

2014 COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPER OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNER

Nisga'a Lisims Government, BC



A fully-integrated part of northwest British Columbia's economy, the Nisga'a Nation boasts abundant natural resources, water supply, and full road accessibility. The primary industries in the Nass Valley area are fishing and forestry, which are complemented by employment in the government, education, and health care sectors.

Since becoming effective in 2000, the Nisga'a Final Agreement secured the Nisga'a Nation's 2000 square kilometres of land, and all of the resources contained therein. Ensuring the security of this land has created the confidence and security necessary to develop the Nisga'a Nation to its fullest potential. The agreement has also brought about vast improvements in infrastructure, which have resulted in new jobs to the Nass Valley region. The forest industry in the area is maturing and seeing advancement, and a thriving fishery has been developed, with the Nisga'a ensuring environmental stewardship throughout. In addition to this,

burgeoning telecommunication and tourism industries have created many employment opportunities in an expanding and diversifying economic market. From small, local business initiatives to international partnerships, the Nisga'a Lisims government actively encourages all initiatives that will bolster community employment and economic success.

The Nisga'a Nation owes a lot of its success to its commitment to inclusive nation-building, as all four Nations have collectively worked together in a regional approach to economic development. Though engaging all four Nations through every step of development has been acknowledged as a key challenge, its benefits have been undeniable. Working together has allowed for integration of all ideas. Having a shared vision, aligned interests, and collaborative decision-making has gone a long way for the communities' success. In removing any sense of competitiveness or disparity between the communities, they move forward together, unified in the pursuit of their economic development goals.

The Nisga'a Prosperity Framework has become a key project for economic development in the Nation, outlining 11 key themes for implementation. The framework was created as a way for the Nation to overcome barriers and limitations to economic development. Since completing this prosperity framework, the Nisga'a Lisims Government has developed many new businesses. These include two logging trucking businesses, two restaurants, two retail outlets, a daycare, a consulting business, a tourism outlet, and numerous other ventures. Four more tourism plans are also in the works for the four Nisga'a Villages.

The Nisga'a Nation has demonstrated innovation and excellence in their dynamic approach to community economic development. Fostering a culture of entrepreneurship has allows community members to see themselves and their roles within the community as it moves forward. With a proactive and responsible government, and a strong workforce seeking employment and training opportunities, the Nisga'a Nation has a bright future, with insurmountable possibilities for new industries, partnerships, and projects.