

Nisga'a Growth Corporation

ANNUAL REPORT

2022/23

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

Chris McNeil, Jr., Chairperson of NGC

|| As the Chairperson of Nisga'a Growth Corporation (NGC), I am honoured to communicate our steadfast commitment to fostering economic prosperity and growth, guided by the WSN Economic Prosperity Strategic Plan. We are not a start-up enterprise, because we have such a comprehensive strategic plan, the commitment of our owner and Shareholder, the Nisga'a Lisims Government and sets of business opportunities that are sourced in the NLG's Impact Benefit Agreements. The NLG Executive mandated that the NLG be operationally independent of government and focus closely upon growing business enterprises. At the same time, we have maintained close communications with the NLG as owner through the CEOs of the NLG and NGC. Together with our Board and management, we have dedicated considerable effort to establish a corporate entity marked by efficiency, transparency, and open communication.

Our journey has already seen substantial milestones. Notably, NGC has engaged in crucial mining services contract agreements, embracing the benefits of Impact Benefit Agreements (IBAs) and setting a strong foundation for economic development. Furthermore, we are making significant strides in the Treaty Creek partnership with Tahl-tan Nation Development Corporation TNDC, ensuring the collaboration's success through diligent structural development.

An exciting phase of growth awaits as we transition the management and ownership of Kalii Aaks Timber into our stewardship. This move signifies not just a step towards sustainable resource management but also towards self-reliance and community empowerment.

Looking ahead, we are anticipating the Nation's launch of the Ksi Lisims LNG project, poised to become the largest economic project in modern Nisga'a history. NGC's participation in this venture underscores our commitment to transformative growth and economic benefit for the Nation and real capacity-building opportunities for its citizens.

As NGC evolves, our focus shifts from passive contractual agreements to active operational roles. Our aim is to bolster Nisga'a businesses and entrepreneurs, fostering an ecosystem of success and mutual benefit through direct support and strategic partnerships.

The NGC Board also selected an NGC logo. The Board wanted a Nisga'a design and created a competitive process among Nisga'a artists. We are pleased to announce that the design that was selected was from Nisga'a artist Kari Morgan. The central cultural theme of the logo is the Common Bowl. We are very pleased with the logo, its connection to our culture and the theme of creating prosperity for the Nisga'a Nation.

The NGC Board is also pleased that we will shortly have our first offices located at the Community Centre in *Gitlaxt'aamiks*.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to everyone contributing to our journey. Together, we are forging a path toward a prosperous and sustainable future for the Nisga'a Nation as the Nation's economic arm. ||



Chris McNeil, Jr.
Chairperson

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Arthur Mercer, Chief Executive Officer of NGC

■ As we reflect on the past year, it is clear that our journey has been characterized by strategic alignment, innovation, and a deep commitment to our community. Guided by strong financial policies and a strategic operational plan that is guided by both the WSN Economic Prosperity Strategic Plan, and the Board's Strategic Plan, we have ensured our efforts are in harmony, propelling us toward our shared vision.

The challenge of aligning our operations within the dynamic Nass Area landscape has been significant, yet rewarding. Our focus has been twofold: identifying viable business ventures within our reach and championing the interests of Nisga'a businesses listed on the Nisga'a Business Roster. This dual approach has been crucial in navigating our path forward.

Innovation remains at the heart of our strategy, as we explore new opportunities with the guidance of our Shareholder. This innovative spirit, supported by the unwavering efforts of our board, management, and Shareholder, has been instrumental in our progression towards an integrative and successful future.

We are transitioning from passive to active business operations, emphasizing the development of Nisga'a human resource capacities in trades, operations, and administration. This shift not only builds our working capital but also strengthens our Nation from within.

I am especially grateful for the openness and transparency of our stakeholders, including the Nisga'a Villages and Urban Local Societies. Their readiness to collaborate, while respecting our mutual independence, has been a cornerstone of our achievements.

As we look ahead, our eyes are set on expanding beyond the Nass Area, and building strong partnerships that will be pivotal in our continued success. The road ahead is filled with challenges, yet our collective resolve to build meaningful relationships and explore new ventures and revenue generating opportunities remains unwavering.

Together, we stand on the brink of transformative growth. Our success will be a reflection of our strong partnerships and our collective resilience in overcoming challenges.

Thank you for your continued support and belief in our mission. ■



Arthur Mercer
Chief Executive Officer



SPIRIT OF THE COMMON BOWL

Within Nisga'a Culture, there is an ancient tradition known as the Saytk'ilhl Wo'osim (Common Bowl).

This is not merely a physical object, but a profound symbol of unity, generosity, and the shared journey of life. The common bowl is at the heart of the community, a sacred tradition that holds the bounty of the earth and the spirit of the people.

The concept of the “common bowl” *Saytk'ilhl Wo'osim* in Nisga'a culture refers to a communal sharing and distribution practice that is integral to ceremonies and other gatherings. This concept embodies the principles of wealth redistribution, social equality, and community support. During a feast or community event, food and resources are shared from a common bowl, symbolizing unity, generosity, and the equal standing of all participants within the event.

The story of the common bowl begins many generations ago, when the first of the Nisga'a people were placed on *Lisims* (the Nass River). The *wahlingigat* - the ancient Nisga'a ancestors, say that the *K'am Ligii Hahlhaahl* (Chief of Heavens) gave them the lands, the waters, and the skies, but with these gifts came a responsibility—to share, to honor each other, and to live in balance with all living things.

As the seasons changed and the village prospered, the people gathered to celebrate the abundance of the land and resources. They came together in great, long-houses where the fire crackled and the walls were adorned with carvings of clans (known as *pdeek*): *Gisk'aast* (Killer Whale/Owl), *Ganada* (Raven/Frog), *Laxgibuu* (Wolf/Grizzly Bear) and *Laxsgiik* (Eagle/Beaver). At the center of these gatherings was the common bowl, carved from the trunk of a cedar tree (*sim gan*), its sides smoothed by the hands of a master carver and painted with the totemic symbols of the clans.





When the feast began, the common bowl was filled with the fruits of the harvest—salmon from the rivers, berries from the forest, and roots from the earth. But the bowl was more than a container for food; it was a vessel of unity. As it passed from hand to hand, each person took what they needed, no more, no less. The young were served first, a sign of the community's hope for the future, followed by the Elders, honored for their wisdom and guidance.

The passing of the common bowl was a sacred act, a moment of connection between all Nisga'a houses (*wilp*). It was a reminder that no one was alone, that every joy and sorrow was shared, that the strength of the people lay in their unity. The common bowl taught the values of respect, humility, and gratitude, for the earth provided, and the people took care of each other.

In times of hardship, when the salmon were scarce or harvest-ing failed, the common bowl became even more significant. It was a promise of support and solidarity, a testament to the en-during spirit of the Nisga'a people. For in sharing the burden, the weight became lighter for all.

The tradition of the common bowl continues to this day, a thread that weaves through the fabric of Nisga'a society, binding the past with the present, the individual with the community, the human with the natural world. It is a living symbol of the Nisga'a philosophy that wealth is not measured by what one has, but by what one contributes, and that true prosperity comes from the well-being of the whole.

And so, as the seasons turn and the world changes, the com-mon bowl remains a beacon of hope and unity for Nisga'a peo-ple, a reminder that together, they are stronger, kinder, and in-finitely rich in the things that matter most.



INTRODUCTION



Mandate

The Nisga'a Growth Corporation is wholly owned by the Nisga'a Nation with a mandate to create sustainable economic prosperity for the Nisga'a Nation.

Mission

To find and facilitate partnerships with Nisga'a businesses first and foremost, where possible, to fulfil business opportunities that will provide meaningful careers to all Nisga'a citizens while maximizing economic prosperity and growing the economic Common Bowl (*Saytk'ilhl Wo'osim*) of the Nation.

Vision

The Vision of the Nisga'a Growth Corporation is to increase the economic prosperity and well-being of Nisga'a Citizens and to ensure the Nation's prosperity in perpetuity.

VALUES



● ***Kwhlixoosdanskw***
Respectful

- Of our People
- Of our Culture
- Of our Lands
- Of our Resources

● ***Anook'askw***
Reciprocity

- With our Citizens
- With our Villages and Urban Locals
- With our Partners
- With our Neighbours

● ***Ka'k Gan Axy'ookskw***
Transparency and Trust

- With our Shareholder, the Nisga'a Nation
- In our People
- With our Partners
- With our Employees

● ***Wayiyhl Sagootkw***
Innovation

- In our Businesses
- In our Partnerships

● ***Daxgat'in Nisga'a Angigat, Ayukw, Gan Ts'eets'iks***

Strengthening and Sustaining Our People, Culture and Lands

- By utilizing and developing talent from within the Nisga'a Nation first
- By respecting Nisga'a Cultural Laws in all we do
- By ensuring a sustainable and respectful relationship with our Lands for future Nisga'a Citizens
- By working together and leading new value-creating relationships within the Nation



OUR LOGO STORY

In 2023, NGC issued a call to Nisga'a artists to submit their ideas for a logo for NGC which represented both growth and the common bowl. Many outstanding submissions were received, and the NGC Board of Directors and Communication Committee are honoured to present the new NGC logo, and the story of its creation.

■ I chose to create the logo in formline, because not only is that our main way of doing our two-dimensional design in the Northwest coast, but it's also very meaningful to us as Nisga'a people. I do most of my design work in formline, or carvings, which is very synonymous with our Nisga'a heritage.

The design has three elements that are visible at first glance: the person, the cedar hat, and the bowl (the common bowl). When designing a logo, everything has to have a nice cohesive balance. The person, who is wearing traditional regalia, could represent any gender. The hat is a traditional cedar hat, which is often worn by women but is also worn by men.

The bowl being held up by the person represents the common bowl, with the circle in the bowl representative of growth, with the colours highlighting the concept of growth in nature. It reminds me of all the times that we gather in any form, and of our feasts, and our protocols. We stand together and we give money and assist with everything that is important to us.

It shows how we stay as a strong community through coming together. The common bowl is collectively everyone putting in to try and help out the entire community and that's what is happening in all of our laws and protocols. It is a good representation of this part of our culture. Some people may also be reminded of the *Hoobiyee* moon when they look at this design, something that is also part of our heritage.

I really enjoyed making this design, it is a little different than my other designs with how it's purposely not symmetrical, though it is still well balanced. ■

Kari Morgan K'alaajex

Nisga'a Fine Artist

karimorgan.com



OUR BOARD MEMBERS



Chris McNeil, Jr.
Chairperson

Chris McNeil Jr., (Nisga'a Tlingit) owner of Native Strategy Group, which provides advisory services to Native organizations. He served as the president and CEO of Sealaska Corporation from 2001 until 2014 and other officer capacities from 1978 through 1993, including EVP and general counsel and as a Sealaska director from 1998 through 2000. He has served as special counsel to the Alaska Federation of Natives, chairman of the Native American Rights Fund, the first director of American Indian Program at Stanford University, second vice president of the Central Council of the Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, director of Goldbelt, Inc., director of the American Indian National Bank, president of the Juneau Tlingit & Haida Community Council, chairman of Tlingit & Haida Regional Housing Authority, Washington representative and counsel to the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation, and chairman of the Native American Contractors Association.



Julie Kitka
Director

Julie Kitka is a distinguished leader and advocate for the Alaska Native community, serving as the President of the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) since 1990. Under her leadership, AFN has become a major force in promoting cultural, economic, and political empowerment for Alaska Natives. Julie's efforts have significantly improved public-private partnerships and expanded the Native health system in Alaska. Internationally, she has shared Alaska's experiences in Indigenous rights and land settlements. Julie, a Chugach Eskimo, holds a Business Administration degree from Alaska Pacific University and has received multiple accolades for her contributions, including the 2022 Ecotrust Indigenous Leadership Award. She continues to serve on various boards, contributing to policies and initiatives that support Alaska Natives' well-being and rights.

Julie's work has extended beyond Alaska, engaging in international forums and partnerships to share insights and experiences, particularly in property rights and Indigenous land settlements. Her efforts have significantly impacted policy and legislative changes, contributing to the well-being and rights of Alaska Natives and all Indigenous people.



Dr. Brent Mainprize
Director

Dr. Brent Mainprize, MBA, PhD, is an award-winning professor at the University of Victoria's Gustavson School of Business where he teaches entrepreneurship and Indigenous economic development. Brent has over 20 years' experience as an entrepreneurship educator, academic, and facilitator of economic change in Indigenous communities. Brent has held entrepreneurial management positions in the telecommunications high tech sector and continues to balance academic and new venture pursuits.

Brent has secured venture capital as an entrepreneur and as a consultant helping high growth companies. As a management consultant, Brent has helped high growth companies secure large private equity placements, prepared for acquisition, and developed a variety of financial models and marketing solutions. He brings a wealth of expertise and experience to the Nisga'a Growth Corporation.



Edward Clayton
Director

Edward proudly identifies as Nisga'a, with Nisga'a and Tsimshian ancestry in his immediate family. His experience in working in administration and economic development both with the Nass Valley and in external First Nations organizations with a focus in economic development and corporate finance positions will bring diversity of experience and financial strength to the Nisga'a Growth Corporation Board.

By gaining progressively more responsibility in accounting positions, Edward is comfortable in Corporate Controller and/or Chief Financial Officer positions with various companies across multiple industries. His specialized knowledge and passion for the economic growth and well-being of the Nation is welcomed on the Board.



OUR BOARD MEMBERS



Ryan Weymark
Director

Ryan is an energetic Professional Engineer (P. Eng.) with experience in mining, heavy civil and infrastructure projects. He has experience working on projects as a consultant, contractor and owner's representative at various stages, including due-diligence, M&A, economic studies (pre-feasibility to feasibility), permitting (provincial and federal) and construction.

He has worked on numerous advanced stage projects in strategic roles, with the ability to bridge the gap between corporate and technical teams. He is a Technical Advisor to several exploration companies, a Director of the Britannia Mine Museum and an Industry Advisory Committee member for UBC's Department of Mining Engineering. Ryan's industry experience brings a depth and breadth of knowledge and networks to the Board.



Teresa Azak
Director

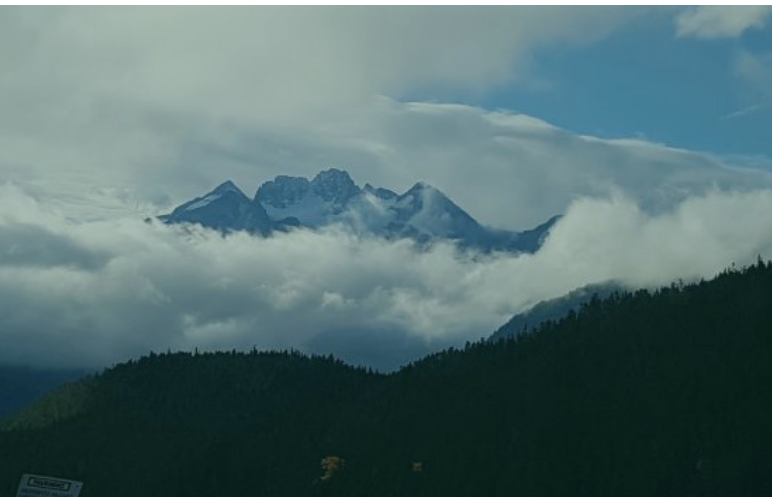
Teresa Azak is a Nisga'a citizen and Elder, with a broad base of experience in running small businesses and pursuing entrepreneurial ventures. An individual who has spent a lifetime asking questions to learn and grow, her fit with the board to continue to ask questions will be an invaluable benefit.

As a Nisga'a language speaker, and an Elder, her connection to Nisga'a culture is strong, and her wisdom in providing guidance in these areas of profound importance. Teresa is simply a highly committed and strong board candidate with a perspective that is important to ensure a well-balanced board for a start-up enterprise like the Nisga'a Growth Corporation.



Stephen Johnson
Director

Stephen is a proud Nisga'a citizen, *Laxsgiik* from *Wilps Gwiix Maaw'*, who leads a healthy lifestyle and volunteers leading youth and families in his community. As an expert in Nisga'a tourism and building connections, Stephen has successfully operated Nass Valley Tours, and worked to build connections with Nisga'a tourism operators in the Valley to create opportunities for all to benefit from the growing Indigenous tourism industry. Stephen brings a strong desire to improve the health and well-being of all Nisga'a citizens to the Board, and will strive to break down barriers and make positive and enduring connections.



MANAGEMENT TEAM



Arthur Mercer
Chief Executive Officer

Arthur Mercer, *Sim'ooGit Galga*, has 30 years' experience in areas of government, economic development as well as business operations that include public companies as well as private sector development.

Arthur has led and executed complex joint ventures, bringing together diverse community economic and business development leaders. He previously managed, as Chief Executive Officer, the Nisga'a Commercial Group of companies. Prior to this, he was the Economic Development Coordinator for the Nisga'a Lisims' Government.

He has extensive experience on both private and public entity boards.

With his broad experience in resource and infrastructure development, Arthur continues to network with the private sector, industry, educational institutions and governments in developing strategic economic development partnerships that incrementally improve on business development and capacity building.



Bodie Elliott
Communication / Administration

Bodie Elliott has over 15 years' experience modelling best practices for diverse project management in a variety of contexts, including business planning, strategic planning development, inventory system development and implementation, charitable contribution planning, operation systemization, technology implementation, executive research projects, change management processes and construction management across a breadth of industries.

She is proficient at both the launching and administration of small to medium sized ventures and projects, including developing methodologies, gaining stakeholder input and approval, and providing administration for projects through to successful, on-time and on budget completion.

Her experience in a venture capital, private equity holding company with holdings in a variety of industries across Western Canada, as well as dozens of projects in Indigenous communities in British Columbia has provided Bodie with broad spectrum of unique lenses and skills to support the setup and startup of NGC, and is honoured to provide administrative and development support to both the NGC Board and NGC Management.

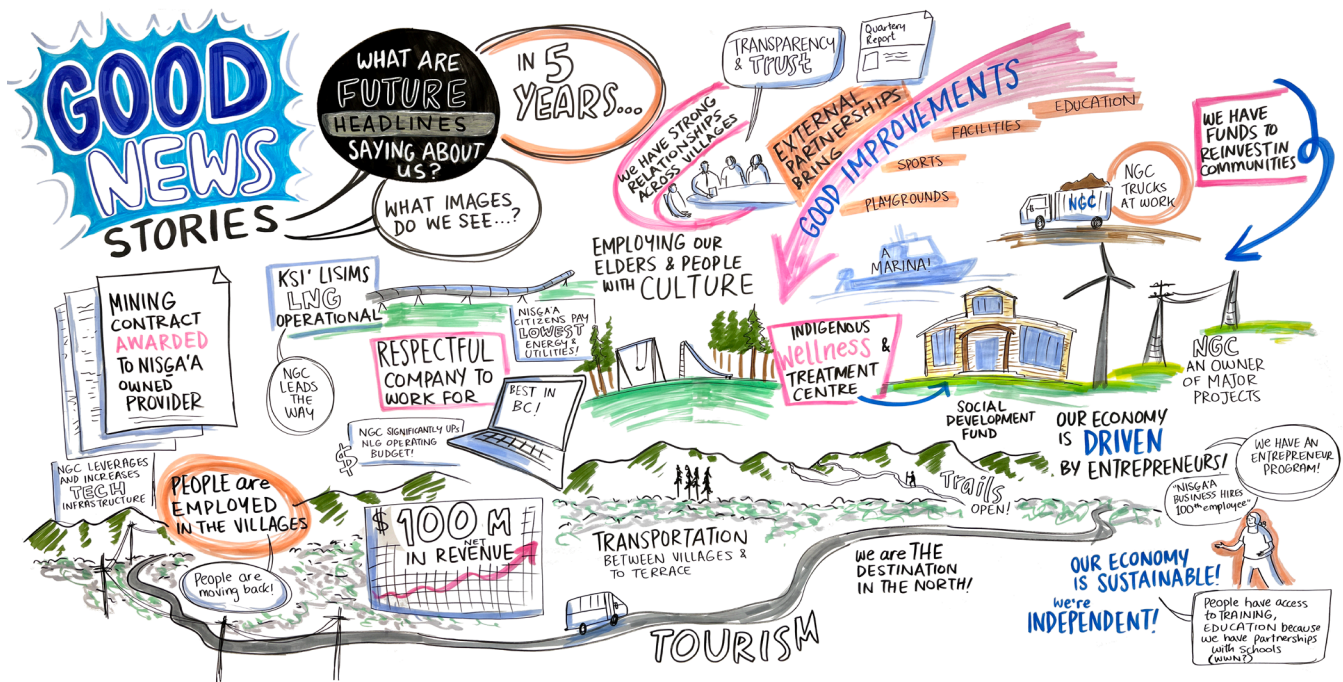


BOARD STRATEGIC PLAN

On June 12, 2023, the Nisga'a Growth Corporation (NGC) Board and Chief Executive Officer came together to chart a course forward for the new economic arm of the Nisga'a Lisims Government.

Highlights of the Board Strategic Plan include two components that were recorded in a visual graphic style: Envisioning Future Success and Opportunities: An Economic Landscape as seen below.

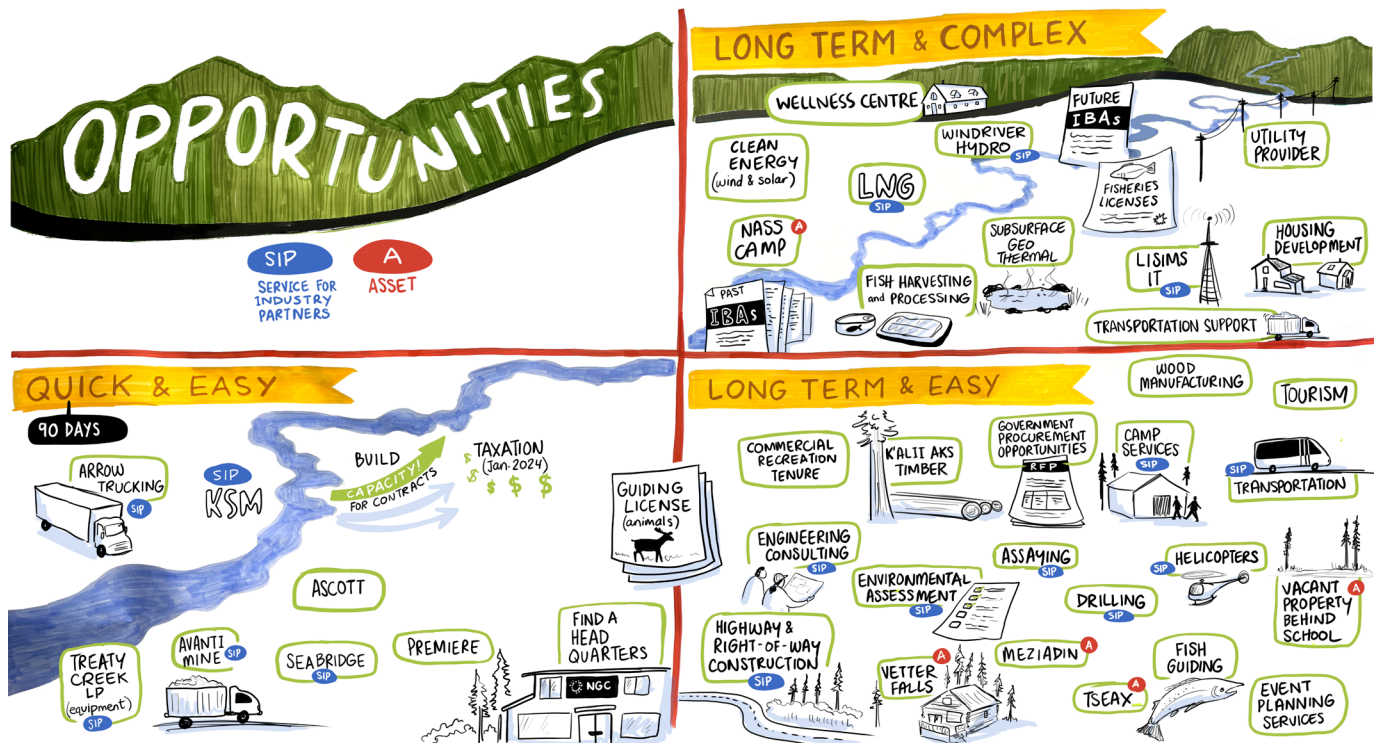
Using the *Wilp Siayuukhl* Nisga'a's (WSN's) Economic Prosperity Strategic Plan (2019) as the guide for the Nation's overarching economic goals, NGC visualized the future in order to develop insights, actions, and the steps necessary to begin to achieve the vision of economic prosperity set out in this guiding document.



Envisioning Future Success

In this section, NGC sought to open up the future in order to project a vision for economic prosperity for the company and the Nisga'a Nation. This was done by envisioning headlines of success in the future – the triumphs and “good news stories” the Board and management of NGC would hope to see in 5 years.

While not all of these headlines would be directly brought about by the economic activities of NGC, this activity provided a starting space for the discussion of what actions and decisions would be required by NGC to move towards these goals.



Opportunities: An Economic Landscape

The Nisga'a Nation and the Nisga'a Growth Corporation are within a landscape of Unrealized Potential. As part of providing direction to the Management Team to prioritize and allocate time and resources to particular opportunities, these opportunities were both identified and mapped – both for “quick wins” and for more long-term projects.

Opportunities were divided up into three quadrants: those opportunities are anticipated to be “quick and easy”, those that are “long term and easy” and those that are “long term and complex”.

OUR PARTNERS

In NGC's first year of operations, we focused on building partnerships and relationships. We spent time with our Shareholders (Nisga'a Lisims Government) and their representatives, Nisga'a Village representatives, Nisga'a Urban Local Societies, and Nisga'a businesses to better understand the operational landscape, and how and where NGC could build and support partnerships. NGC also spent significant time developing relationships and partnerships with industry leaders to create opportunities for NGC and Nisga'a businesses. This effort resulted in the following formal partnerships:



Boart Longyear Ventures Inc.

Boart Longyear Ventures Inc. is a global mineral exploration company, primarily known for providing drilling services and tools for the mining, environmental, energy, and infrastructure sectors. They specialize in drilling equipment and performance tooling and are recognized for their expertise in providing innovative solutions and technology in the exploration industry.



Arrow Transportation Systems

Arrow Transportation Systems is a Canadian transportation and logistics company specializing in bulk commodity hauling, material handling, and transportation management. They provide a variety of services including trucking, shipping, logistics, and warehousing solutions, catering primarily to industries such as forestry, mining, oil and gas, and bio-energy. Arrow is known for its commitment to safety, sustainability, and reliable service.



Procon Mining & Tunnelling Ltd.

Procon Mining & Tunnelling Ltd. is a Canadian mining contractor specializing in underground mine development, construction, maintenance, and contracting services. They offer a wide range of services including project management, engineering, and technical services aimed at the mining and construction industries. Procon operates primarily in Canada and has been involved in significant mining projects, providing expertise in both mining and infrastructure development. NGC's partnership with Procon is a 50/50 partnership with Nisga'a Ts'amiks Vancouver Society.



OUR FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Monthly and Annual Financial statements will be available on the website

www.nisgaagrowthcorporation.ca



