

STELLAT'EN FIRST NATION ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN



Table of Contents

- Project Background 1**
- Introduction..... 1
- Economic Development Vision 2
- Community Statistics & Information 5**
- Environmental Scan 5
- Situation Analysis 9
- Asset Inventory..... 15**
- SWOT Analysis 15
- Current Businesses 16
- Economic Development Goals 19**
- Enhance Quality of Life..... 19
- Develop Sustainable Business 19
- Exercise Inherent Rights 21
- Develop Entrepreneurial Capacity 21
- Priority Opportunities 23
- Implementation Plan 26**

PROJECT BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

In 2007, Stelat'en First Nation (SFN) embarked on a process to envision the community in the year 2030. Significant community consultation resulted in a report that set out long-term and high-level goals for the community and for the administration of SFN to pursue and painted a picture of what the community might look like in the coming decades. The economic development vision for the community painted a concise picture of a community where engaging employment was plentiful:

Over the years, Stelat'en First Nation has built its economy for community independence and ownership of our jobs and businesses. Social assistance is a distant memory as members are self-sustaining. Youth pursue more career opportunities. The Slenyah Centre is a core piece for businesses meeting the wide-ranging needs of retail customers and tourists, including eco-tourism with crafts, camping and guiding for rafting, trails, hunting & fishing and school activities. Members are involved in small businesses of various kinds. The Nation works with forestry, fisheries stewardship and the agricultural potential. A Stella development corporation has provided capacity to develop First Nation businesses as well as support individual community members' development of their family business. Community and family gardens help to meet the food needs of households.¹

With the year 2030 little more than a decade away, SFN has made significant progress on many fronts related to economic development. Workforce participation is higher now than it has been at almost any time since contact. People rely less on social assistance than in the past, numerous family businesses operate in the community, and the community garden provides fresh produce to community members year-round.

Yet, while some parts of the economic development infrastructure necessary to achieve the goals set out in *Vision 2030* are already in place, the community has not seized opportunities to engage in eco-tourism, camping, guiding, rafting, and outfitting – businesses that would diversify

¹ *Stelat'en First Nation Planning Workshop Report*, October, 2007.

the local economy, making it less vulnerable to shocks associated with the sometimes-volatile natural resource sector.

At the same time, new opportunities related to the natural resource sector, and leveraging the inherent rights and title of First Nations have create unforeseen opportunities for employment. The *Economic Development Plan* will maintain the vision laid out by leaders of the past, build on the successes of the present, and pursue opportunities into the future.

Economic development literature tells us that there are two conditions for economic growth: technological change and the accumulation of capital (including human capital). Technology can make individuals more productive, meaning that they can produce more with less effort. An example is a feller buncher: with modern forestry equipment, a job that would have taken several people all day to complete can now be accomplished by one person in a matter of minutes. The buncher operator is able to attain the whole value that several people had previously attained and it becomes easier for that person to support themselves and their family. The accumulation of capital - whether physical capital in the form of a buncher, or through the acquisition of skills and knowledge called “human capital” - allows an individual to use their abilities to produce valuable goods and services more efficiently. However, investment is required to access either a buncher or a university degree. Economic growth therefore depends on prioritizing where to invest time and effort to produce more efficient results in the future.

In 2016, SFN applied to the Land and Economic Development Services Program of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada to create the present *Economic Development Plan*. This plan looks at labour market opportunities, band members’ skills, current band activities related to economic development, lands available for economic development, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. It presents a strategy to develop the economic opportunities available to members of Stelat’en First Nation in order to enable them to meet the needs of the community into the future.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT VISION

Through consultation with the community, Chief and Council, and the administration, the authors of this plan identified a vision for SFN’s economic development. The SFN Economic Development Officer – hired in November of 2017 – will be responsible for ensuring that SFN pursues this vision and that it remain central to the economic development of Stelat’en First Nation.

The central goal of the SFN *Economic Development Plan* is to enhance the quality of life of Stellat'en members. While there are many subjective definitions of the term "quality of life," this plan takes the term to mean that members are situated to obtain what they desire and select the best quality of life for themselves, thereby maximizing social and cultural benefits for the community.² When community members are able to create the lives they desire, based on deeply held cultural values, they help to enhance the quality of life of their family and their neighbours. In practice, this goal prioritizes the availability of desirable employment for every member.

The second goal of the plan is to develop businesses that are sustainable both financially and environmentally. The closure of the Endako Mine in 2014 demonstrated the often-precarious nature of resource dependence. Developing businesses that are financially resilient requires diversification into sectors of the local economy that do not depend on one or two large employers. British Columbia's robust international tourism sector offers a number of opportunities to connect the community to local, regional, national, and international markets.

The *Economic Development Plan* also aims to leverage inherent Aboriginal rights in Canada to the benefit of SFN members. Whether dealing with proponents of natural resource projects or with the provincial or federal governments, Canadian law has been increasingly vocal about the vital importance of free, prior, and informed consent for Indigenous peoples. These principles are embodied in the United Nations *Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, adopted by the government of both British Columbia and Canada. In British Columbia where the land base is largely unceded by Indigenous groups, extractive industries have inequitably contributed to the development of the settler economy while depriving First Nations of access to wealth and resources. Government to government negotiations between Carrier Sekani First Nations leaders and their provincial and federal counterparts seek to raise the standard of living of Indigenous peoples in British Columbia to match that of their settler neighbours. Strategies aimed at raising the standard of living of Indigenous peoples include sharing the historic revenue from natural resource extraction with First Nations, increasing the number of direct-award contracts to First Nations-owned businesses, and prioritizing employment for First Nations members in industrial projects in First Nations traditional territories.

² Ed Diender & Eunkook Suh, "Measuring Quality of Life: Economic, Social, and Subjective Indicators," *Social Indicators Research* 40 (1997): 189-216.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS IDENTIFIED BY THE COMMUNITY AND CHIEF & COUNCIL

- Actively seek, secure and promote economic initiatives that will enhance the quality of life and prosperity of Stelat'en First Nation and Stelat'en members;
- Develop diverse, environmentally sustainable and profitable businesses for Stelat'en First Nation and Stelat'en members that respect the history, culture and traditions of Stelat'en First Nation and the environment in which we live;
- Exercise our inherent right to access to the natural resources of the land and waters within the traditional territory of the Stelat'en First Nation; and
- Assist in building the capacity of Stelat'en members to be successful entrepreneurs.

Finally, the *Economic Development Plan* prioritizes the development of the entrepreneurial capacity of Stelat'en members. SFN currently receives funding from Indigenous Services Canada to support investment in member-owned business start-ups. In past years, grants to members have been used to support the development of member-owned businesses. These have included funding to help make and sell hand crafts, beadwork, as well as funds supporting small franchise businesses, and a consultancy.

In the coming years, SFN will continue to provide strategic funding to members wishing to pursue small business enterprises. At the same time the Band will work with partner organizations to leverage this strategic financial support with entrepreneurial capacity building

and skills development. Organizations that are well suited and oriented toward developing entrepreneurial capacity include:

- The Department of Indigenous Services Canada
- The Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations, and Rural Development
- Community Futures Stuart Nechako
- Community Futures Nadina
- The College of New Caledonia

The Economic Development Officer will develop a program to administer capacity funding to members. The program will take as its criteria the ability of the applicant to create value and employment in the community, the ability of the applicant to demonstrate a commitment to developing their entrepreneurial skills in a formal setting, and the ability of the applicant to integrate traditional or locally significant content into their business model.

COMMUNITY STATISTICS & INFORMATION

This chapter will give an overview of SFN's economic development planning and present some key economic indicators for the community.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

Over the past decades, Stellat'en First Nation has undertaken a number of planning projects that touched on economic development. The main goals and objectives of each plan are presented below along with an indication of the state of their implementation where possible.

Vision Quest 2001, 1997

The Stellat'en Natural Resource Committee met during 1997 to outline the objectives and goals of SFN in the natural resource sector. The result was the *Vision Quest 2001* document that took a wholistic view of industry, employment, wellness, education, and environment and looked at ways for SFN to take advantage of opportunities then present in fisheries, logging, silviculture, retail trade, and tourism.

Members of the committee identified a connection between employment and ending drug and alcohol abuse. Strategies to improve employment prospects for youth included providing activities for youth, developing activities that brought together neighbouring First Nations communities, and hosting events and sessions to connect youth with the traditional knowledge held by elders. The committee made 13 recommendations including recommendations to develop an elders care facility, a traditional use camp, a strategy to conserve salmon, to document traditional resource use, and to establish a training facility.

While an elders care facility has not been created, the Band has since undertaken fisheries stewardship in partnership with CSTC and has conducted a series of traditional use studies which are outlined below. Plans to build use the Binta Lake reserve as a cultural centre and traditional use camp are also included in the long-term strategy outlined below.

SFN Planning Workshop, 2007

In 2007, Chief Mabel Louie led a planning workshop that engaged community members and staff over a three-day period of deep consultation and visioning for the future. The resulting report identified community assets and contained a community vision covering many aspects of community life, goals and strategies to attain that vision, and an implementation plan.

The economic development vision (“Vision 2030”) that resulted from this workshop was quoted in its entirety at the beginning of this chapter. It continues to guide the economic development of the community. 58 community members took part and voted on priority actions for economic development. The action receiving the most votes was to expand the Slenyah Store to include a car wash, tire shop, coffee shop, RV site, pet area, and an artist area during peak tourist season with 23 in favour. 11 members voted to promote apprenticeships in the trades, 11 voted for a tourism plan consisting of a river rafting outfitter and for a trail to Red Rock north of the reserve, and 8 members voted in support of developing campsites and an RV site on reserve.

Some parts of the Slenyah expansion plan went ahead. There has not been a car wash or tire shop added, but a building that is suitable for light mechanical work was constructed in the interim. The Economic Development Office opened a gift shop near the store during the Christmas season and will operate the store once again in the summer of 2019. A fulsome feasibility study for an expanded truck stop gas station is underway as of early 2018 and is slated to be completed in March, 2018. The Economic Development Office is also currently undertaking a feasibility study for an RV campsite and river rafting outfitter. The study will be completed by early 2019.

SFN Comprehensive Community Plan, 2015

The Comprehensive Community Plan for SFN developed in 2015 remains the strategic plan for the community. The document informs Chief and Council and the Administration about the priorities identified by the community for leadership to pursue. In January of 2018 the plan was reviewed by community members as part of the monitoring and evaluation process.

Economic development goals that the community identified in 2015 continue to inform the mandate of the Economic Development Office. The five priorities listed in the plan are:

- To create a community economic development corporation,
- To develop a strategic economic development plan,

- To explore the creation of a financial investment institution to support economic development in SFN and other First Nations,
- To pursue employment opportunities through the development of business partnerships, and
- To establish a natural resource department.

Stellat'en Holdings Inc. was created in 2014 and has a Limited Partnership under the *BC Partnerships Act* with SFN through a bare trust. Stellat'en Holdings in turn has Limited Partnership Agreements with Slenyah Store Inc. and Stellat'en Duchun Forestry Inc. Annual budgets and workplans for these entities must be approved by Chief and Council. Work to explore participating in a First Nations-led financial institution is underway. A natural resource department has not been formally created, but many of the pieces are now in place, including a Natural Resource Liaison and a Referrals Officer.

SFN Blackwater Socioeconomic Study, 2015

The Firelight Group undertook a study in 2015 to establish a socioeconomic baseline from which to compare the impacts of the proposed Blackwater Gold Project, a gold mine that would have impact on the traditional territory of the Stellat'en. Stellat'en members living on and off-reserve reported significantly lower median household incomes than that of the surrounding region. 90% of respondents to a survey conducted for the study indicated that they used traditional foods as a source of nutrition. Many respondents had concerns about the impact the project would have of traditional food harvesting. The economic baseline established by the study showed that many on and off-reserve members felt that they did not possess an adequate skill set to take advantage of the opportunity for jobs presented by the project.

Since 2015, SFN Chief and Council, Staff, and the Education Department have been working to fill the skills gap that exists in the community to enable community members to access employment opportunities presented by the project.

SFN Economic Development Goals, 2017

An engagement session with community members in 2016 focused on brainstorming ideas for economic development in the community. The session also produced the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Analysis presented later in the present plan. The engagement session

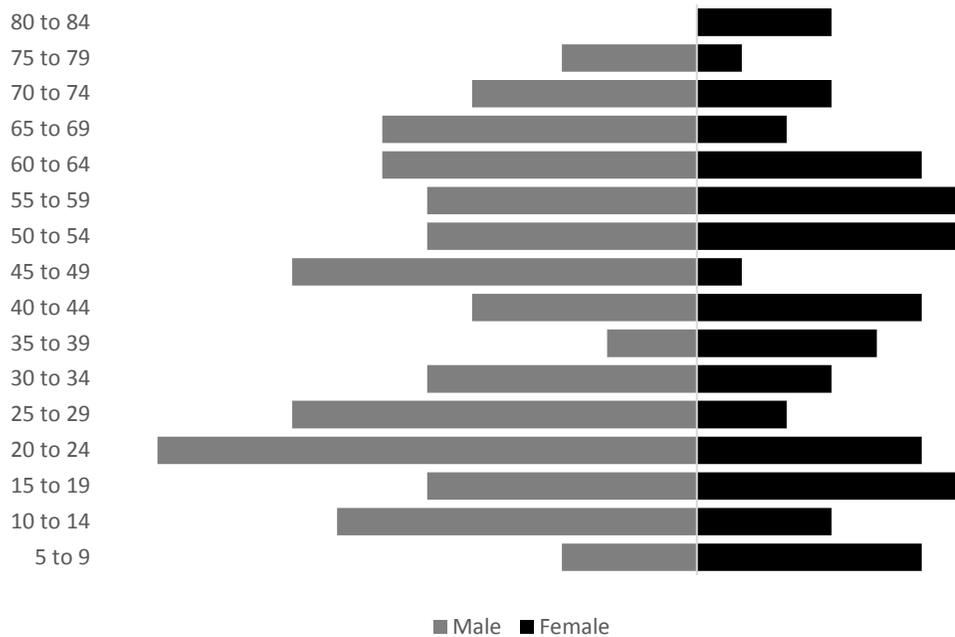
also prioritized economic development opportunities that community members wanted the Administration to pursue. These priorities framed the discussion that was later held by SFN's Chief and Council, boards of directors of its businesses, and administration to finalize the present plan.

SFN Economic Development Vision, Strategies 2017

In October of 2017, key economic development stakeholders from Stellaquo met in Prince George in a two-day session to focus on prioritizing and finalizing a strategic Economic Development Plan for the community. The Economic Development Goals outlined in this present plan, as well as the key strategic priorities listed here were the result of these meetings. Following these meetings, SFN hired a full-time Economic Development Officer to take the lead in developing the Economic Development Plan.

SITUATION ANALYSIS

The following section relies heavily on data contained in the most recent census. Statistical information based on the 2016 Canadian Census is not as precise when describing small communities as it is at describing larger geographies. The reader cannot assume the exactness of figures describing the education, income, demographic, and labour characteristics of Stellaquo. However, these numbers present a general picture of the economy of Stellaquo, especially when these figures are compared to data describing the surrounding Regional District of Bulkley Nechako (RDBN). The accuracy of figures describing Stellaquo is designed to be within 10% of the actual figures. For example, the federal government's statistics on education attainment among Stellat'en living on reserve state that there are no bachelor's degree holders on the reserve. However, there are in fact several bachelor's degree holders on reserve. The census data is nonetheless within a 10% range of error. Comparing statistics with the RDBN is especially helpful when the difference between the two sets of data is greater than 10%. A difference of more than 10% shows that there is a significant difference between Stellaquo and neighbouring communities.

Figure 1: Age Distribution of Stellaquo IR #1

Source: Stellat'en First Nation Band List.

Demographics

The age distribution of Stellaquo is characterized by a greater proportion of youth than the RDBN. Although the data available represents only a rough estimate of the actual numbers, the trend reflects something that is seen in many First Nations communities across Canada. Among the population of the Bulkley Nechako Regional District, a population distribution diagram like the one presented in Figure 1 would show a very large group of people aged between 50 and 60. By comparison, the distribution of age groups in Stellaquo has a much higher proportion of people under the age of 35.

Income

Households in Stellaquo receive lower incomes compared to other communities in the area (see Figure 2). While the median household income for families and individuals in the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako was reported at more than \$65,000 per year in 2015, Stellaquo households

Figure 2: Median After-Tax Income of Households in 2015

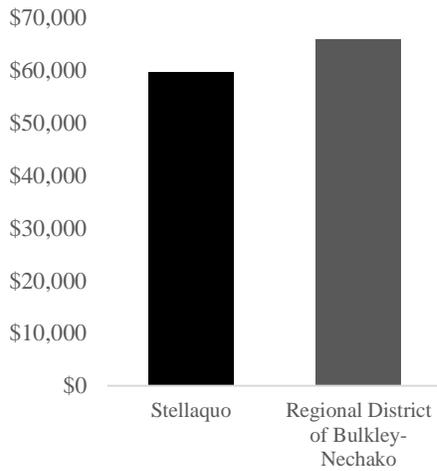
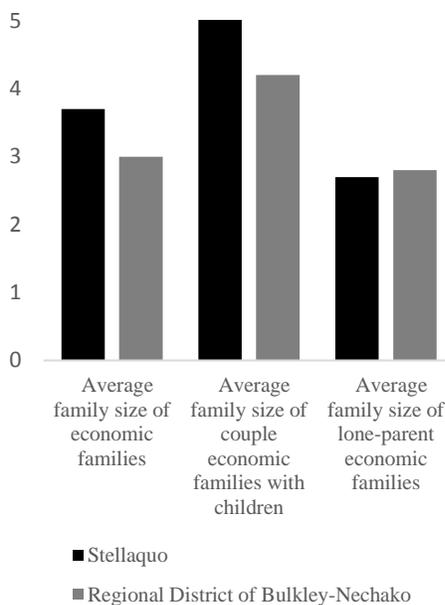


Figure 3: Average Size of Households



Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29 2017.

reported a median income of less than \$60,000 per year. The median income is the household income that has an equal number of households reporting below it and above it.³

In addition to a reported lower median income, households in Stellaquo are on average larger than those in neighbouring communities. The federal government uses the term “economic family” to describe more than one people who are related and living in a home together. The average size of an economic family in Stellaquo is 3.7 people, while the average for the RDBN is 3. For couples with children, the average size in Stellaquo is 5.2 compared to 4.2 elsewhere in the area. Lone-parent families are nearly the same size, with an average of 2.7 for Stellaquo compared to 2.8 for the RDBN.⁴ As a result, there are more dependants in Stellaquo relying on incomes that are generally lower than incomes in neighbouring communities.

Education & Skills

The level of education attainment in Stellaquo is generally lower than that of neighbouring communities (Table 1). Compared to RDBN Census respondents, fewer Stellaquo residents living on reserve had received post-secondary cer-

³ The median is a useful measure because an average of all incomes can be skewed by a few very high incomes or a few very low ones. Some very high incomes in a population make it seem that the whole population is earning more when looking at the average. The median income gives a better picture of the population as a whole.

⁴ The average is a useful measure for family size because there is less variability in family sizes than there is with income. With income, one person could make 100 times what another person makes, but there is not a household with 100 times more people than another household. This is why averages are used to characterize household sizes in the community.

tifications of any kind. More residents of Stellaquo reported a high school diploma as their highest level of education attainment. More detailed analysis of the skills and education attainment of Stelat'en members will become as the SFN Education and Training Centre comes online in 2018.

Table 1: Education Attainment

	Stellaquo	RDBN	Difference
No certificate; diploma or degree	41.9%	23.9%	18.0%
Secondary (high) school diploma or equivalency certificate	38.7%	31.2%	7.5%
Postsecondary certificate; diploma or degree	22.6%	44.9%	-22.3%
Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma	9.7%	13.0%	-3.3%
Trades certificate or diploma	0.0%	5.2%	-5.2%
Certificate of Apprenticeship or Certificate of Qualification	6.5%	7.8%	-1.4%
College; CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma	9.7%	17.3%	-7.7%
University certificate or diploma below bachelor level	0.0%	2.7%	-2.7%
Diploma or degree at bachelor level or above	0.0%	11.9%	-11.9%
Bachelor's degree	0.0%	8.0%	-8.0%
University certificate or diploma above bachelor level	0.0%	0.9%	-0.9%
Degree in medicine; dentistry; veterinary medicine; optometry	0.0%	0.4%	-0.4%
Master's degree	0.0%	2.3%	-2.3%
Earned doctorate	0.0%	0.2%	-0.2%

Occupations

Occupations reported by Census respondents in Stellaquo show some board patterns of differentiation with neighbouring communities (Table 2). The statistical reliability of these figures is especially suspect because of the crudeness of the dataset. However, a general pattern shows that logging and transportation are major sources of private-sector employment. Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting account for a similar proportion of jobs in Stellaquo as well as in the RDBN. Logging truck driver is a common occupation in both communities, and this is reflected in the relatively high response rate to transportation and warehousing. Slenyah Store is also a major source of employment in the community, and this is likely reflected in Stellaquo's overall higher reported rate of employment in retail trade. Occupations in public administration were reported to

be much higher in Stellaquo than in the Regional District. This reflects the fact that SFN Administration employees a higher proportion of Stellat'en members than municipalities, regional districts, the province, and the federal government do relative to the overall population.

Table 2: Occupations

	Stellaquo	RDBN	Difference
Agriculture; forestry; fishing and hunting	18.2%	14.7%	3.5%
Mining; quarrying; and oil and gas extraction	0.0%	3.7%	-3.7%
Utilities	0.0%	0.4%	-0.4%
Construction	0.0%	7.1%	-7.1%
Manufacturing	18.2%	12.3%	5.9%
Wholesale trade	0.0%	2.0%	-2.0%
Retail trade	18.2%	10.1%	8.1%
Transportation and warehousing	18.2%	5.5%	12.7%
Information and cultural industries	0.0%	0.6%	-0.6%
Finance and insurance	0.0%	1.5%	-1.5%
Real estate and rental and leasing	0.0%	0.8%	-0.8%
Professional; scientific and technical services	0.0%	4.1%	-4.1%
Management of companies and enterprises	0.0%	0.1%	-0.1%
Waste management and remediation services	0.0%	2.3%	-2.3%
Educational services	0.0%	7.9%	-7.9%
Health care and social assistance	0.0%	9.4%	-9.4%
Arts; entertainment and recreation	0.0%	1.2%	-1.2%
Accommodation and food services	0.0%	5.9%	-5.9%
Other services (except public administration)	0.0%	4.1%	-4.1%
Public administration	27.3%	6.4%	20.9%

ASSET INVENTORY

This chapter provides an inventory of skills, opportunities, and existing businesses present in Stel-laquo. It also includes an inventory of some successful off-reserve entrepreneurs.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Table 3: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>
Location	Lack of quality water
Bahlats	Lack of employment
Culture	Lack of encouragement for young people.
Community	Lack of communication
Language	Transportation
Everyone helps when a tragedy happens	Self-serving agendas
Cultural knowledge	Motivation, not enough
Salmon festival, adults teach kids about fish harvesting	70 to 80-year age group underutilized
Community Hall	No firefighters for our hall, lack of training
Headstart	Lack of planning
Firehall	Infrastructure (sewer water is poor)
Wellness Centre	
Band Office, Treaty Office	
Chief & Council and staff are working hard	
Community garden	
The gathering place located by the community garden	
<u>Opportunities</u>	<u>Threats</u>
Close to the highway	Students not meeting math, English and science requirements
Trees	“Close minded bandmembers to non-bandmembers”
Minerals	Lack of funding for training/education
Fish	Lack of opportunities
Water	Alcohol and drugs
Land base	Prescription drug use
Moose	Geographic location is a weakness to start a company
Lakes	Lack of space for housing
Gas Station/Slenyah	Two more houses will maximize our septic lines
Small building beside Slenyah	
PGNAETA, skills training	
Chief and Council negotiates with various project proponents	
Elders and Seniors are our best resources	
Youth	
Culinary arts certified teachers to train others to cater, cook.	
Selkin Logging	
Partners with the village of Fraser Lake	
Cooperative Proposal	

A Strength/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats analysis (SWOT) was conducted in the spring of 2017 at a community planning session at the New Hall in Stellaquo (Table 3). Stellat'en members viewed the community's cultural as the primary source of its strength, while lack of opportunity and communication were major sources of weakness. The natural setting of Stellaquo was seen as an opportunity for employment, including the abundant natural resources of the area as well as the picturesque of the locale. Lack of education and training leading to a loss of opportunities and potentially substance abuse was seen as a key threat.

CURRENT BUSINESSES

Selkin Logging & Michell Enterprises

Robert Michell started Selkin Logging in 1990 and – along with his wife Gladys - expanded into trucking in 1998 with the creation of Michell Enterprises. Together, the two businesses employ about 30 people on a permanent basis including loggers, logging truck drivers, mechanics, and contractors. The businesses employ primarily indigenous workers including Metis and First Nations. The companies employ 11 Stellat'en First Nation members, 4 Nadleh Whut'en members, 3 members of Saik'uz First Nation, 2 members of Takla First Nation, and 1 Moosomin, Saskatchewan.

In 2010 Premier Gordon Campbell presented Robert and Gladys with a citation as Business of the Year at the annual BC Aboriginal Business Awards. The citation read in part:

From negotiating Forest and Range Agreements to delivering superior product to local mills, Selkin logging and its trucking company has sustained profitability over a challenging two decades. Known as outstanding corporate citizens, Selkin Logging has a staff of 22 and is committed to its Stellat'en First Nations community.

Both companies hold Safety Accord Forestry Enterprise Certifications with the BC Forest Safety Council.

Chasbut Contracting

Ken Schmidt started Chasbut Contracting in 2003 after many years of experience logging by hand and without the benefit of very much equipment. Ken regrettably passed away in 2017, but his

children, all Stellat'en First Nation members, continue to successfully operate the company today out of Stellaquo.

Chasbut Contracting works closely with local industry producing timber for national and international markets. The company employs 9 members, of whom 5 are of First Nations ancestry. 2 employees are members of Stellat'en First Nation.

Chasbut was named the 2015-2016 Logger of the Year by Fraser Lake Sawmills. The award is presented in recognition of a company's exceptional record of safety, adherence to environmental regulations, the quality of the product it delivers, its ability to meet delivery schedules, and the relationship it fosters as a contractor.

AC Safety Services

Stellat'en Monica Contois started AC Safety Services after working in the oil and gas sector as a field medic and later as a safety coordinator. Monica is a Red Seal Electrician, holds an Occupational Health and Safety Certificate, and will soon obtain an Occupational Health and Safety Diploma.

AC Safety Services provides occupational health and safety to industry including first aid attendants, gas detection and monitoring, drug and alcohol testing, and accident investigation. The company also offers courses to industrial clients, train workers in worksite safety. Courses include rigging and hoisting, bear aware, and basic chainsaw safety.

Stellat'en Holdings Inc.

The corporate structure of SFN's business enterprises is described in an earlier section. Stellat'en Holdings Inc. is owned by Stellat'en First Nation and is the majority shareholder in Slenyah Store Inc. and in Stellat'en Duchun Forestry Inc. Slenyah Store is a retail business focused on status fuel sales. Stellat'en Duchun Forestry holds First Nations forest licenses and is developing its capacity to provide other forest services including wildfire fuel treatments and silviculture.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

ENHANCE QUALITY OF LIFE

Develop protocol for businesses in SFN Territory

SFN will welcome any investment within its territory. Proponents of investments and partnerships will work closely with SFN ensure that the objectives off all parties are aligned. The employment of SFN members is a high priority objective in any proposed partnership or investment.

Engage levels of government

All programs from all levels of government will be examined for applicability to any initiative being proposed by SFN including training, funding grants, and help with business planning.

Partner with institutions (UNBC, eg.)

Institutions of higher learning will be approached to help address SFN capacity with respect to economic development initiatives that are feasible and will likely be put in place in a reasonable time and that time being from one to three years.

DEVELOP SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS

Improve sustainability of Slenyah

The Slenyah Store has been in operation for more than 20 years and for much of that time it has been on a sound financial footing. The closure of the Endako Mine had a negative effect on revenue and the store was slow to respond by adjusting prices or reducing its overhead expenses. As a result, the business has relied on the committed support of SFN to maintain itself. In 2014 Slenyah was reorganized into Slenyah Store Inc. and entered a Limited Partnership with Stelat'en Holdings Inc. A board of directors was appointed by the shareholder (ultimately Stelat'en First Nation through a bare trust held by the Chief for the benefit of the nation). Since 2014 the board has been responsible for working with the store manager to develop and budget for the year and to monitor the financial performance of the store on a quarterly basis, comparing anticipated financial performance to actual performance. Since 2017, the economic development officer has been working

with the board and with the store manager to ensure that the relationship between the store manager, the board of directors, the band administration, Chief and Council, and Stellat'en membership is a harmonious one in which roles and responsibilities are clearly identified. Tighter adherence to reporting deadlines and to the approved annual budget will improve the store's financial performance.

Develop Forest Services

In conjunction with the provincial governments' Forest Opportunities Fund, SFN has received funding to support the development of a forest services business that would be resilient to a downturn in local logging. With the Annual Allowable Cut for the province set to fall in the coming years, the forest service business will focus on silviculture and other services not related to logging as well as many aspects of environmental stewardship. Stellat'en Duchun Forestry Inc., SFN's general partner and holder of its First Nations Forest License will become the vehicle through which forest services are delivered in Stellat'en traditional territory on the basis of direct award relationships with government and industry.

Explore outfitting and hospitality

Developing businesses that are able to take advantage British Columbia's tourism sector is a priority for Stella'ten First Nation's economic development. Tourism is a seasonal sector of the economy that can be influenced by macro economic level factors such as the value of the Canadian dollar, but it is a largely untapped sector in the local economy of Stellat'en First Nation and one that presents opportunities for employment and capacity building. British Columbia has a comparative advantage with other provinces in Canada thanks to its natural endowment of scenic beauty, a natural advantage shared by Stellat'en First Nation. Turning this advantage into employment will depend on strategies outlined elsewhere in this plan including developing a cultural centre at Binta Lake and exploring the feasibility of an RV campsite and river rafting outfitter.

Develop retail and tourism

Building on the priority to explore opportunities in hospitality, this plan will work to leverage an increase in the number of visitors into the local area to support local retail including Slenah store, a potential truck stop retail facility, and a gift shop focused on locally-produced handcrafts.

EXERCISE INHERENT RIGHTS

Engage in European market study

In order to diversify the potential market for visitors, SFN plans to undertake a study to determine how to engage European tourists. Anecdotal evidence shows that many visitors from Europe are interested in learning more about First Nations and indigenous culture. A European market study will attempt to systematically identify the strategic advantages that SFN has in the international tourism market. The study will be used to develop a plan to attract more overseas visitors to the area.

Develop Binta Lake Cultural Centre

Binta Lake IR#2, located approximately 60km southwest of Stellaquo, has been a base of fishing for Stellat'en since time immemorial. The relative remoteness of Binta Lake makes it an ideal location for a cultural centre focused on traditional Stellat'en knowledge and medicine. Through community consultation, members have repeatedly stated their desire to utilize Binta Lake more effectively. In the coming years, SFN will explore the possibility of developing a seasonal facility from which to operate cultural camps in order to showcase, teach, and learn Stellat'en traditional knowledge.

Promote Environmental Stewardship

SFN will develop a program to train members in various aspects of environmental monitoring and guardianship of the traditional territory. Working with industry partners and with Stellat'en Duchun Forestry, environmental monitors will report to the community and make recommendations to support the protection of culturally and environmentally significant areas. Environmental stewardship is necessary both for the protection of sensitive ecological systems and for the sustainability of activities carried out on the land base.

DEVELOP ENTREPRENEURIAL CAPACITY

Stellat'en First Nation will work to develop the entrepreneurial capacity of the Nation and its members primarily through the Economic Development Department and through the Education Department. Economic Development will focus on businesses and business training, while Education will focus on developing the skills necessary for members to take advantage of economic

opportunities. The Economic Development Officer will develop a program to offer grants and other types of support for business start-ups and expansions.

Economic Development Office

In November of 2017, SFN took the first step in creating an Economic Development Office by engaging a full-time Economic Development Officer (EDO). Early drafts of the *Governance and Fiscal Agreement for Stelat'en Businesses* (GFA) laid out the roles and responsibilities of the EDO. These were mainly focused on:

- identifying commercial and other economic opportunities for SFN to pursue;
- applying for grants and other funding to undertake feasibility studies, business plans, training for indigenous entrepreneurs, and start-up funding;
- working with the Boards of Directors of Stelat'en businesses to create policies, procedures, and terms of reference; and
- reviewing and revising the Economic Development Plan

The GFA will be amended in the coming year to reflect the duties of the EDO as they were described in the draft GFA and as SFN administration has defined the duties of the EDO.

Training Centre

Stelat'en First Nation has been providing much needed education, employment and training services to community members for many years. Each year, the number of people whose lives are affected by these opportunities increases and training services are needed more and more. Whether it is adult education assistance or employment and training opportunity, SFN's capacity to facilitate these programs has been limited.

With the construction of the New Wellness Centre in the community has come an opportunity for us to transform the old Health Centre into an Education and Training facility. As of early 2018, the Education Department is working to connect services, renovate, and purchase furniture and telephones, desks, computers, tables, chairs, shelves, and filing cabinets. The Education and Training Facility is expected to be in operations by the spring of 2018.

PRIORITY OPPORTUNITIES

Based on community consultation conducted in early 2017 and a meeting of economic development stakeholders later in the year, development opportunities were prioritized according to the relative benefit to the community. Stakeholders ranked a truck stop facility as the first priority business opportunity followed by an RV Site and Rafting Outfitter, and finally a gift shop.

Truck Stop

SFN will conduct a feasibility study to determine the potential profitability of developing a gas station on reserve with sufficient space to accommodate tractor trailers, busses, and large recreational vehicles. A potential truck stop facility would include card lock facilities, consumer facing fuel retail, a convenience store, and a restaurant.

The feasibility study will determine the most suitable location for the facility, conducting preliminary designs and site renderings, establishing the cost of developing the facility, and determining the financial capacity of SFN to carry the project forward.

The truck stop feasibility study will begin in early 2018 and will arrive at a recommendation to Chief and Council by the spring of 2018. If the project goes forward to design and construction, the truck stop would be operational by the fall of 2020.

RV Site and Rafting Outfitter

SFN will explore the opportunity to develop an RV campground and rafting outfitter making use of Stellat'en First Nation members' knowledge and skill as well as physical assets owned by the First Nation. The project will take advantage of the scenic surroundings of Stellat'en First Nation and its strategic location along a major route to Haida Gwaii and Alaska.

Each business will be incorporated and will be managed by a board of directors overseeing a manager. The corporations will be Limited Partners with Stellat'en Holdings Inc., an economic development corporation owned by a bare trust on behalf of Stellat'en First Nation. Each business will follow parallel stages starting with a market analysis and leading to separate business plans.

During the first stage of the campground feasibility (Spring of 2018) a qualified professional will be retained to produce a highest and best use study for a site selected by Stellat'en membership during the development of the Stellat'en Land Use plan. The land designated for the campsite will not be encumbered by a Certificate of Possession, lease, or other land-use designation. The reserve

land required will be subsequently placed under a Certificate of Possession. A qualified professional will conduct a market analysis of the summer traffic along Highway 16 identifying potential customers in the local, regional, and international market for camping during the second stage of the project. The third stage of the project will consist of a comprehensive study of the technical and regulatory requirements of operating an RV and campsite including a detailed engineering study to address requirements for fresh water, wastewater, and electricity. The fourth stage of the campground feasibility will look at financial requirements to start the business including the acquisition of tangible capital assets, development of infrastructure, certifications, insurance, wages, marketing materials, and any other expense the business can expect to incur. All relevant data collected will be used to develop a robust business plan that will enable the campground to start operating in the fall of 2019.

During the fall and winter of 2018-2019, Stelat'en First Nation will acquire the necessary assets, infrastructure, certifications, insurance, etc. to begin operating the campsite. Stelat'en First Nation will access funding for construction through the First Nations Financial Management Board. Construction is expected to take place during the summer of 2019. The campsite is expected to be operating in the fall of 2019.

During the first stage of the river rafting feasibility study (Spring of 2018) a qualified professional will conduct a comprehensive study of the technical and regulatory requirements of operating a river rafting outfitter include any necessary environmental assessment or equivalent process to permit the outfitter to operate on the Stellaquo River from Francois Lake, located off-reserve.

During the second stage of the rafting feasibility study, the financial requirements for start-up including the acquisition of assets, certifications, insurance, wages, marketing materials, and any other expense will be determined to develop a business plan that will enable the rafting outfitter to start operating in the summer of 2019. This work will be completed by the fall of 2018. During the final stage of the river rafting feasibility component, Stelat'en First Nation will acquire the necessary assets, certifications, insurance, etc. to begin operating the outfitter. The outfitter is expected to be operating in June of 2019.

Together, the two businesses would complement one another and maximize the attractiveness of the local area to visitors.

Gift Shop

Following the successful operation of a “pop up” Christmas gift store near the Slenyah Store, SFN will operate a gift shop specializing in cultural products starting in the spring of 2018.

The gift shop will focus on presenting Stelat’en First Nation in a positive light through engagement with the local and regional tourism sector. It will provide opportunities for local artists and craftspeople to showcase the product of their labor, for the community to educate non-members about its history and culture, and some modest employment.

Making use of a log cabin building sitting adjacent to the Slenyah Store, the shop will employ one part-time manager/clerk during the period from May to September. The shop will also employ students through SFN’s summer student employment program.

Artists and craftspeople will be able to sell their wares on the basis of consignment. The shop manager and the artists will determine the price of a given and the shop will take a small administrative fee. The shop will not operate as a profit-making venture, rather its focus will be on showcasing local cultural products and supporting local artists.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

1 Enhance Quality of Life							
Action	Measure	Responsibility	Potential Partner	Resource Required	Timeline	Annual Review Action Status	
A	Develop protocol for businesses in SFN Territory	Protocol in place	Chief & Council Consultants	Government and industry	Time	1-3 years and ongoing	
B	Engage levels of government	Government to government protocols in place	Chief & Council	Local, provincial, and federal governments	Time	1-3 years and ongoing	
C	Partner with institutions (UNBC, eg.)	Partnerships In place	Administration, Education coordinator	UBNC, CNC, School District	Time	Ongoing	

2. Develop Sustainable Businesses							
Action		Measure	Responsibility	Potential Partner	Resource Required	Timeline	Annual Review Action Status
A	Improve sustainability of Slenyah	Profitability increased	Board of directors, EDO		Capacity building	Ongoing	
B	Develop Forest Services	Company established, contracts in place	Band Manager, EDO	Government, industry	Capacity Building, investment	1-3 years	
C	Explore outfitting and hospitality	Feasibility studies completed	EDO	DISC, funding agencies	Time, investment	1-2 years	
D	Develop retail and tourism	Businesses established & expanded	EDO	Funding agencies, financial institutions	Time, investment	Ongoing	

3. Exercise Inherent Rights							
Action		Measure	Responsibility	Potential Partner	Resource Required	Timeline	Annual Review Action Status
A	Engage in European market study	Study completed	EDO	DISC, Village of Fraser Lake	Time	1-3 years	
B	Develop Binta Lake Cultural Centre	Centre established	EDO	DISC	Time	1-4 years	
C	Promote environmental stewardship	Effective control of land base	Referrals officer, Band Manager	DISC	Time, capacity building	1-2 years and ongoing	

4. Develop Entrepreneurial Capacity							
Action		Measure	Responsibility	Potential Partner	Resource Required	Timeline	Annual Review Action Status
A	Economic Development Office	Office reporting to Chief & Council and boards of directors	EDO	DISC, RDBN, Village of Fraser Lake	Capacity building	ongoing	
B	Training centre	Centre established	Education Coordinator	UNBC, CNC, School District	Time, funding	1 year	

5. Priority Opportunities							
Action		Measure	Responsibility	Potential Partner	Resource Required	Timeline	Annual Review Action Status
A	Truck stop	Truck stop in operation	EDO, Band Manager	Fuel suppliers, food franchises, financial institutions	Time, investment	1-3 years	
B	RV Site and Rafting Outfitter	Businesses in operation	EDO	DISC, NKDF, NDTF, FNFMA	Time, investment, capacity building	1-2 years	
C	Gift shop	Gift shop open seasonally	EDO		Time	6 months and on-going	