Inclusive Innovation Action Plan

2023-2024 Annual Progress Report

mitacs

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Inclusive Innovation Action Plan - Year 1: Progress Update At-a-Glance

Launched in 2023, the Inclusive Innovation Action Plan (IIAP) outlines Mitacs's three-year equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) commitments from April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2026. The Annual Progress Report will be published annually after the end of each fiscal year. This document reports on Mitacs's EDI achievements in the 2023-2024 fiscal year, which is year one of implementation for the IIAP.

Goal 1: Embed Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) in Internal Systems, Policies, and Practices

Intended outcome 1.1
Maintain diverse representation of talent.

- Increased pay transparency
- Highly diverse workforce with four key demographics exceeding Canadian population representation
- EDI learning and development across the organization

Intended outcome 1.2
Cultivate a more inclusive culture at Mitacs.

- Achieved a strong organizational inclusion score at **72.3%** (11.8% above industry benchmarks)
- LGBTQ2S+ inclusion score rose by **12.4%** to **71%** in 2023

Intended outcome 1.3
Broaden innovation impact and increase social and economic benefits for all people in Canada.

- Completed internal research report to support the advancement of social innovation at Mitacs

Intended outcome 1.4
Advance reconciliation by creating more opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to participate in Mitacs's innovation ecosystem.

- Increased provincial funding for Indigenous initiatives
- Increased the share of Indigenous Pathways delivery unit in eligible programs by **61%**
- Trained **11** Business Development Advisors to serve as Indigenous engagement leads
- Supported Let's Talk Science Indigenous Mentorship Project

Goal 2: Enhance Access and Support for Equity-Deserving Students

Intended outcome 2.1
Empower equity-deserving groups to thrive in Mitacs's programs.

- **Free and accessible asynchronous training curriculum** for students
- EDI and Indigenous awareness for Mitacs Training facilitators
- Increased travel subsidy supports
- Spotlighted impact stories of equity-deserving groups in Mitacs's programs Presented inaugural **Inclusive Innovation Award** in November 2023
- Increased accessibility of Mitacs's materials

Legend

Complete ✓

In Progress ✓

Not yet started ⏱
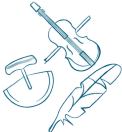
Goal 3: Expand Inclusive Innovation Ecosystem through Partnerships

Intended outcome 3.1
Broaden Mitacs's collaborative network to increase engagement in inclusive innovation.

- Conducted EDI consultations with post-secondary institutions
- **Partnered with five organizations** to support underrepresented researchers and entrepreneurs

Intended outcome 3.2
Develop a strategy to position Mitacs in a convenor role to advance inclusive innovation across institutions and sectors.

- Scheduled to begin this work in Year 2 and continue through to Year 3 of the IIAP

Intended outcome 3.3
Enhance economic opportunities for small to medium enterprises owned by equity-deserving groups.

- Developed a list of **46** diverse suppliers

Workforce Representation and Inclusion at Mitacs

In November 2023, the EDI team partnered with Diversio, a third-party EDI data analytics company, to survey Mitacs employees on both diversity and inclusion metrics. With a **74.7%** response rate (**274** total responses), it is clear Mitacs staff are deeply invested in having their perspectives heard and recorded.

Mitacs WorkForce	Canadian Population (Statistics Canada)
53.7% Women & **4%** Gender Diverse	• Women account for **50.9%** of total population (StatsCan, 2022a) • Transgender and non-binary folks account for **0.33%** of Canadians aged 15 and older (StatsCan, 2022b)
2.6% Indigenous	• Indigenous Peoples account for **5.0%** of total population in Canada (StatsCan, 2022c)
45.4% Racialized	• Racialized individuals represent **26.5%** of Canada's population (StatsCan, 2023a)
15.4% LGBTQ2S+	• LGBTQ2S+ folks represent approximately **4%** of Canada's populations aged 15 years and older (StatsCan, 2022d)
46.7% have physical, cognitive, or mental health conditions	• Persons with disabilities represent **27%** of Canadians aged 15 years and older (StatsCan, 2023b)

Please note: While our workforce representation of Indigenous Peoples falls short compared to the overall population in Canada, we observe a slight year-to-year increase of Indigenous Peoples at Mitacs (**0.5%** in 2022 to **2.6%** in 2023), signalling our strong commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous communities. Additionally, the reporting threshold for trans individuals was not met, as such this demographic is not included in employee statistics.

50-30 Challenge Progress

The 50/30 challenge is an initiative between the Government of Canada, Canadian businesses and organizations. The goal of the program is to encourage organizations to meet gender parity (**50%** representation) and significant representation (**30%**) of members of equity deserving groups on Canadian boards and senior management. Mitacs's Board and Senior Management team have succeeded in meeting the "**30%**" representation goal but have not yet achieved the "**50%**" representation goal to reach gender parity.

Board of Directors Gender Representation

40%

60%
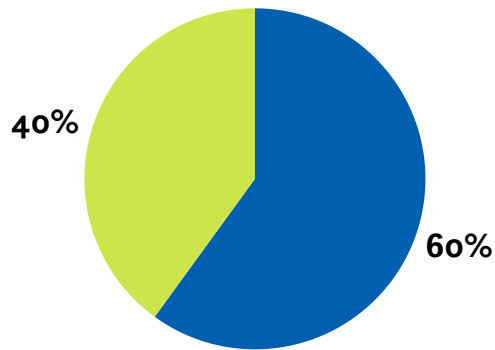
Executive Management Team Gender Representation

25%

75%
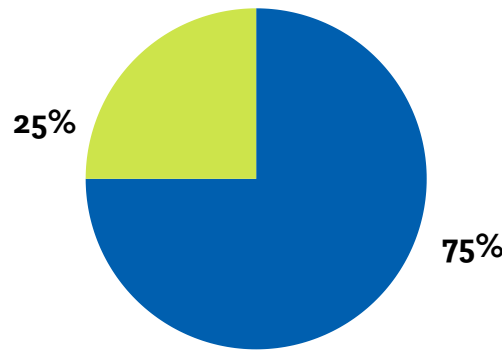
Vice Presidents Gender Representation

12%

38%

50%
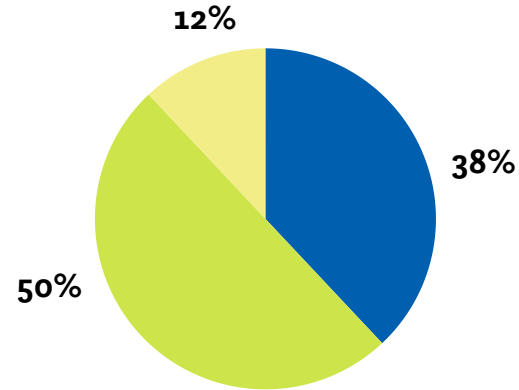
Legend

- ● Women and Gender Diverse
- ● Men
- ● Racialized and ethnic minorities
- ● White
- ● Prefer not to answer

Board of Directors Racial Identity

44%

56%
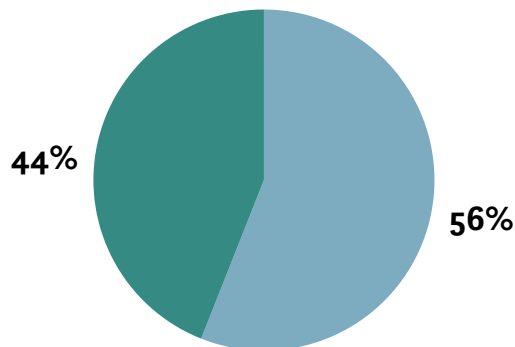
Executive Management Team Racial Identity

25%

75%
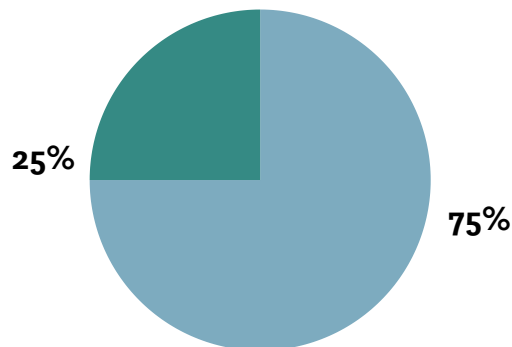
Vice Presidents Racial Identity

12%

38%

50%
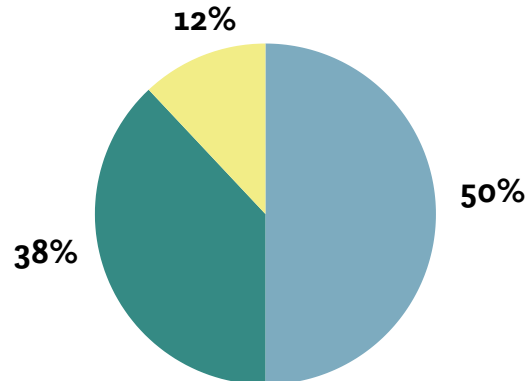
Note: Minimum reporting threshold was not met to provide reporting of LGBTQ2S+ and persons with disabilities percentages.

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Inclusive Culture Scores

Inclusive culture underpins the ways in which Mitacs operates from both an operational and cultural level. From year to year, Mitacs measures employee satisfaction with the following inclusion metrics: inclusive culture, fair management, career development, workplace flexibility, and workplace safety. Results from the 2023 survey positioned Mitacs at an Inclusion Score of **72.3**, which is **1.8** points higher than Mitacs's 2022 score, and **11.8** points higher than industry average.

Mitacs's Inclusion Scores Compared to Industry Benchmarks

Numbers in brackets are comparable scores from 2022.

| Target Groups	Inclusive Culture	Fair Management	Career Development	Workplace Flexibility	Workplace Safety
Company Score	73 (66) ⬆	73 (74)	58 (61)	78 (72) ⬆	79 (79)
Associations*	65 (65)	60 (60)	54 (54)	65 (65)	59 (59)
Dominant Group* (Baseline)	78 (75)	90 (76)	67 (59)	86 (84)	98 (81)
Women & Gender Diverse	70 (71)	70 (77) ⬇	57 (62) ⬇	77 (75)	75 (84) ⬇
Racial & Ethnic Minorities	71 (64) ⬆	74 (74)	61 (63)	75 (71)	80 (81)
LGBTQ2S+	72 (53) ⬆	67 (54) ⬆	54 (56)	83 (74) ⬆	79 (63) ⬆
Persons with Disabilities	66 (58) ⬆	65 (70) ⬇	48 (58) ⬇	72 (65) ⬆	72 (72)

Key Definitions

- **Associations:** Provide benchmark comparable data to help determine Mitacs inclusion performance, this data is collected from similar non-profit organizations, professional networks, and professional associations (such as CIFAR and BioCanRX).

- **Dominant Group:** Refers to the combined demographics most represented in senior leadership. At Mitacs, this group consists of cisgender White men, who do not identify as LGBTQ2S+, and do not have a have physical, cognitive, or mental health condition.

EDI Training and Capacity Building at Mitacs

During the 2023-2024 fiscal year, Mitacs held 5 EDI learning and development (L&D) sessions for staff. These sessions focused on exploring the cultural heritage of various equity deserving groups, reconciliation and allyship with racialized and Indigenous communities, LGBTQ2S+ and disability inclusion.

All Staff Learning and Development

Learning Session	Number of Attendees
Asian Heritage Month: History & Learning, Diverse Asian Cultures across Canada – May 29, 2023	**175** Attendees (**49.3%**)
Two-Spirited Allyship – June 19, 2023	**176** Attendees (**50%**)
National Day for Truth & Reconciliation: Exploring Reconciliation with Mitacs – Oct 3, 2023	**181** Attendees (**50.8%**)
Influence of Disability Inclusion in Innovation – Jan 23, 2024	**194** Attendees (**54.6%**)
Black Excellence and Contributions to Innovation – Feb 21, 2024	**195** Attendees (**54.7%**)
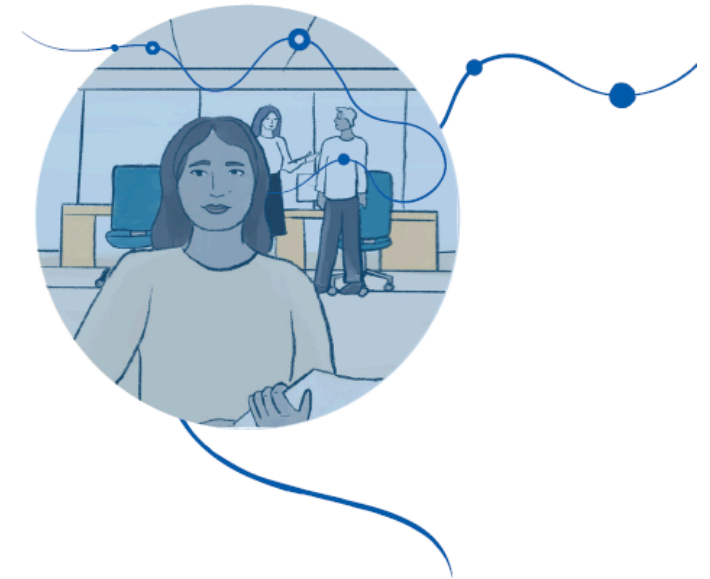
Targeted EDI Training

The EDI team hosted two informational training sessions on the IIAP in August of 2023. Attendance was strong with **190 attendees** for **session 1**, and **112** attendees for **session 2**, which is an **84%** attendance rate.

The EDI team supported our L&D partner, the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion, in hosting a session in November, titled French Canadian History: Impacts and leading inclusion practices, with **19 attendees** for the English session and **18** attendees for the French session.

18 employees (100% attendance rate) from the Research department completed training on OCAP (Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession) Principles, a set of standards for First Nations information governance and data sovereignty.

Two workshops were held by Canadian Equality Consulting for **25 participants** (100% attendance rate) from the Marketing and Communications department, with a focus on Inclusive Communications and Design.

Inclusive Communications Style Guide

The team created an Inclusive Communications Style Guide to use when communicating with program participants. This guide will be rolled out organization-wide in 2024-2025.

Removing Bias in Recruitment and Increasing Pay Transparency

The team collaborated with Mitacs Human Resources (HR) department on a monthly cadence to discuss overlapping issues between EDI and HR. Topics discussed include results of satisfaction surveys, retention strategies, onboarding and training, and diverse hiring practices. Mitacs combats unconscious gender bias within its recruitment process. All job postings undergo an assessment through the gender decoder tool, which pinpoints inequitable gendered language within job descriptions. Pay transparency has become a mandatory requirement for all new job postings. Pay transparency creates a trusting relationship with employees and reduces the likelihood of wage gaps experienced by equity deserving groups, particularly women.

Internal Initiatives

Diverse Supplier List

Developed a list of 46 diverse suppliers.

Parental Leave

Mitacs has expanded its parental leave top up benefits to include 8 weeks of leave paid at a rate of **90%** of the employee's salary (Employment Insurance and Mitacs top up combined equals **90%** salary) as well as an additional 17 weeks paid at a rate of **40%** of the employee's salary. Overall, paid parental leave has increased from 17 weeks to 25 weeks.

Parental Leave Working Group was established to continuously monitor and improve employees parental leave experience. The Parental Leave Working Group has completed 6 returning parent interviews, and 8 departing parent interviews, to assess gaps for employees on parental leave. An anonymous feedback channel has also been created. A resource checklist has been developed for both employees and managers to ensure employees are on/offboarded in an effective and informed manner.

Program Participation

Summary: This data set covers 2023 calendar year, based on the results of the National EDI Self-Identification Form, a voluntary demographic information collection survey completed by Mitacs participants on an annual basis. This data is further benchmarked against the latest 2022 data collected from the **Canadian Association for Graduate Studies (CAGS)**.

Ethnic Identity	Mitacs Participants	CAGS Data
White	**38.2%**	**50%**
Middle Eastern	**18.0%**	**8%**
South Asian	**15.3%**	**13%**
East Asian	**12.6%**	**9%**
Black	**7.3%**	**7%**
Latin American	**4.7%**	**3%**
Not Listed / Mixed	**2.9%**	**8%**
Prefer not to respond	**2.6%**	**--**
Indigenous	**2.6%**	**3%**
Southeast Asian	**1.9%**	**2%**

Gender Identity	Mitacs Participants	CAGS Data
Men	**53.3%**	**55%**
Women & gender diverse	**45.9%**	**43%**
Prefer not to respond	**1.6%**	**--**

Person with Disability	Mitacs Participants	CAGS Data
No condition	**93%**	**--**
People with conditions	**5.3%**	**18%**
Prefer not to respond	**1.8%**	**--**

LGBTQ2S+ Identity	Mitacs Participants	CAGS Data
Heterosexual	**79.6%**	**78%**
LGBTQ2S+	**13.8%**	**11%**
Prefer not to respond	**8.2%**	**--**

Accessibility: Website, Documents, Forms, and Courses

Accessibility: Website Audit

Mitacs retained Level Access, a digital accessibility compliance agency, to conduct a comprehensive audit of our new website. Our goal was clear: to enhance the accessibility of our website interface for all users. Level Access shared the results from the audit in late April 2023. Since then, Mitacs has been working towards identifying and addressing gaps that might affect a seamless experience for individuals of all abilities. Mitacs began this effort by mapping out the key features of the new website. With these results, we were able to evaluate all the main functionalities against an array of accessibility elements, including AMP, JAWS 2022, keyboard access, color contrast, alt text for images, text resizing, and even code-level manual inspection of the Document Object Model.

Currently, Mitacs's newly launched website is undergoing an accessibility review by Level Access to ensure all remediations identified in 2023 have been appropriately addressed to meet accessibility standards.

Accessibility: Documents, Forms

100% of public-facing PDF and Word documents for program applicants and participants have been made accessible to meet WCAG and PDF/Universal Accessibility requirements. This includes application forms, supplemental forms, informational materials regarding our programs, etc.

Accessibility: Training Courses

All asynchronous training courses are accessible to the WCAG 2.0 Level AA standard. Currently, **90% of course documents** are compliant to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and the PDF/Universal Accessibility 1.0 standard.

Indigenous Initiatives and Capacity Building

Indigenous Pathways Funding

The Indigenous Pathways enhanced leverage funding (3:1 matching) has been applied in large part by the provinces of BC and Manitoba, a direct result of the increased support received from these provinces. There is a clear correlation between provincial funding commitments and Pathways participation rates. It can be concluded that **increased provincial support has increased the representation of Indigenous projects in 2023.**

Indigenous pathways provincial representation
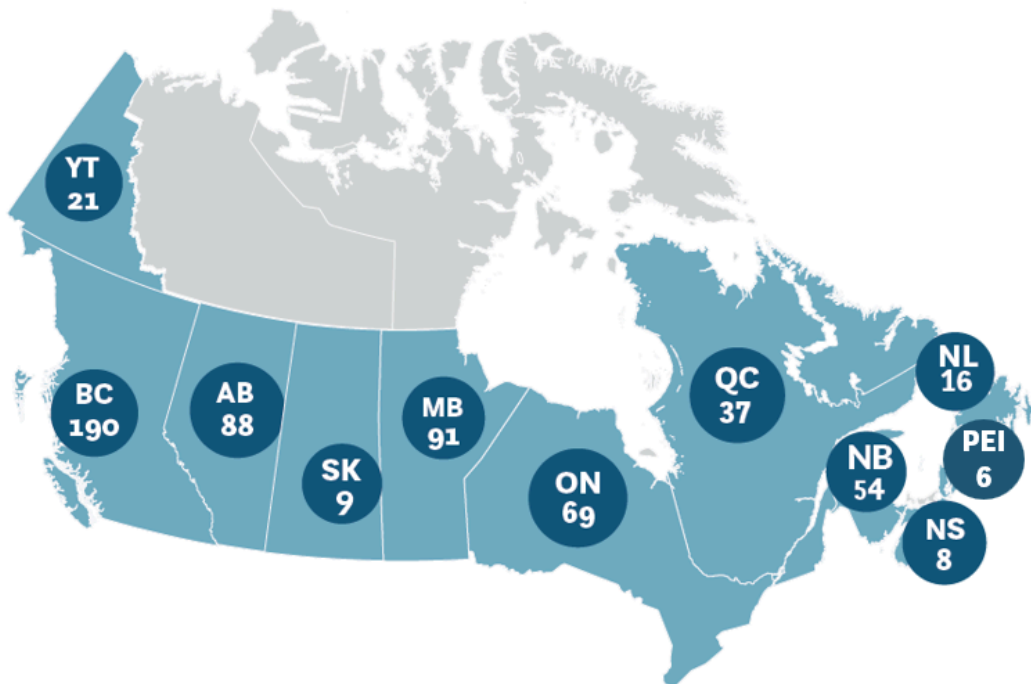
| Province	% Representation
Alberta	**14.67%**
British Columbia	**31.67%**
Manitoba	**15.17%**
New Brunswick	**9%**
Newfoundland	**4.5%**
Nova Scotia	**1.34%**
Ontario	**11.5%**
Prince Edward Island	**1%**
Quebec	**6.17%**
Saskatchewan	**1.5%**
Yukon Territory	**3.5%**

Indigenous Pathways Funding

Mitacs has secured **$8,642,716** in funding dedicated to Indigenous Pathways in 2023-2024.The Federal government contributed **$4,603,584**, making up 53% of the Pathways budget. Partner organizations contributed **$2,076,680 (24%)** in funding and **$1,962,452 (23%)** was secured in Provincial funding for Indigenous Pathways.

Indigenous Business Development (BD) Primes

Mitacs onboarded **11 new Indigenous Business Development (BD) Primes**. These roles focus on building relationships with Indigenous researchers, organizations, and sourcing potential projects. BD Primes were onboarded through role-specific training lead by Mitacs's Senior Advisor, Indigenous Relations and Initiatives. This training focused on expectations of the role, how to connect with Indigenous researchers, where to direct outreach efforts, and tips for vetting Indigenous research projects.

Expanded Post Secondary Partnerships

Mitacs has onboarded two new Tri-council eligible Indigenous post-secondary institutions, the Red Crow Community College and Kenjgewin Teg, an accredited Indigenous institute. These institutions were onboarded to ensure their preparedness to benefit from a partnership agreement with Mitacs.
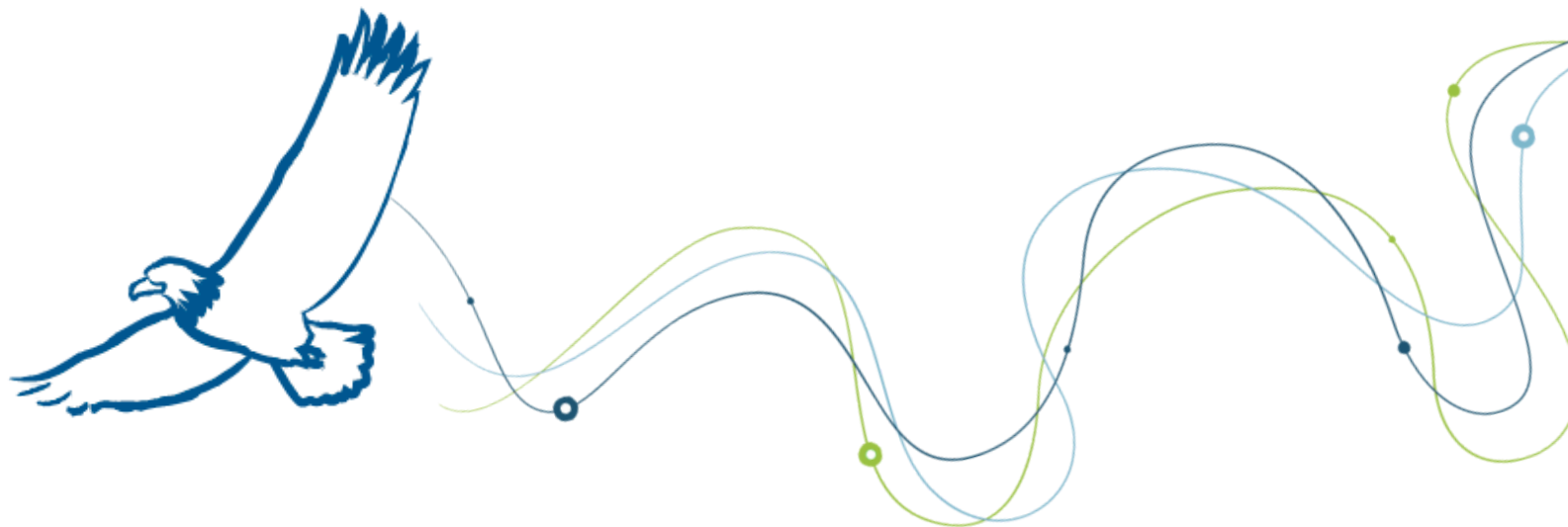
Increased Funding from Manitoba, British Columbia, and Saskatchewan for Indigenous Innovation

The Indigenous Pathways initiative received expanded support from Research Manitoba, a provincial agency that reports to the Minister of Advanced Education and Training. Research Manitoba committed to a 3-year agreement, investing **1.1M** for each of these years for core Mitacs programs. An additional **$500,000 contribution** has been made for 50 Indigenous internship units (IUs) for each of these three years; **$10K per unit** that would include eligibility for accommodation funding. The total contract value is **$4.8M**.

In British Columbia, Mitacs has also expanded its partnerships. Innovate BC (a provincial agency that reports to the BC Minister of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation) in collaboration with New Ventures BC (a not-for-profit organization) has committed **$600,000 in funding** ($5,000/IU + up to $10,000/IU for travel and accommodations) to support a minimum of 40 Accelerate and BSI IUs for Indigenous students in the tech sector in 2023-24.

The province of Saskatchewan provided an additional **$1,150,000** in funding for 2023-24. Of that funding **$150,000** has been designated for 15 IUs through Indigenous Pathways.
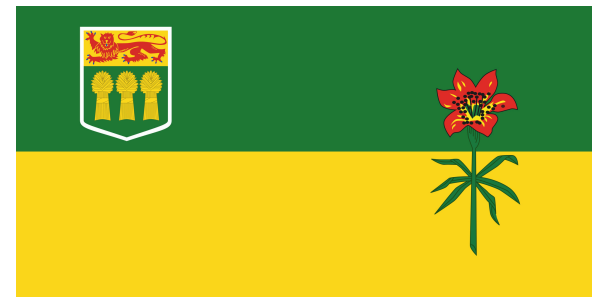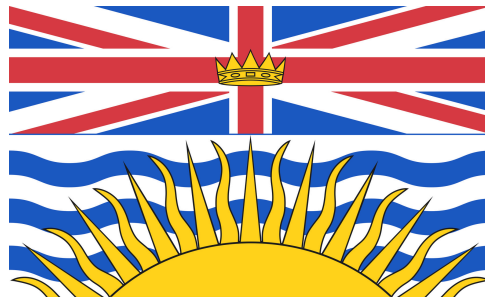
External Thought-Leadership Collaboration

Below are three examples of organizations Mitacs collaborated with and the outcomes for 2023.

Indigenous Innovation Initiative (I3)

The I3 Report produced through this partnership advances Mitacs's goals under the IIAP, honoring Mitacs's commitment to decolonizing innovation by providing tools for barrier reduction and increasing access to Indigenous talent.

Innovation Economy Council (IEC)

Mitacs supported and helped draft the report titled <u>Diverse Nation: Unlocking the Potential of Inclusive Innovation</u>, published in August 2023.

Canadian Science Policy Conference (CSPC)

8 Mitacs attendees, shared their expertise on 3 distinct panels:
·Evidence and Innovation Support in the Social Sector
·Driving innovation across regions: A workshop to tackle tough questions
·Decolonizing science, technology, and innovation policy – barriers, opportunities, and new knowledge systems

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Mitacs Awards

Mitacs's inaugural **Inclusive Innovation Award** was introduced in 2023. This award has been designed to celebrate the achievements of research leaders who promote social inclusion, incorporate diverse perspectives, and prioritize accessibility. This year's award winner, **Kirsty Choquette**, received the award for their groundbreaking work in developing an inclusive evaluation framework, which works to effectively support and build safety nets to ensure Indigenous youths transitioning out of child welfare systems are adequately supported and prepared. Learn more about Kirsty's accomplishments in the promotional video!

Another highly impactful Mitacs award winner, **Glenda Watson Hyatt**, received the **Mitacs Award for Outstanding Innovation (Master's stream)**. Glenda's research pinpoints the systemic barriers to employment for persons experiencing speech loss/disability and calls upon industry and the innovation sphere to answer the call for accommodation through universal design. Learn more about Glenda's accomplishments in the promotional video!

Partnerships

Indigenous Black Engineering Technology (IBET)

In 2023, the IBET Connect Award was awarded to three students. One IBET student received an Accelerate Entrepreneur award. IBET is a continually growing program, however IBET itself is narrow in scope (open to 19 institutions) and the cohort of eligible students is small with **40 students in total**. Some big wins for the IBET program in 2023 include the launch of the IBET Connect Award.

Indigenous Research Award (INDRA)

INDRA, in partnership with the University of British Columbia, the University of Saskatchewan and others, continues to serve Indigenous students. A total of 10 IUs funded at the amount of **$6,000** per award in 2023-2024.

Let's Talk Science

The Indigenous Mentorship Project is a collaboration between Mitacs and Let's Talk Science, providing students with hands-on research/training experience and increasing awareness of pathways for high school students. Jointly hosted at the University of Ottawa and Carleton University, **18 students were mentored** over two visits, with 5 students traveling to Ottawa for the research trip.

Yukon First Nations Chamber of Commerce (YFNCC)

Throughout 2023, Mitacs has worked to strengthen and improve relations with the Yukon territory. The relationship began by Mitacs contributing **$5,000** to the Artic Indigenous Investment Conference, led by the YFNCC. This conference led to further opportunities to collaborate with YFNCC, with a 6 IU project secured shortly thereafter. Further opportunities stemming from this sponsorship included an 18 IU project led by the Yukon University in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation.

Scotiabank Economic Resilience Research Fund (SERRF)

In 2021, Mitacs entered a partnership with Scotiabank to aid in the funding of research projects that drive economic resilience across Canada. The program has been successful in 2023, with 15 projects funded, Mitacs has contributed **$56,250** in funding to this program.

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