructure, including broadband to the community, last-mile networks and telecentres in the community, and computers in the home;
  - Planning and business tools, including Internet services and network management tools, e-Readiness Index, Community Technology Plan toolkit, and integrated data management applications;
  - Technical skills development, including raising awareness of the need for technical skills in the community, technician training pilot project, technical support network, and;
  - ICT user skills capacity building, including skills training in the community and skills competency testing and certification.

For each project, breakout groups were asked to identify next-step action items, possible partner organizations, likely funding amounts, and project leaders and sources of manpower. This exercise was designed to get a better sense of the amount of work facing the Council as it goes forward with the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

2. Common ICT tools and services: The plenary group then examined the community need for common tools and services. These include, but are not limited to, a centralized helpdesk, establishing and running various servers including email servers, a network operating centre, an internet service provider business application, etc. For many small communities, the business case and the technical capacity to run these services are lacking. Does it make sense for the FNTC or a partner organization to develop and provide common tools and services to these communities?

The BC Community Connectivity Cooperative (BC3) examined some of these same issues in 2005 and was willing to share their experience. The President of BC3, Hans deBruyn presented the business case developed for BC3 based on 34 small communities. There was considerable discussion on whether the model was transferable to the First Nations' environment and whether the number of First Nations communities is sufficient to make a sustainable business case. To further explore this issue, a FNTC working group was formed to look at the common tools and services required by First Nations communities and to determine how FNTC could ensure that these tools and services will be delivered.

3. FNTC future roles, responsibilities, and resources: FNTC's current structure has served the Council well in fulfilling its original mandate but, as the model changes to developing FIT Communities in BC, FNTC needs to consider its future role. This session introduced a number of issues as it examined the Council's role, responsibilities, and resources:
  - staffing requirements;
  - operating parameters;
  - marketing and communications requirements; and
  - legal structure.

Once the working group on common tools and services has done their work the Council should examine these issues.

4. Strategic Plan stakeholder presentations: An early priority for FNTC in implementing the Strategic Plan will be securing support from funding and implementation partners. During this session, Council members discussed scheduling for the required series of partner/stakeholder presentations; began planning for an introductory reception for prospective stakeholders; and prepared a list of possible funding partners to be invited to Strategic Plan stakeholder presentations. This work will continue over the next weeks.
5. Illuminate collaboration software: Taking advantage of the gathering of a large number of Council members, FNTC arranged for an introductory session on the Illuminate teleconferencing and collaboration software. FNTC is deploying Illuminate to facilitate Council meetings via teleconferencing, thereby making it easier for Council members to attend meetings and reducing Council meeting travel costs.

### **Outcomes**

The Council identified and began to do more detailed planning on the next steps necessary to implement the Strategic Plan. The establishment of some working groups will help move the work of the Council along but it became very clear that the work exceeds the level of dedicated resources the Council currently has at its disposal. As the implementation of the Strategic Plan becomes more solid, the question of resources will need to be addressed. Council members shared insights and opinions on the future direction of FNTC and its role in support of the continued expansion of ICT capacities in BC First Nations communities. The summary of the "To Do" list at the end of the report provides an early indication of some of the work ahead.

## II. Background

### FNTC mandates

The First Nations Technology Council was formed in June 2002 by First Nations Summit Resolution #0602.12. The Resolution states in part:

- The First Nations Technology Council's mandate is to develop a First Nations Technology Plan for First Nations in British Columbia which will address technology issues, including:
  - high speed Internet connection;
  - development of technical support for communities
  - ensuring all citizens have the necessary technical skills to access applications that can make a difference in their lives.

Subsequently, the First Nations Summit has passed additional Resolutions, expanding FNTC's mandate as follows:

- First Nations Summit Resolution #0604.26, passed June 11, 2004, which mandates FNTC to promote the use of technology as a tool to support the revitalization of culture and language in all First Nation communities in British Columbia.
- First Nations Summit Resolution #0604.27, passed June 11, 2004, which states in part that high speed broadband access to the Internet should be considered as important as other basic infrastructure such as an electrical distribution system, water distribution system or community road.
- First Nations Summit Resolution #1104.12, passed November 25, 2004, which authorizes FNTC to lead a proof of concept project to be known as the FIT (Fully Integrated Technologies) Community project in a Community Cluster of at least four and not more than eight communities located in the same geographic region. FNTC is to work closely with, and take the lead from, the FIT Community Project Team made up of representatives from the communities included in the Cluster.

Most recently, and following completion of the FNTC Strategic Plan, the First Nations Summit mandated the Council to commence implementation of the Plan through First Nations Summit Resolution #0306.05, passed March 9, 2006, which states in part:

- The First Nations Summit Chiefs in Assembly support the First Nations Technology Council 2006-2008 Strategic Plan, and support the First Nations Technology Council in seeking funds to implement the Strategic Plan.

It is in pursuit of this most recent mandate that FNTC organized the strategic planning workshop for Council members and representatives from current stakeholders with the purpose of beginning development of a Plan implementation strategy.

### First Nations Technology Council Strategic Plan

Much work has gone into understanding and documenting the current level of ICT infrastructure and user skills capacity and gaps in capacity that exist in BC First Nations communities. Work has also been done to identify and engage with government and private sector. Investigations of successful ICT capacity building initiatives in other jurisdictions have been completed.

Work of this sort is never done in a vacuum, and the FNTC Technology Coordinator and some Council members, in the course of assembling background information for the

Strategic Plan, have had the opportunity to facilitate and participate in dozens of workshops, seminars, and conferences on topics related to First Nations use of technology. Being able to advocate on behalf of First Nations ICT capacity building one-to-one and in small and large group settings has proven useful in stimulating immediate capacity building initiatives and in helping to inform the FNTC Strategic Plan.

The FNTC Strategic Plan was completed in March 2006 and presented to the First Nations Leadership Council and First Nations Summit Chiefs in Assembly, and has been endorsed by both groups. In addition, the Plan has been presented to the BC Premier, to provincial and federal ministries, and to FNTC private-sector partners.

The Strategic Plan focuses on four program areas of ICT capacity-building activity:

1. Community connectivity: Delivery of broadband service to First Nations communities, community technology planning, community Internet service providers, and video-conferencing facilities;
2. Community ICT deployment: Band administration local-area networks, public access telecentres, and Band and community management and reporting software applications;
3. ICT technical skills capacity development: Technical skills training programs and the First Nations technical support network;
4. ICT user skills capacity development: Community-based basic and advanced computer and Internet user skills training, mobile training labs, train-the-trainer programs, competency testing and certification.

The four program areas were used to define and populate the planning maps used during the strategic planning workshop.

The vision of the Council has expanded from a focus on connectivity, technical support and user skills to having each of the 203 BC First Nations become a FIT Community where technology is used as a tool to integrate all community programs and services.

As an acceptable level of ICT services for First Nations communities, the following are among the benchmarks FNTC has established:

- Availability of broadband service to all homes and community buildings that want to be connected;
- A community technology champion holding the technology vision for the community;
- A Community Technology Plan in place;
- Information and Communications Technology Policies in place;
- Technical support contract with adequate service protocols, including a community-based computer technician, with A+ certification or better;
- Community members having the necessary technical skills to access applications of their choice;
- At least one video conferencing terminal in a public space in the community;
- A computer in every home in the community with a student in grade 2 or above or in the home of people with health issues;
- Regular community-sponsored ICT user capacity workshops;
- ICT being used to preserve and revitalize traditional language and culture;
- Learners of all ages being able to access relevant learning objects including formal and informal courses;

- Telehealth programs in place with relationships having been built with Regional Health Authorities;
- e-Commerce programs running in the community;
- ICT being used for more open governance.

### **FNTC activities**

In addition to the development of the Strategic Plan, FNTC continues to be engaged in a wide variety of programs and initiatives that seek to improve community sustainability and the quality of life for First Nations members.

Other noteworthy Council accomplishments include:

- Completing and publishing a BC First Nations ICT environmental scan;
- Developing and launching the FIT (Fully Integrated Technologies) community proof-of-concept project;
- Developing and testing the community technology planning toolkit;
- Completing last-mile studies in more than 60 First Nations communities;
- Developing and publishing the First Nations ICT policies manual;
- Developing and publishing a traditional language and culture preservation and restricted use legal protocol;
- Hosting of two First Nations provincial technology conferences, four regional technology workshops, and more than twenty community capacity-building workshops;
- Hosting of two First Nations youth computer camps;
- Presentations at numerous national and international Aboriginal technology conferences.

In addition to beginning implementation of the Strategic Plan, other current FNTC activities include:

- Developing a training program for First Nations community-based technicians;
- Working with partners in the production of a First Nations technology awareness video for television broadcast and production of a series of vignettes and how-to videos in support of the full-length video;
- Working with partners in development of a First Nations e-Solutions Centre of Excellence;
- Working with partners in designing and testing an e-Readiness Index for First Nations communities;
- Developing a shared Internet services administration solution for First Nations communities.

### **III. Workshop overview**

The First Nations Technology Council strategic planning workshop was designed to review FNTC's efforts to date and determine the Council's future focus. In addition to Council members, key stakeholder groups were invited to attend the workshop. Those accepting included the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, NetworkBC (Ministry of Labour and Citizens' Services), the BC Community Connectivity Cooperative, BC Hydro, Smart Choices Society, and Simon Fraser University. Thirty-one delegates provided input and insight into FNTC activities and considered future opportunities and direction (see

Appendix A). The workshop was facilitated by Ganhada Group, an Aboriginal consulting firm headquartered in West Vancouver.

### **Purpose**

The completion of the Strategic Plan marks a turning point for FNTC. The organization was originally created with a specific mandate but over the past two years has expanded its scope and purpose. It has gone from a lobbying and awareness-building organization to an organization that is working to bring coordination to many ad hoc information and communications technology and information management initiatives that are being developed, and FNTC has now moved into actual program delivery.

FNTC's lobbying and awareness building has been very successful. Funds were secured to administer Community Network Infrastructure Grants to 19 communities and in the February 2006 Provincial Budget, funds were allocated, contingent on matching Federal dollars, to bring broadband to the remaining un-served or under-served communities. Funds were also allocated to build some technical capacity in communities.

It is imperative that public and private partners work with the FNTC on the implementation of the FNTC Strategic Plan so that a coordinated, integrated implementation provides communities with the best possible solutions for the best price.

The Strategic Plan is complex and complicated. The workshop made it possible for participants to examine in more detail the elements of the Strategic Plan and to begin discussions about how each element would be resourced. To date, FNTC has been administered by the FNTC Technology Coordinator, but, as discussed in this Report, it is becoming increasingly apparent that the implementation of the Strategic Plan will require additional resources.

### **Opening comments**

FNTC Technology Coordinator, Sue Hanley, opened the workshop with a brief address setting out the expectations for the workshop. In her remarks, Sue recounted a meeting she had with Joe Wozny who, in addition to being Executive Director of the Smart Choices Society, is a visiting instructor for the Leadership in a Networked World program at Harvard University's John F Kennedy School of Government. Sue and Joe discussed a number of issues, including the FNTC Strategic Plan. By the end of their meeting, it had become clear that FNTC really was at a cross-roads and that implementing the Strategic Plan was only one of the issues facing the Council in the coming months and years.

Many of the smaller First Nations communities have expressed similar concerns regarding the implementation and administration of their internet networks. In addition to technical support and technical skills development, communities need help in setting up and running an Internet service provider business. The Council needs to find a way to help these communities through the establishment of common tools and services that would support sustainable community infrastructure. FNTC could develop and deliver these tools and services or could facilitate the development and delivery of these tools and services by partnering or contracting a third party.

Sue also observed that FNTC needs to continue to work at the community level. In addition to continuing community capacity-building workshops, and rolling out FNTC's Community Technology Plan Toolkit, the Council needs to find a way to determine where, on a technology adoption continuum, each of the 203 communities sits. With some benchmarking in place, this would help determine what kind of help each community needs (and when) and would ensure that resources would be better spent.

## **Objectives**

As outlined by Sue Hanley during her introductory comments, the FNTC strategic planning workshop was organized to address the following:

1. What is the best way or ways to implement the FNTC Strategic Plan?
2. If the Council agrees that communities have a need for common tools and services, is the FNTC the right organization to provide these?
3. How can FNTC continue to serve and improve service to the communities?
4. What is the best way or ways to resource the activities of FNTC?
5. How can the Council use technology to communicate better?

## **IV. Session 1 – FNTC Strategic Plan review**

In preparing for the strategic planning workshop, FNTC created four activity planning maps designed to present, by project, five major components of project implementation planning for each of the Strategic Plan areas of activity. The Plan's areas of activity are:

- ICT infrastructure and connectivity
- Technical (ICT user-skills) capacity building
- Technical skills development
- ICT planning and administration tools and services

The five components of project implementation planning are:

- Current state of the project - where are we;
- Activities required to move the project toward completion - what is the next step;
- Timing for these activities - when does it need to happen;
- Funding for the activities - how much will it cost, how much do we have so far;
- Delegation of responsibility - who will do it.

Session 1 was facilitated in two parts, as the opening session of each day of the workshop. The session was designed to elicit recommendations on implementation of the Strategic Plan. The task for the delegates was to review activity planning "maps" that outline each project or initiative. The goal of the exercise was to establish a clear understanding of what resources would be required to implement each of the initiatives set out in the Strategic Plan and to lay out detailed action items that will aid FNTC as it begins to implement the Plan.

To better garner the detailed input needed from delegates, breakout groups were organized with delegates joining the group assigned to the strategic area that most interested them and to which they could contribute the most. The goal of the breakout group work was to get as specific as possible with respect to the action items – a definitive plan of action that could be implemented with measurable results. Participants were asked to focus on human resource requirements as this was a key part of a latter workshop session on FNTC roles, responsibilities, and resourcing.

Wall charts were constructed based on the Strategic Plan activity planning maps, with questions provided to stimulate discussion leading to implementation details being developed for the projects. On day one, the groups recorded initial observations and recommendations on the activity planning maps. The groups were invited to reflect on their

discussions overnight and, on day two to amend the activity maps as appropriate to include new and amended project implementation details.

Three questions the breakout groups were asked to answer were:

- Does the whole group agree on the action items as outlined?
- Can the FNTC deliver these action items with its existing structure?
- What sort of human resources are needed to implement these action items?

Some of the groups were unable to complete the exercise, including time-lines and resources so more work will need to be done in some areas.

### **ICT infrastructure and connectivity**

The FNTC activity planning map for ICT infrastructure and connectivity includes the following initiatives:

- Ensuring that there is an Internet broadband point-of-presence (POP) available within every First Nations community;
- Ensuring that there is a last-mile community broadband network in every First Nations community that wants one;
- Ensuring there is a computer telecentre in every First Nations community that wants one;
- Ensuring there is a videoconferencing centre in every First Nations community that wants one;
- Ensuring that all First Nations homes and community facilities have adequate electrical and telecommunications wiring to support ICT requirements
- Ensuring that every home with a learner or health-challenged family member has a first-class computer;
- Ensuring that every First Nations Band administration office has a professionally installed and maintained local-area network.

The following ICT infrastructure and connectivity action items were agreed by the delegates:

<b>Action items - ICT infrastructure and connectivity</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timing</b>
Install broadband POP in every community	NetworkBC in partnership with Federal Government (or Deferral Account)	End of 2008
Define community last-mile service standards	FNTC Technology Working Group	
Define community telecentre minimum standards	FIT community project best practices Partner: Ktunaxa Nation	
Define home wiring minimum standards	FNTC Technology Working Group in partnership with: INAC, CMHC	
Define home computer minimum standards	FNTC Technology Working Group	
Define Band administration local-area network minimum standards, installation	FNTC Technical Working Group in partnership with INAC Joint Capital Forum	

<b>Action items - ICT infrastructure and connectivity</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timing</b>
guidelines, template		
Form FNTC technology working group	Matthew Asham, Mike Christian, Norm Leech, Richard Smith, Jamie Sterritt, Phillip Djwa, Jess Gordon, Don Maki, Chris Thomas	

### **Technical (ICT user-skills) capacity building**

The FNTC activity planning map for Technical (ICT user-skills) capacity building includes the following initiatives:

- Delivering computer and other ICT skills training to community members in the community via a portable computer lab or techmobile;
- Developing a program for formally training community members as ICT user-skills trainers;
- Developing and launching a program of voluntary computer user-skill competency testing and certification for community members at various levels of computer competency;
- Facilitating a continuing series of ICT skills development, e-business, business planning and personal and professional development workshops.

The following ICT user-skills capacity building action items were agreed by the delegates:

<b>Action items – ICT user-skills capacity building</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timing</b>
Re-assess tech mobile need, value, implementation	FNTC	
Research, select off-the-shelf training software for training trainers	FNTC technical capacity working group Partners: AHRDAs, INAC	
Define community need for ICT user skills competency testing	FNTC Partners: AHRDAs, INAC	
Form FNTC technical capacity working group	Laara Mixon, Kristin Kozuback, Karen Bailey-Romanko, Dayna Anderson, Claudia Trudeau, Carl Mashon	

### **Technical skills development**

The FNTC activity planning map for technical skills development includes the following initiatives:

- Completing development and launching an industry-certified technician training pilot project in partnership with the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT);
- Structuring and launching the First Nations Technical Support Network;

- Producing an information campaign for First Nations communities on the opportunities and requirements for ongoing expansion of ICT infrastructure and ongoing development of user-skills capacities within the community.

The following technical skills development action items were agreed by the delegates:

<b>Action items – Technical skills development</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timing</b>
Revise technician training pilot project curriculum	NVIT	
Write technician training business plan	FNTC in partnership with NVIT	
Arrange practicum work placements	FNTC in partnership with NVIT	
Prepare terms of reference for FNTC Technical Support Network	Jess Gordon	
Plan Tech Support Network meeting, recruit meeting facilitator	Sue Hanley, Jess Gordon	
Develop program to promote value of community-based technical support	FNTC	

### **ICT planning and administration tools and services**

The FNTC activity planning map for ICT planning and administration tools and services includes the following initiatives:

- Examining the requirements and benefits of using the e-Readiness Index to measure community ICT capacities;
- Field-testing and amending as necessary the Community Technology Plan toolkit;
- Investigating Internet service provider management tools and solutions;
- Identifying opportunities and researching Band administration and other First Nations administration requirements for an integrated data management application;
- Further developing and refining the service delivery model and back-end requirements of an e-Solutions (e-Health) Centre of Excellence;

The following ICT planning and administration tools and service action items were agreed by the delegates:

<b>Action items – ICT planning and administration tools and services</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timing</b>
Get copy of available e-Readiness Index tool	FNTC Partner: Industry Canada, Smart Choices Society	
Procure funding for community tech planning project manager and survey person	FNTC	

<b>Action items – ICT planning and administration tools and services</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timing</b>
Research ISP management tools, solutions	Tyler Dobie (for FNTC)	Completed August 5, 2006
Define potential environments and uses for integrated data management application	FNTC Partner: Ktunaxa Nation	
Survey of high-productivity uses of e-Solutions Centre of Excellence, and cost-sharing	FNTC Partners: Canada Health Infoway, Ministry of Health	

### **Other FNTC Strategic Plan review session output**

During the work in each of the session breakout groups, it became very evident that, without additional resources, it will not be possible for FNTC to implement the Strategic Plan. For the Council's previous mandates with respect to advocacy, awareness-building, and technology plan development, resources required to complete the work included a patchwork of volunteers, short-term contractors, and many overtime hours worked by the FNTC Technology Coordinator. As FNTC moves forward implementing the Strategic Plan, a companion plan, outlining human resource requirements, must also be developed and implemented.

## **V. Session 2 - Common tools and services**

### **Opportunities for First Nation community ISP services**

Session 2 dealt with the awareness that more and more communities are expressing similar concerns about the challenges of running an Internet service provider (ISP) business. FNTC has previously had preliminary discussions on whether Council could provide or acquire common ISP tools and services for the benefit of all communities lacking an ISP. Tools and services might be better provided through a centralized arrangement that allows for economies of scale without compromising service standards.

Representing the BC Community Connectivity Cooperative (BC3), Hans DeBruyn, and Jamie Sterritt, representing FNTC, reported to the delegates that BC3 had examined similar issues in 2005 after the announcement of the Telus Connecting Communities Agreement (CCA). Hans noted at the time that 34 rural and remote communities were left without an ISP so BC3 commissioned a study to determine if the BC3 could play a role in providing some common ISP and network administration services as well as provide an internet gateway to these communities. Mr. DeBruyn, author of "BC Community Gateway Business Plan Assessment" (see Appendix B), discussed the concept of central services and outlined some of the pros and cons of setting up a central Internet gateway. Jamie Sterritt outlined the Council's thinking, i.e. that without some kind of common tools and services, many small First Nations communities may not successfully implement their own ISP.

Following the BC3 presentation, discussion focused on the previous BC3 efforts and their experiences and mistakes. Given the similarities between this FNTC initiative and that of BC3, there were suggestions from delegates that the partnership between the two organizations that was created through the Community Network Infrastructure Grants

program be extended. From the perspective of FNTC, an extended partnership might create advantages including:

- Economies of scale: Allowing a greater community outreach with the same set of fixed assets, infrastructure and staff;
- Pooling of resources: Some of the FNTC Council members are also member of the Board of BC3. Our goals and objectives are very similar. Pooling of resources and creating a common vision could benefit community members.
- Learning curve efficiencies: Gleaning experience from the BC3 initiative will shorten the development time for FNTC.

FNTC needs to ensure that an extended partnership would reflect the needs of First Nations communities, which exist in a different environment than non-Aboriginal communities in BC.

Jamie Sterritt agreed to lead a working group to look at common tools and services. Questions to be considered by the working group include:

1. Is there enough demand to warrant deeper investigation of setting up arrangements for common ISP and network management tools and services?
2. Are there organizations who are now delivering the required services and from whom these services could be purchased?
3. What are the organizational requirements needed to successfully undertake providing these tools and services?
4. What infrastructure and technical capacities will need to be developed to successfully undertake providing these tools and services?

While the common tools and services session focused largely on ISP and community network administration tools and services, opportunities may exist for other common tools and services to be provided to First Nations communities. The following are some other possible tools and services:

- Band administration reporting and resource management software;
- Computer lease-to-own program;
- Computer hardware and software buying group;
- Computer hardware recycling service.

### Action items

The following common ICT tools and services action items were agreed by the delegates:

<b>Action items – Common tools and services</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timing</b>
Rework BC3 gateway business plan assessment using First Nations information, prepare recommendations report	Jamie Sterritt, Matthew Asham, Norm Leech, Claudia Trudeau, Hans DeBruyn, Iris Lucas, Sue Hanley, Don Maki	Commence immediately Completion Oct 2006
Develop list of common tools and services of interest to First Nations, and identify objectives in deploying common tools and services		

## **VI. Session 3 - FNTC future roles, responsibilities, and resources**

Having received the First Nations Summit's mandate to implement its Strategic Plan, FNTC is entering a new operating realm for the organization. FNTC has functioned primarily as an advocacy organization, representing First Nations ICT interests to government and the private sector, raising awareness of First Nations ICT capacity building within First Nations communities and to outside stakeholders, and building the First Nations technology plan. Implementation of the Strategic Plan will necessitate a shift in focus for the Council from advocacy to program delivery. The strategic planning workshop provided the opportunity for the Council to begin discussing what FNTC's future roles and responsibilities will be, and what resources will FNTC need to develop internally and arrange from outside service providers.

### **Sustainability**

As a preamble to the session on the future organization of FNTC, Joe Wozny, Executive Director of Smart Choices Society, delivered a short discourse on the issues of sustainability as they relate to an organization like the FNTC. Joe's message was that the sustainability of any organization is tied directly to the organization's ability to establish and maintain planning and operating disciplines and to ensure that the organization continually monitors their activities to make sure they are aligned with the needs of their constituents.

The following are some key elements of planning and operating disciplines as highlighted by Mr. Wozny:

- To achieve operating discipline, establish and follow a standard planning methodology that suits your overall organizational structure.
- Before any Investments are made, there needs to be a business case prepared.
- For each project and program, define value, budgets, scoping, and accountability.
- Be clear on all details when making plans, and explain the benefits and costs of implementing the plan.
- Define gates, i.e. critical, measurable points, to provide your organization with the ability to evaluate the project or program and make a go/no go decision to continue or end the activity.
- For each project and program, establish standards, frameworks, and quality-performance monitoring and troubleshooting.
- Recognize projects as "in-line" or "on-line." In-line projects are projects that require resources and groups from one or more organizations to work together. Often an in-line project results in changes to work processes, roles, and overall operations within the groups. An on-line project is often focused on taking an application and making it available through a network. Usually one group is responsible for the application, and the implementation and costs to implement.
- Once you begin implementation, ensure you are following your plan.
- Infrastructure supports flexibility and opportunity so it should be considered an enabler and a must-do for creating operating discipline.
- Define the organization's "infrastructure basket." Get common agreement on what's included in the basket; manage changes to infrastructure via an agreed process.

Given that the original mandate of FNTC to develop a technology plan for BC First Nations has been completed, workshop participants were asked to review the effectiveness of the current organizational structure of FNTC to determine whether the Council would be able to meet future needs of First Nation communities. At present, FNTC is comprised of volunteer

members representing geographic regions of the province and members representing First Nations organizations and government agencies serving BC First Nations. FNTC is currently a committee of the First Nations Summit and has no autonomy or rights as a formalized organization, e.g. FNTC cannot enter into contracts or seek funding other than through the First Nations Summit.

The delegates agreed that in order to preserve the sustainability of the organization, an assessment of full operational requirements and their associated costs will need to be conducted. Issues to be addressed in the assessment include:

1. Can the FNTC meet the needs of communities with its current structure?
2. Should FNTC become a program delivery agency?
3. What are the risks in becoming a program delivery agency under the umbrella of the First Nations Summit?
4. What kinds of tools or services do the communities need?
5. Would it be better to 'buy' services from a third party and have FNTC manage that contract?
6. What type of organization could best meet community needs?
7. If FNTC were to become an incorporated society would we be seen as taking money away from communities?
8. Would the Leadership Council and the Chiefs support FNTC as an incorporated society or cooperative?
9. Is the timing right to look at these issues?

As part of the FNTC organizational review, the Council will consider the following:

- The Council: Is a volunteer Council the best way to ensure the mandate is met? Would a smaller, working Board be more effective?
- Legal structure: FNTC is a committee of the First Nations Summit and has no autonomy or rights as a formal organization, e.g. FNTC cannot enter into contracts or seek funding other than through the First Nations Summit. With the multitude of FNTC activities planned to occur during the upcoming years, to pursue these activities without any legal structure could put the Summit, the Council members, FNTC staff, and volunteers at risk. Is now the time to amend the organizational structure and to set up a suitable legal structure in order to move forward.

During the session, there were numerous delegate comments suggesting that a not-for-profit incorporation was the most logical choice as FNTC's legal structure, as it:

- reflects the true essence of the FNTC;
- allows for legal autonomy to operate and implement the Strategic Plan; and
- creates some measure of protection from liability.

Regardless of what form of legal structure is best, there was generally agreement that the organization needs to be examined and that discussions need to begin with the First Nations Summit and the Leadership Council. This should only happen after the common tools and services working group reports back and if the recommendation is that FNTC become the tools and services delivery vehicle.

- Staffing: What is apparent from two days of strategic planning is that FNTC needs to make some timely organizational structure changes in order to maintain momentum for Council initiatives and to keep up with the time demands of Council staff and Council members. Workshop delegates were in complete agreement that FNTC has achieved a

great deal in terms of program deliverables and development of reputation while operating with a very lean administrative structure. There was also consensus that in order for FNTC to evolve to the next level of organizational service, there needs to be an increase in the staffing currently allocated to FNTC.

When assessing FNTC staffing requirements, the following issues may be considered:

- Increased staffing will free up administration to focus more fully on core program management responsibilities;
  - Paid staff could be introduced for back-office, non-critical responsibilities, but not for more critical responsibilities such as financial management or customer interaction;
  - The current workload of Sue Hanley, the FNTC Technology Coordinator, could result in missed opportunities due to lack of support staff;
  - The current workload may result in staff burnout;
  - If Ms. Hanley were to leave the organization, FNTC would require significant time to re-tool its operations to be able to maintain the same continuity of services and performance.
- **Resources:** As FNTC approaches implementation of the Strategic Plan, resourcing will become a significant responsibility for Council administration. The following are resources FNTC employs to help manage Council workload:
    - **Volunteers:** Volunteers, particularly volunteers recruited from the Council, have been a primary resource for FNTC for handling Council workload to this point. This arrangement is barely sustainable today as Council members and other volunteers focus on demanding day jobs and other professional responsibilities. The significantly increased workload of implementing the Strategic Plan cannot be delegated to volunteers.
    - **Partners:** From its inception, FNTC has worked closely with many partners from the public sector and the private sector, both for getting partners to help fund and otherwise contribute to FNTC activities, including the annual First Nations Technology Conference, the youth computer camps, the FIT Community proof-of-concept project, and the technology awareness video. The Council looks forward to continuing to work closely with partners during implementation of the Strategic Plan but recognizes that these partners rarely bring resources to do the work.
    - **Contractors:** FNTC has periodically employed contractors and temporary workers to assist the FNTC Technology Coordinator to complete larger-scale tasks. FNTC will use contractors and temporary workers as a resource for completing Strategic Plan projects that involve significant manpower. The volume of activity in recruiting and directing contractors and temporary workers is increasing and could require a full-time coordinator for FNTC during peak periods of project activity.
    - **Funding:** Strategic Plan project funding will need to be sourced from project partners and other stakeholders supportive of First Nations ICT capacity-building. Given the amount of funding required, FNTC will need a full-time funding administrator to manage the funding contribution process.
  - **Marketing communications:** As the scope and scale of FNTC activities expands, the Council will need communications expertise to ensure clear and consistent promotional and public relations messaging. A marketing communications agency will be a valuable

resource for the Council for building awareness with prospective Strategic Plan stakeholders, for stakeholder communications during implementation of Plan projects, and for keeping First Nations communities informed on Plan project results.

### Action items

The following FNTC organizational review action items were agreed by the delegates:

Action items – FNTC organizational review	Lead	Timing
Prepare briefing note to Leadership Council requesting approval to prepare a business case examining future FNTC governance structure	Laara Mixon, Sue Hanley, Gwen Phillips, Norm Leech	Commence immediately
Assess personnel requirements for FNTC, prepare briefing note to Leadership Council to accompany governance structure briefing note	Norm Leech, Laara Mixon, Peter Parrish	Commence immediately
Prepare RFP for agency to handle FNTC marketing and communications requirements	Norm Leech, Laara Mixon, Sue Hanley, Iris Lucas	Commence immediately

## VII.

### VIII. Session 4 – Preparing for strategic plan stakeholder presentations

The final planning session of the workshop dealt with the upcoming FNTC Strategic Plan stakeholder presentations. The Strategic Plan sets out a number of very ambitious projects that will require significant financial and in-kind contributions from federal and provincial ministries, public sector agencies, and private sector organizations. The Council, in building the Strategic Plan, anticipated the need for these significant contributions and included in the Plan are the foundations for demonstrating the “return on investment” that stakeholders from every sector will achieve through their investment in ICT capacity building in BC First Nations communities.

#### Initial planning

The Council recognizes that the process for securing contributions from senior stakeholder organizations must be carefully planned and properly undertaken. The stakeholder presentation planning session at the workshop gave delegates the opportunity to discuss principal aspects of the upcoming presentations.

- **Preferred timeframes:** After some discussion, the delegates concluded that there is a relatively narrow window of time that best serves FNTC’s need to capture the attention of the prospective stakeholders and to get underway the process of securing funding commitments toward implementation of the Strategic Plan. Individual stakeholder presentations need to be completed no later than the middle of November to allow for follow-on meetings to discuss contributions, before the holiday season arrives and before fiscal 2007-08 budgeting is finalized, particularly for government stakeholders.

- Presentation goals: The workshop delegates identified the following goals for the stakeholder presentations:
  - Procure public and private sector funding necessary to implement the FNTC Strategic Plan;
  - Procure other forms of Strategic Plan project endorsement;
  - Maintain a regular program of information dissemination to prospective stakeholders;
  - Keep as many “irons in the fire” as is possible, for it is unlikely that FNTC will be successful with every application;
  - Facilitate a constructive dialogue with prospective Strategic Plan project funders to allow the funder to help in ascertaining the kind of funding best meets the planned project’s needs, and where appropriate, to provide resources to enable the Council to further develop the project. This is called “engaged funding” and is very much a long-term relationship rather than a one-time funding contribution.
- Preliminary planning: From the discussions during the session, a number of recommendations were offered to the individuals and working groups who will plan and organize the program of stakeholder presentations.
  - Staging a gala launch event will help raise the profile of First Nations ICT capacity building and the profile of FNTC, and will give prospective contributors a better understanding of the level of stakeholder support FNTC has developed;
  - Having a few landmark contribution agreements completed before the round of stakeholder presentations begins will be helpful in encouraging prospective stakeholders to make a contribution;
  - Individual presentations to prospective contributors should occur separately and away from the launch event;
  - Offer symbolic gifts, e.g. bent-wood boxes, to funding partners when contribution agreements are completed;
  - Do in-depth research on potential contributors to gain an understanding of their funding strategies and funding processes;
  - Assign individual Council members to work with individual prospects, where possible leverage already existing business relationships;
  - Stakeholder presentation activities will require full-time personnel to accomplish, especially when considering the tight timelines that are planned.

### **Prospective stakeholders**

The Council began development of a list of prospective Strategic Plan stakeholders and industry sectors recognized for their support of First Nations capacity development that will be expanded upon as planning for the Stakeholders Meeting continues.

### **Action items**

The following stakeholder presentation action items were agreed by the delegates:

<b>Action items – Strategic plan stakeholder presentations</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timing</b>
Prepare presentation vision and action plan - defining goals, attendees, message to deliver, event logistics, planning responsibilities		
Have agreements in place with Sponsors / endorsers before the meeting	Sue Hanley	
Secure permission to screen “From Cedar to Silicon” at opening reception for prospective stakeholders	FNTC Partners: NetworkBC, Knowledge Network	
Arrange for opening reception to be held at UBC Longhouse, preferably on a Thursday evening in late October or early November	Sue Hanley	
Plan and produce Strategic Plan stakeholder communications package	FNTC communications agency	

## **IX. Session 5 – Elluminate software presentation**

The final session of the two-day workshop was an introductory session on the Elluminate e-learning, communications, and workflow collaboration software recently acquired by FNTC. Elluminate features that are attractive to FNTC include audio and audio/video teleconferencing, interactive whiteboard, instant messaging, and a powerful set of moderator tools.

As FNTC begins the process of implementing its Strategic Plan, Elluminate is sure to prove valuable for conducting small group and impromptu meetings where timing, logistics, and the travel-time burden make a face-to-face meeting impractical or impossible. Elluminate’s functionality may also prove useful in conducting certain types of online training and in working group collaboration. FNTC plans to deploy Elluminate to all Council members over the next two months, with the first full Council meeting by teleconference to occur in the fall.

## X. Next steps

For easy reference, the following is a summary of the more than 30 action items identified and defined during the FNTC strategic planning workshop, and included in this Report:

<b>Action items - ICT infrastructure and connectivity</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timing</b>
Install broadband POP in every community	NetworkBC in partnership with Federal Government (or Deferral Account)	End of 2008
Define community last-mile service standards	FNTC Technology Working Group	
Define community telecentre minimum standards	FIT community project best practices Partner: Ktunaxa Nation	
Define home wiring minimum standards	FNTC Technology Working Group in partnership with: INAC, CMHC	
Define home computer minimum standards	FNTC Technology Working Group	
Define Band administration local-area network minimum standards, installation guidelines, template	FNTC Technical Working Group in partnership with INAC Joint Capital Forum	
Form FNTC technology working group	Matthew Asham, Mike Christian, Norm Leech, Richard Smith, Jamie Sterritt, Phillip Djwa, Jess Gordon, Don Maki, Chris Thomas	

<b>Action items – ICT user-skills capacity building</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timing</b>
Re-assess tech mobile need, value, implementation	FNTC	
Research, select off-the-shelf training software for training trainers	FNTC technical capacity working group Partners: AHRDAs, INAC	
Define community need for ICT user skills competency testing	FNTC Partners: AHRDAs, INAC	
Form FNTC technical capacity working group	Laara Mixon, Kristin Kozuback, Karen Bailey-Romanko, Dayna Anderson, Claudia Trudeau, Carl Mashon	

<b>Action items – Technical skills development</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timing</b>
Revise technician training pilot project curriculum	NVIT	
Write technician training business plan	FNTC in partnership with NVIT	
Arrange practicum work placements	FNTC in partnership with NVIT	
Prepare terms of reference for FNTC Technical Support Network	Jess Gordon	
Plan Tech Support Network meeting, recruit meeting facilitator	Sue Hanley, Jess Gordon	
Develop program to promote value of community-based technical support	FNTC	

<b>Action items – ICT planning and administration tools and services</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timing</b>
Get copy of available e-Readiness Index tool	FNTC Partner: Industry Canada, Smart Choices Society	
Procure funding for community tech planning project manager and survey person	FNTC	
Research ISP management tools, solutions	Tyler Dobie (for FNTC)	Completed August 5, 2006
Define potential environments and uses for integrated data management application	FNTC Partner: Ktunaxa Nation	
Survey of high-productivity uses of e-Solutions Centre of Excellence, and cost-sharing	FNTC Partners: Canada Health Infoway, Ministry of Health	

<b>Action items – Common tools and services</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timing</b>
Rework BC3 gateway business plan assessment using First Nations information, prepare recommendations report	Jamie Sterritt, Matthew Asham, Norm Leech, Claudia Trudeau, Hans DeBruyn, Iris Lucas, Sue Hanley, Don Maki	Commence immediately Completion Oct 2006
Develop list of common tools and services of interest to First Nations, and identify objectives in deploying common tools and services		

<b>Action items – FNTC organizational needs</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timing</b>
Prepare briefing note to Leadership Council requesting approval to prepare a business case examining future FNTC governance structure	Laara Mixon, Sue Hanley, Gwen Phillips, Norm Leech	Commence immediately
Assess personnel requirements for FNTC, prepare briefing note to Leadership Council to accompany governance structure briefing note	Norm Leech, Laara Mixon, Peter Parrish	Commence immediately
Prepare RFP for agency to handle FNTC marketing and communications requirements	Norm Leech, Laara Mixon, Sue Hanley, Iris Lucas	Commence immediately

<b>Action items – Strategic plan stakeholder presentations</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timing</b>
Prepare presentation vision and action plan - defining goals, attendees, message to deliver, event logistics, planning responsibilities		
Have agreements in place with Sponsors / endorsers before the meeting	Sue Hanley	
Secure permission to screen "From Cedar to Silicon" at opening reception for prospective stakeholders	FNTC Partners: NetworkBC, Knowledge Network	
Arrange for opening reception to be held at UBC Longhouse, preferably on a Thursday evening in late October or early November	Sue Hanley	
Plan and produce Strategic Plan stakeholder communications package	FNTC communications agency	

## **XI. Appendices**

### **A. List of Participants**

### **B. BC3 Community Gateway Business Plan Assessment**

### **C. Planning and Implementation Matrix**