

# Indigenous Workforce Development Program (IWDP)

*Stratton Group Development Corporation & Stratton MineSafe Solutions Ltd.*



## Introduction & Vision

**Commitment to Indigenous Empowerment:** Stratton Group Development Corporation (and its subsidiary Stratton MineSafe Solutions Ltd.) is committed to creating sustainable employment opportunities for Indigenous peoples in Northern Saskatchewan, particularly in and around La Loche and the Clearwater River Dene Nation (CRDN). This Indigenous Workforce Development Program (IWDP) formalizes our vision of an inclusive workforce where local Indigenous talent is recruited, trained, and advanced into meaningful careers. By investing in Indigenous capacity, we aim to drive long-term economic growth in our home region and set a precedent for culturally respectful employment practices in the mining and energy sectors.

**Strategic Goals:** The IWDP is designed for both internal guidance and external partnership building. Internally, it provides a structured approach to hiring, training, and promoting Indigenous employees within Stratton MineSafe Solutions (our safety services division). Externally, it serves as a public testament to our corporate social responsibility and our commitment to reconciliation through economic empowerment. Ultimately, our vision is to develop a highly skilled Indigenous workforce that not only meets our company's needs but also strengthens community well-being. This aligns with best practices in the industry – for example, Cameco's uranium operations have demonstrated that partnering with northern communities can yield a workforce that is **50% Indigenous** [cameco.com](https://www.cameco.com) and an associated local business supply chain that procures **74%** of its services from northern-owned companies [cameco.com](https://www.cameco.com). Such outcomes inspire our own program's targets.

**Indigenous Ownership & Leadership:** A core strength of Stratton Group is Indigenous ownership and leadership. The company was founded with the vision of “driving sustainable growth and attracting newcomers” to our region [ca.linkedin.com](https://ca.linkedin.com), and empowering First Nations business development. This identity shapes the IWDP. Being an Indigenous-owned company means we inherently value the perspectives of local communities and are dedicated to ensuring they share in the benefits of resource industry growth. Our program's philosophy echoes the view that it is “**reasonable, fair and appropriate for indigenous peoples and communities to share in the benefits of resource development**” [cameco.com](https://www.cameco.com). By modeling Indigenous leadership at the corporate level, we aim to instill pride and trust among program participants and community members.

*Stratton MineSafe Solutions Ltd. is positioned as Saskatchewan's first Indigenous-owned safety services provider, offering industry-certified safety training and consulting. The IWDP builds on this foundation to train local community members as Safety Officers, trainers, and administrators.*

## Goals & Objectives of the IWDP

**Workforce Development Goals:** The primary goal of the IWDP is to recruit, develop, and employ Indigenous people in key roles within Stratton MineSafe Solutions Ltd., notably as **Safety Officers, Training Instructors, and Administrative Professionals**. By focusing on these roles, the program seeks to create career pathways beyond entry-level positions, enabling participants to acquire specialized skills and leadership capabilities. This addresses a known challenge in the resource industry: while Indigenous workers are often recruited into entry-level or trades positions, there is a need to **advance more Indigenous employees into technical and supervisory roles** [cameco.com](https://cameco.com) [ourcommons.ca](https://ourcommons.ca). Our program directly tackles this by preparing participants for skilled occupations that have higher responsibility and growth potential.

Specific objectives include:

- **Safety Officers:** Train and certify Indigenous Safety Officers who can work at mine sites and industrial projects in northern Saskatchewan. These individuals will gain credentials in Occupational Health & Safety, mine rescue, first aid, and other safety ticket certifications. The goal is to staff Stratton's safety services team with local officers who understand the language, culture, and specific safety challenges of their communities. In doing so, we not only fill a critical industry role but also ensure culturally aware safety practices on job sites.
- **Trainers/Instructors:** Develop Indigenous trainers capable of delivering safety courses, orientations, and on-site training programs. This "train-the-trainer" approach multiplies the impact – those who complete the program as instructors will go on to educate the next cohorts of workers. We aim to certify trainers through accredited programs (e.g. train-the-trainer certifications, adult education courses via Northlands College or Gabriel Dumont Institute) so they can lead classes in everything from equipment operation to emergency response. Cultivating Indigenous trainers helps embed knowledge in the community and creates local experts who can serve industry across the region.
- **Administrative & Management Roles:** Prepare Indigenous employees for administrative and coordinative positions (project coordinators, safety program administrators, HR assistants, etc.) within Stratton Group. These roles ensure that Indigenous staff are represented not just in fieldwork but also in office and management functions, where they can influence planning and decision-making. Professional development in computer skills, project management, finance, and office administration will be provided. The long-term aim is to see alumni of the IWDP rise into senior positions within the company – a tangible indicator of breaking the "ceiling" into professional ranks [ourcommons.ca](https://ourcommons.ca).

**Community Employment Targets:** While the program is open to all Indigenous peoples in Northern Saskatchewan, we place a special emphasis on candidates from La Loche and CRDN. These communities are central to our operations and have historically faced limited

local employment opportunities. By training community members for skilled jobs, we intend to reduce local unemployment and out-migration. Success will be measured not only by the number of individuals trained and hired, but by improved economic outcomes in the community (e.g. increased median income, more families with a stable wage earner) and stronger local capacity in safety and emergency response. This reflects the broader objective shared by national programs like the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership, whose **“overall objective is sustainable employment for Aboriginal people in major economic industries, leading to lasting benefits for Aboriginal communities, families and individuals.”** [canada.ca](https://canada.ca)

The IWDP aligns with this objective on a local scale.

**Long-Term Vision:** In the long run, Stratton envisions that graduates of the IWDP will become mentors, supervisors, or even independent entrepreneurs in their own right. Just as other companies have noted that a true mark of success is when Indigenous employees eventually start their **own businesses and employ even more Aboriginal people** [ourcommons.ca](https://ourcommons.ca), we hope some of our trainees will follow a similar path. Whether they continue with Stratton or venture into creating local contracting companies, the skills and experience gained through our program will contribute to an enduring cycle of Indigenous economic empowerment. Our goal is not just to fill immediate job vacancies, but to **build a sustainable talent pipeline** that can serve the wider mining and energy sector in Saskatchewan. In doing so, we contribute to making resource development an “engine of social and economic progress” in the North [canada.ca](https://canada.ca), driven by the talent and ambition of Indigenous peoples.

## Partnership Framework with Educational Institutions

### Collaborating with Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI)

As part of our commitment to Indigenous Workforce Development, Stratton MineSafe Solutions Ltd. is actively pursuing a partnership with the Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI). GDI is a Saskatchewan-based educational and employment organization that has been serving Métis and First Nations communities for decades. They bring culturally-informed training expertise and a proven track record of delivering programs to remote communities.

Our vision for this partnership is to combine Stratton MineSafe’s safety training expertise with GDI’s extensive experience in training and employment services. This collaboration would bridge educational gaps and prepare participants for technical training and long-term career success.

### Key Initiatives with GDI (Proposed):

#### 1. Pre-Training Preparation:

- Identify and recruit candidates from La Loche, CRDN, and surrounding areas using GDI’s community networks.

- Develop and deliver preparatory workshops in the community, such as upgrading math or science skills relevant to mine safety, or hosting a “work readiness” camp covering teamwork, work ethic, and basic safety awareness.

## 2. Funding and Sponsorship Opportunities:

- Explore funding sources through GDI’s access to Métis training funds or provincial programs to support participants.
- Utilize scholarships, trainee allowances, or apprenticeship wage subsidies to offset costs for safety gear, textbooks, or travel for training.

## 3. Cultural Support:

- Integrate cultural content and traditions into training programs, such as starting sessions with Elder blessings or incorporating Indigenous language terminology related to safety concepts.
- By respecting Indigenous identity, we aim to improve participant retention and comfort throughout the program.

### Shared Vision:

Both Stratton MineSafe and GDI share a common purpose – to increase access to education and employment opportunities for northern and Indigenous communities. We are confident that this proposed collaboration will enhance local capacity, foster economic development, and contribute to sustained success in the region.

**Partnering with Northlands College:** Northlands College is the primary post-secondary institution serving northern Saskatchewan, known for its mining, trades, and health and safety programs. Stratton will formalize a partnership or Memorandum of Understanding with Northlands College to deliver the technical training components of the IWDP. Northlands has a history of providing industry-relevant training close to home – it has offered programs in uranium mining for decades and even partnered with outside institutions to bring in specialized curriculum [northernontariobusiness.com](http://northernontariobusiness.com). Through this partnership:

**Customized Training Programs:** We will collaborate on developing or tailoring courses specifically for our needs. For example, a **Mine Safety Officer certificate program** could be co-created, combining existing modules (like Northlands’ Occupational Health and Safety courses, first aid/CPR, firefighting, etc.) into a cohesive program for our trainees. Similarly, an **Administration in Mining** course might be crafted for those on the administrative track, including modules on procurement, documentation, and regulatory compliance.

## Community-Based Delivery

To ensure that training opportunities are **accessible to local residents**, we will prioritize **community-based delivery methods** in collaboration with **Northlands College and Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI)**. Our aim is to **bring training directly to La Loche and surrounding areas** rather than requiring trainees to relocate to larger centers.

### Facility Utilization:

- **Dumont Technical Institute (DTI) Building in La Loche:** This existing facility can serve as the primary hub for **GDI/DTI courses** that we develop and deliver together, reducing travel requirements and enhancing community involvement.
- **Clearwater River Dene School (CRDN):** Previously utilized by **Northlands College for university courses**, this facility could be repurposed to support our **safety training and workforce development programs**.
- **Ducharme Elementary School (Old Building):** With a new school having been constructed for elementary students, the **old Ducharme school building** could be considered as a **multi-purpose training and skills development center**.

### Technology and Accessibility:

When in-person delivery is not feasible, we will leverage **Northlands College's mobile training labs** or **distance education technology** to deliver **virtual and hybrid training programs**. This approach maximizes accessibility while minimizing disruption to trainees' lives.

### Community Integration:

By **utilizing familiar community facilities**, we not only make training more accessible but also create a sense of **ownership and pride** among participants. This community-centered approach enhances **engagement and retention**, while fostering a **supportive learning environment**. This approach echoes successful models elsewhere, such as NexGen Energy's community-based trades training collaboration which saw "**local industry, educational institutions, and local communities**" come together to train 288 people in Saskatchewan's North.

**Accreditation and Certification:** With Northlands as an accredited college, participants will earn recognized certificates or diplomas upon completion. These credentials (e.g. safety technician certificate, etc.) will be valuable for their long-term careers, whether they continue with Stratton or work elsewhere. We will ensure programs meet provincial and industry standards so that our graduates are fully qualified.

**Role of Other Institutions:** While GDI and Northlands are key partners, we will also seek input or support from other agencies: for instance, the **Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies (SIIT)** for certain trades training, or the **Metis Nation-Saskatchewan** for



additional funding support for Métis participants. Government workforce development programs will be tapped where possible. (Notably, past federal-provincial initiatives like the Northern Career Quest program, which trained 1,500 Indigenous people for the resource sector, succeeded through multi-party partnerships involving tribal councils, educational institutes, and major mining companies [canada.ca](https://canada.ca). Our partnership framework draws lessons from that model of broad collaboration.) The emphasis is on **working together with existing institutions** so that our program reinforces and adds to established capacity rather than duplicating it. Every partner shares the goal of seeing northern residents skilled and employed.

## Community Engagement & Cultural Inclusion

**Building Trust through Engagement:** The IWDP will be guided by robust community engagement with La Loche, CRDN, and neighboring Indigenous communities. We recognize that establishing positive relationships and trust is a **precondition to success**. Stratton Group will consult regularly with community leadership – including the Chief and Council of Clearwater River Dene Nation, the Mayor and council of La Loche, and local economic development officers. An **Indigenous Advisory Committee** may be formed, composed of community representatives and elders, to provide guidance on program implementation. Their input will shape recruitment strategies, cultural protocol in training, and conflict resolution, ensuring the program respects community values. As NexGen Energy’s experience has shown, “**transparent discussion and meaningful collaboration**” with Indigenous groups fosters support and meaningful participation. In fact, NexGen’s strong engagement led to historic community support for their project. Following this example, Stratton will engage early and communicate often with our community stakeholders.

**Cultural Inclusion in Training:** A distinguishing feature of the IWDP is the integration of Dene and Métis culture throughout the program. We will work with local elders and knowledge keepers to incorporate cultural teachings. For instance, training sessions can open with a prayer or smudge ceremony led by an elder, acknowledging traditional territory and setting a positive tone. We will accommodate cultural practices such as time off for hunting season, family bereavement, or ceremonial events – flexibility that demonstrates respect for participants’ identities. Where possible, instruction will use culturally relevant analogies and include content like traditional approaches to safety (e.g. how elders taught respect for the land and caution in the bush).

Stratton will also provide **cultural awareness training for our non-Indigenous staff and management** who will be working with program participants. This mirrors industry best practices: Syncrude Canada, for example, mandates cultural sensitivity training for supervisors and requires that all leaders who oversee Indigenous employees undergo Indigenous cultural training [ourcommons.ca](https://ourcommons.ca). Such measures foster an inclusive workplace where Indigenous employees feel understood and valued. By educating all employees on Dene and Métis heritage, languages (Dene, Michif), and the historical context of La Loche/CRDN, we create a work environment of mutual respect.

**Community Benefits & Engagement Activities:** The IWDP is not only about training individuals; it’s about uplifting the community. Stratton will sponsor and participate in community events that promote education and careers. This may include: career fairs at the local

high school, open house sessions where community members can meet our trainers and staff, and demonstrations of safety equipment for youth. We will highlight role models – for instance, if a community member becomes a certified safety officer through our program, we will celebrate that achievement publicly to inspire others. Additionally, the program will coordinate with existing community initiatives. If La Loche or CRDN have ongoing youth skill-development programs or employment initiatives, we will integrate our efforts (avoiding silos). This cooperative approach was emphasized by the Northern Career Quest program as well, which succeeded as a “**co-operation between government, First Nations and Métis people, the training sector and industry**” to maximize Indigenous participation in resource jobs [canada.ca](https://canada.ca). Stratton’s IWDP embodies that spirit of co-operation at the grassroots level.

Finally, community engagement will include **feedback and continuous improvement**. We will solicit regular feedback from participants, their families, and community leaders. Their voices will help us refine the curriculum, scheduling, and supports. Our goal is to make the IWDP a source of community pride – something community members claim ownership of. Indeed, part of the vision is that in future, the program could be co-managed with community institutions, or even led by alumni (truly becoming a community-embedded workforce training program). When communities see that we honor their culture, listen to their input, and deliver tangible benefits, the trust and goodwill generated will extend to all our business operations in the region. This trust is invaluable; it creates a positive feedback loop supporting both community development and our company’s social license to operate.

## Mentorship & Career Advancement

**Mentorship Model:** Mentorship is a critical pillar of the IWDP, ensuring that participants have the guidance and support needed to thrive. Upon entering the program, each trainee will be paired with a mentor – ideally an experienced Indigenous professional in a relevant field (safety, training, or administration). Stratton will draw on our network of senior staff and external partners to identify mentors. For example, a veteran Safety Officer working with one of our partner mining companies could mentor our safety trainees, providing insights from years of on-the-job experience. Likewise, a seasoned HR or project admin professional within Stratton’s head office can mentor administrative interns. Mentors and mentees will meet regularly (bi-weekly or monthly), either in person or via video calls, to review progress, answer questions, and set career goals. This relationship offers moral support and practical coaching and helps bridge the gap between training and real-world application.

**On-the-Job Training & Coaching:** The IWDP emphasizes learning by doing. After initial classroom training, participants will undergo on-the-job training placements. During these placements (for instance, a 3-month internship at an active mine site or at Stratton’s operations), they will work under the close supervision of both their mentor and site supervisors. We will implement a structured coaching process: supervisors will conduct frequent job task observations and provide feedback, reinforcing safe work habits and building confidence. (Cameco’s safety culture provides a model here – they require front-line supervisors to perform thousands of job



observations to ensure workers are following safety protocols [cameco.com](https://cameco.com). We will similarly emphasize hands-on coaching to instill a safety-first mindset in our trainees.)

Mentorship will also involve life-skill coaching. Recognizing that many young people from remote communities face challenges when entering industrial work (such as adapting to shift schedules, remote work camps, etc.), mentors will advise on these aspects too. Something as simple as guidance on personal budgeting, or tips for maintaining work-life balance while on rotational work, can significantly improve retention. The ultimate aim is to **increase retention and promotion rates** of Indigenous hires. We note that companies like Syncrude have found Indigenous employees often have *lower attrition* than average because “they live in the region... they have no desire to move away” [ourcommons.ca](https://ourcommons.ca) when given good jobs at home. Through strong mentorship and support, we expect our trainees to become long-term employees who grow with the company.

**Career Path Planning:** Each participant in the IWDP will have an individualized career development plan. At the outset, we will work with them to map out a potential career ladder – for example, a Safety Trainee might aim to become a certified Safety Officer within one year, a Senior Safety Officer in three years, and potentially a Safety Supervisor or Trainer in five years. We will identify the incremental milestones, additional training, or certifications needed along the way. Stratton commits to providing ongoing training opportunities to facilitate this growth (such as sponsoring advanced certifications or sending employees to workshops like the Mine Safety Professionals conference). By illustrating a visible career path, we keep participants motivated and focused on long-term advancement rather than just short-term job placement.

Mentors and managers will periodically review these career plans with the employees. Achievements will be celebrated (e.g., when someone earns their certification or completes a year of service with a good safety record). If barriers arise, we will problem-solve supports – for instance, if an employee needs further education to advance, we might adjust their work schedule to allow college courses, or provide tutoring through GDI. This approach echoes the philosophy that “**investing in our employees**” and formalizing policies for career growth yields a more skilled and loyal workforce. We want IWDP participants to see not just a job, but a meaningful career ahead of them.

**Alumni Network & Mentoring Future Generations:** As the program matures, IWDP graduates will be encouraged to become mentors for newer participants, creating a self-sustaining cycle. We will establish an alumni network so that those who have gone through the program can stay connected, share experiences, and continue learning. This network can also engage with local schools – for example, alumni can return to La Loche high school to speak about their careers and inspire youth. In this way, the program’s impact extends beyond its direct participants and timelines; it becomes part of the community fabric. Over years, as dozens of individuals complete training and move into stable careers, they become role models, informal career counselors, and even community leaders. This outcome – Indigenous people empowered to lead and teach others – is the true legacy we aim for. It aligns with the broader vision of reconciliation,

where Indigenous communities regain agency over their economic futures and share knowledge inter-generationally for continuous improvement.

## Industry Case Studies & Best Practices

To strengthen and inform our IWDP, Stratton Group has studied successful Indigenous workforce development initiatives across Canada's mining and energy sectors. These case studies provide valuable lessons and reinforce why our approach will work. Key examples include:

- **Northern Career Quest (Saskatchewan):** This was a federal-provincial-industry partnership launched in 2008 to train Indigenous people for northern Saskatchewan's mining, oil sands, and energy projects. With over \$33 million invested, it provided skills training to about 1,500 First Nations and Métis individuals [canada.ca](https://canada.ca). A hallmark of Northern Career Quest was multi-stakeholder cooperation – First Nations, Métis organizations, colleges (Northlands and SIIT), and companies like Cameco and Areva all contributed [canada.ca](https://canada.ca). The program was a “good news story about co-operation” enabling Indigenous people to participate in resource industries “in greater numbers and at higher skill levels” [canada.ca](https://canada.ca). **Best Practice:** Broad partnerships and funding can dramatically scale up training. For Stratton, this underscores the importance of working with government grants and multiple partners (as we plan with GDI, Northlands, etc.) to amplify our impact.
- **Cameco & Orano's Northern Workforce:** Saskatchewan's uranium mining companies have long been leaders in Indigenous employment. Cameco is noted as “Canada's largest industrial employer of Aboriginal people” with over 1,500 Indigenous employees [ourcommons.ca](https://ourcommons.ca). At the end of 2023, Cameco reported that **50% of its northern Saskatchewan operations workforce is Indigenous** [cameco.com](https://cameco.com). These hires are not just in entry roles; the companies have goals (mandated by surface lease agreements) to continually increase the number of northern Indigenous people in skilled positions [cameco.com](https://cameco.com). Over decades, they have developed initiatives like scholarship programs, mentorship, summer student jobs, and apprenticeships to achieve these numbers. **Best Practice:** Setting concrete hiring targets and investing in education leads to sustained results. Also, the companies learned to focus on advancement – Cameco notes the challenge now is to move more Indigenous staff into technical and supervisory jobs [cameco.com](https://cameco.com), which is exactly what Stratton's IWDP is addressing by targeting Safety Officer and Trainer roles.
- **NexGen Energy – Rook I Project Agreements:** NexGen, a newer uranium development company in Saskatchewan, achieved remarkable success in Indigenous engagement by signing Benefit Agreements with local First Nations (including CRDN) even at the project's early stages. These agreements included provisions for “*employment, training, and economic development*” for the communities. In parallel, NexGen invested in community programs focusing on youth mentorship and education. They initiated a “**first-of-its-kind collaboration for trades training and certification**” that brought together industry, educational institutions, and communities – resulting in 288 local residents gaining skills for long-term careers. **Best Practice:** Early and proactive

investment in training (even before a project fully starts) builds capacity and community goodwill. Also, innovation in partnerships – NexGen leveraged an F1 racing team’s expertise to enhance safety training – shows thinking outside the box. For Stratton, this case affirms that our early outreach in La Loche/CRDN, even as our business grows, is a smart strategy. We also see the value in potentially creative partnerships (for instance, maybe collaborating with a major safety equipment manufacturer to provide enhanced training tools).

- **Syncrude Canada – Aboriginal Development Programs:** In the Alberta oil sands, Syncrude has been a pioneer in Indigenous employment and business development. By 2017, Syncrude had spent over **\$2 billion on contracts with Indigenous-owned businesses** in the region [ourcommons.ca](https://ourcommons.ca), bolstering a whole ecosystem of Aboriginal enterprises. They also ran programs like the Syncrude Aboriginal Trades Preparation Program, which guarantees Indigenous participants a job upon completion [ourcommons.ca](https://ourcommons.ca). Syncrude’s approach includes flying residents from remote communities (e.g., Fort Chipewyan) to work sites, demonstrating flexibility in work arrangements [ourcommons.ca](https://ourcommons.ca). **Best Practice:** Economic empowerment goes beyond jobs to include support for Indigenous entrepreneurship and supplier development. Also, removing barriers (like transportation, housing for workers) is key to inclusion. Stratton will mirror some of these practices by, for example, ensuring our trainees have transportation to training or work sites (we may run a shuttle from La Loche to nearby projects or provide camp accommodations during placements). We also are committed to local procurement – as our workforce grows, we will seek to source services (catering, logistics, etc.) from Indigenous businesses, further multiplying the program’s economic impact on the community.
- **Government Policy – ASETS/ISETS Programs:** Federal programs such as the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS, now evolved into ISETS) have stressed partnership-driven approaches and long-term employment outcomes. These programs taught that success is measured not just by training completions, but by **sustainable job placements and career progression**

[canada.ca](https://canada.ca)

. They often fund wraparound services like childcare, counseling, or equipment for trainees, recognizing that those supports can make the difference in completion. **Best Practice:** Stratton’s IWDP integrates this holistic mindset. We will endeavor to provide or coordinate support services for participants (for instance, if a trainee needs childcare to attend classes, we will work with community services to help arrange it). Likewise, we will track not just how many people we train, but how many remain employed or get promoted after one year, two years, etc., using that data to continuously refine the program.

Integrating these best practices, the IWDP is built on proven pillars: multi-stakeholder collaboration, community-driven design, clear targets and accountability, cultural respect, mentorship, and holistic support. Our program is essentially standing on the shoulders of successful initiatives, adapted to the specific context of La Loche and CRDN and the safety-services niche of Stratton MineSafe.

## Program Structure & Implementation Plan

**Phased Implementation:** The IWDP will roll out in a series of structured phases to ensure effective execution:

- **Phase 1 – Program Setup (Months 1-3):** Establish the formal partnerships (sign MOUs with GDI and Northlands College), secure funding or sponsorships as needed (including exploring grants from government or industry partners) and hire program staff. During this phase, we will hire or designate an **IWDP Coordinator** – preferably an Indigenous professional with experience in training programs – who will manage day-to-day operations. Curriculum planning happens in this phase: Stratton, GDI, and Northlands will convene to finalize training content, schedules, and certification processes. We will also engage the Indigenous Advisory Committee at this stage for input. Success in Phase 1 is measured by having all agreements in place and a detailed program blueprint ready.
- **Phase 2 – Recruitment & Selection (Months 2-4, overlapping with Phase 1):** Begin community outreach to advertise the program and recruit candidates. We will hold information sessions in La Loche and at CRDN. Application forms will be made simple and accessible, and we will ensure people can apply in-person or via email (with assistance from GDI career services). A selection panel including Stratton staff and community representatives will review applicants. Our criteria will assess basic readiness (a keen interest in a safety career, minimum education or equivalency, etc.) but also consider attitude and commitment over strict academic prerequisites – we want motivated individuals, even if they need some academic upgrading (which we will provide). We aim for an initial cohort of around 10-15 trainees in the first intake, balancing the three streams (safety, training, admin). If interest is high, we may increase capacity or plan for additional cohorts in the future.
- **Phase 3 – Training Delivery (Months 4-12):** The core training period will span several months (exact length depends on the curriculum structure – for instance, a Safety Officer training might be a 16-week program). Training will be a blend of classroom instruction, practical labs, and site visits. Northlands College instructors (possibly co-instructing with Stratton’s experienced safety personnel) will teach technical modules. GDI may teach certain modules like workplace readiness or communications. Trainees will earn certifications step by step (e.g., first aid ticket in month 1, H2S Alive in month 2, etc.). Throughout this phase, mentorship starts – each trainee is introduced to their mentor early on. We also incorporate **mid-program evaluations** to identify if any trainee is struggling and implement remedial actions (tutoring, additional counseling). Family or community support will be encouraged – we might host a family day where participants demonstrate skills learned, to build pride and understanding among their relatives. By the end of Phase 3, participants should have completed formal training and be ready for real work experience with all necessary entry certifications acquired.
- **Phase 4 – On-the-Job Experience (Months 9-15):** After classroom training, participants transition into on-the-job training placements or probationary employment. Stratton MineSafe Solutions will hire the trainees, assigning them to either our own

projects or seconding them to partner companies' job sites for hands-on experience. For example, a newly trained Safety Officer might shadow an experienced safety inspector at a mine site for several rotations, or an admin trainee might work in Stratton's La Loche office handling safety equipment logistics. During this phase, the IWDP Coordinator closely monitors performance and feedback from site supervisors. Mentors continue to support the graduates as they encounter real-world challenges. Toward the end of this phase, a formal evaluation is conducted for each participant to determine if they are meeting job standards and ready for independent role fulfillment. Those who meet requirements will be officially confirmed in their roles (e.g., promoted from "Trainee" status to full "Safety Officer" staff). If any participant needs more time or experience, we will extend their mentorship period or adjust their duties accordingly.

- **Phase 5 – Program Evaluation & Continuity (Month 12 and ongoing annually):** Upon completion of the first cohort's cycle (approximately one year mark), Stratton and its partners will carry out a comprehensive evaluation. Metrics such as number of graduates, job placement rate, retention rate after six months, and feedback from participants will be reviewed. We will also assess outcomes like any improvements noted in safety performance where the new Safety Officers work (e.g., did incident rates drop, signaling effective training?). Community impact will be gauged through informal feedback – are community leaders noticing a difference (more locals employed, positive role models emerging, etc.)? This evaluation will be documented and used to refine the next iteration of the program. The IWDP is intended to be an **ongoing program** with continuous intake perhaps every year or two, depending on demand. Insights from the first cohort will help us adjust curriculum, supports, or partner involvement for future cohorts. Over time, we will institutionalize the program into Stratton's corporate structure, allocating annual budget to it and possibly expanding it (for instance, adding other skilled trades training if needed by the community or our business growth).

**Support Systems:** During implementation, several support systems will be in place to ensure participant success:

- *Transportation & Accommodation:* For any training components not in La Loche (e.g., if some classes are in Buffalo Narrows or Prince Albert), we will provide transportation or lodging as needed so that lack of mobility isn't a barrier.
- *Stipends:* Where feasible, trainees will receive a training allowance or be paid a stipend when they are in full-time training. This helps them focus on learning without financial stress. We are exploring funding options to support this, as it has been shown that providing a modest income during training greatly improves completion rates.
- *Counseling & Pastoral Care:* Adjusting to a new routine or intensive training can be stressful for anyone. We will arrange for counseling services (through GDI or local health providers) to be available for participants who might need to talk through challenges (be it work-life balance, confidence issues, etc.). Also, we'll involve elders for cultural and personal guidance – an elder or knowledge keeper can be "on call" to provide advice and encouragement, which many Indigenous learners find comforting.



- **Progress Tracking:** The program coordinator will maintain a file for each participant, tracking achievements and any issues. Regular progress meetings (monthly) will be held with each trainee to ensure they feel heard and to personalize the program as needed.

**Risk Management:** We acknowledge potential challenges in implementation (such as participants dropping out, funding shortfalls, etc.) and have mitigation plans. If a participant must pause or leave the program (for personal or health reasons), we'll offer them a chance to rejoin in a future cohort – the door remains open. If initial academic readiness is a concern, we'll extend Phase 2 for some students (provide extra upgrading before Phase 3). Should funding gaps occur, Stratton is prepared to invest its own resources to keep critical elements running, because we see this as a long-term investment in our workforce and community relations.

## Corporate Infrastructure & Credibility

**Strong Corporate Governance:** Stratton Group Development Corporation backs the IWDP with a robust corporate infrastructure, underscoring our credibility and capacity to deliver on promises. We understand that partners and community members need assurance that our company is stable, transparent, and well-managed. To that end, Stratton Group has established the following:

- **Dun & Bradstreet Registration:** Stratton Group maintains an active D-U-N-S® Number and profile with Dun & Bradstreet, the global business registry. This registration provides an independent verification of our company's existence and creditworthiness. It signals to large industry partners and government agencies that we are a legitimate and accountable business entity. (Many mining companies require contractors to have a D&B profile as part of their due diligence; Stratton meets this requirement, facilitating partnership in supply chain and subcontracting opportunities.) The D&B record includes our corporate details, years of operation, and financial reliability indicators – all reinforcing trust in any joint initiatives such as the IWDP.
- **Liability Insurance:** We carry comprehensive liability insurance coverage for all our operations and training activities. This includes general commercial liability insurance, automobile liability for transport of trainees, as well as errors & omissions insurance for our consulting and training services. By having appropriate insurance (in line with industry standards or exceeding them), we ensure that participants, employees, and partner organizations are protected from potential risks. It also shows that we operate with professionalism and foresight, managing risks proactively. (Certificates of insurance can be made available to partners on request as part of formalizing partnerships or site access for on-the-job training.)
- **Legal Representation:** Stratton Group and Stratton MineSafe Solutions are represented by **Scharfstein Gibbings Walen Fisher LLP**, a respected law firm based in Saskatchewan. Our legal counsel provides guidance on all contracts, agreements, and compliance matters. For the IWDP, this means all partnership agreements (with educational institutions, funding bodies, etc.) are properly vetted and enforceable. It also means we adhere strictly to employment laws, safety regulations, and any duty to consult



requirements. Having reputable legal counsel assures communities and partners that we conduct business ethically and with due diligence – from drafting Impact Benefit Agreements to handling any liability issues that could arise in training.

- **Professional Accounting & Auditing:** Our finances are managed by **Thomson Jaspar LLP**, a professional accounting firm. They oversee our financial reporting, payroll, and auditing. Financial transparency and accountability are crucial, especially if we receive public funds or grants for the IWDP. With Thomson Jaspar's oversight, stakeholders can be confident that any funds devoted to the program are used appropriately and tracked. Budget reports for the program (e.g. how much spent on training, stipends, etc.) will be produced for internal review and can be shared with partners to demonstrate fiscal responsibility. In short, we have sound financial controls, which also benefits program participants (e.g., stipends and wages will be paid on time and in accordance with accounting best practices).
- **Health and Safety Governance:** As a company specializing in safety, we practice what we preach. Stratton MineSafe Solutions has an internal Health, Safety, Environment & Quality (HSEQ) management system. We are in the process of obtaining COR (Certificate of Recognition) safety accreditation. All training activities under the IWDP will be conducted under this safety management framework – for instance, training sites will have risk assessments, emergency response plans, and insurance as noted. This not only keeps everyone safe, but it reinforces to trainees the importance of safety culture. We treat our trainees as employees from day one, meaning they are covered under our workplace safety policies and workers' compensation where applicable. This corporate commitment to safety excellence adds credibility when we approach industry partners to accept our trainees on-site; they know Stratton upholds high safety standards.

**Credibility with Industry and Community:** The combination of Indigenous ownership and strong corporate infrastructure uniquely positions Stratton Group as a credible partner. On one hand, we have cultural legitimacy and community trust; on the other, we meet the rigorous requirements of industry and government. Few companies can offer both. We highlight these credentials in promotional materials when discussing the IWDP to assure all stakeholders that the program rests on a solid foundation. For example, when inviting a mining company to host an IWDP trainee, we can demonstrate that Stratton is fully licensed, insured, and legally compliant to operate – mitigating any concerns on their part. Likewise, when talking with community leadership, we can show that we have the professional backing to sustain the program (not a fly-by-night idea, but a serious, well-planned initiative).

By mentioning our Dun & Bradstreet listing, insurance, and professional partners, we reinforce that Stratton Group is here for the long term. We are **accountable** – to our partners, to our trainees, and to the community. This credibility is a critical asset: it means we can more easily secure partnerships, funding, and community buy-in. In the end, it increases the likelihood of the IWDP's success and longevity.

## Conclusion & Future Outlook

**Towards a Sustainable Future:** The Indigenous Workforce Development Program is more than a training initiative – it is a strategic investment in the people of Northern Saskatchewan and the future of Stratton Group. Through the IWDP, we will create a pipeline of skilled Indigenous Safety Officers, trainers, and administrators who will play a vital role in the region’s mining and energy projects. Success will be measured not only by the number of individuals employed, but by the ripple effects: families with improved livelihoods, youth who see role models in their community, safer workplaces thanks to culturally competent safety practices, and strengthened relationships between industry and Indigenous communities.

Stratton Group is proud to lead by example. We acknowledge the foundational work laid by others – from government programs to industry pioneers – and we are building upon those lessons with humility and determination. As an Indigenous-owned company based in La Loche, our commitment is deeply personal. The prosperity and wellness of our neighbors, friends, and relatives are at the heart of why we undertake this program. We believe that **economic reconciliation** – closing the gaps in employment and income for Indigenous peoples – is achievable when businesses step up with concrete actions. The IWDP is our contribution to that cause, ensuring that Indigenous people are not just participants but leaders in the regional economy.

**Growth and Expansion:** In the coming years, Stratton envisions expanding the IWDP in scope and scale. If the initial cohorts demonstrate success, we may introduce new streams (for example, heavy equipment operators or environmental monitoring technicians) based on community interest and industry demand. We will also look to partner with additional mining companies or contractors who wish to sponsor trainees or offer placement opportunities. There is potential to replicate our model in other northern communities as well, making Stratton a hub for Indigenous workforce development across the province. Such expansion will be pursued carefully, maintaining the quality and community-focused nature of the program.

Moreover, the IWDP can serve as a platform for **continuous learning** within Stratton. The fresh perspectives of Indigenous youth and the guidance of elders can influence how we do business in positive ways – perhaps inspiring new services (like cultural safety training for other companies) or innovations in safety management that integrate traditional knowledge. In essence, embracing Indigenous workforce development strengthens our corporate culture and adaptability.

**Invitation to Stakeholders:** We openly invite government agencies, industry partners, and community organizations to collaborate with us on the Indigenous Workforce Development Program. Whether it is through co-funding, providing work experience placements, or sharing expertise, stakeholders can amplify the impact of this program. Together, we can demonstrate that partnership with Indigenous communities is not just a social obligation but a smart investment – yielding a competent workforce, reduced turnover, and a supportive operating environment. As one industry leader aptly stated, local Indigenous labor supply and business contracts are “far more cost

effective than bringing in workers and suppliers from other areas” [ourcommons.ca](https://ourcommons.ca), and importantly, it builds a stable workforce with lower attrition because people are invested in their home region [ourcommons.ca](https://ourcommons.ca). Our IWDP embodies this win-win proposition.

In conclusion, the Stratton Group Indigenous Workforce Development Program is a comprehensive, action-oriented plan that transforms our commitment to Indigenous inclusion into reality. It aligns with the best practices of the Canadian mining and energy sectors while being tailored to the unique context of La Loche and Clearwater River Dene Nation. Through clear goals, strong partnerships, culturally grounded methods, and rigorous corporate support, the IWDP will create meaningful careers for Indigenous people and help shape a more inclusive and prosperous northern Saskatchewan. We look forward to reporting on the success stories that emerge from this program – stories of trainees becoming leaders, of communities gaining capacity, and of a regional economy that truly includes the original people of the land in its growth. Together, we are forging a safer, stronger, and more equitable future.

Thank you for your time in reviewing this document,

Marsi-Cho

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## Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

The success of the Indigenous Workforce Development Program (IWDP) will be measured through key performance indicators (KPIs). These metrics will help us track the progress and impact of the program and ensure that we are meeting our goals. The KPIs will include:

- **Training Completion Rate:** Percentage of participants who successfully complete the program.
- **Job Placement Rate:** Percentage of participants who secure full-time employment after completing the program.
- **Retention Rate:** Percentage of placed employees who stay employed for six months or more.
- **Employer Satisfaction:** Feedback from partnering companies regarding the quality of workers placed from the program.
- **Community Engagement:** Feedback and participation from local community leaders and elders to ensure the program aligns with community needs.

## Financial Support and Program Funding

To ensure the success of the IWDP and its long-term sustainability, Stratton MineSafe Solutions Ltd. will seek various funding opportunities, including:

- **Government Grants:** Actively pursuing Indigenous workforce development grants provided by federal and provincial programs.
- **Corporate Sponsorships:** Collaborating with industry partners (e.g., mining, oil & gas, construction, etc.) to secure funding for training programs and job placements.
- **Partnerships with Educational Institutions:** Working with local colleges and training institutes to offer scholarships or financial support for program participants.

## Partnerships with Industry and Education

Stratton MineSafe Solutions Ltd. is committed to forming strong partnerships with both industry leaders and educational institutions to ensure that the IWDP meets the evolving needs of the workforce. This includes:

- **Industry Partners:** Collaborating with mining companies like Cameco, Orano, NexGen, and others to provide **on-the-job training** and **employment opportunities** for program participants.
- **Educational Partnerships:** Collaborating with institutions such as Gabriel Dumont Institute and Northlands College to provide formal **certifications** and **industry-recognized credentials**.

## Community Involvement and Feedback Mechanisms

To ensure the IWDP remains relevant to local communities, Stratton MineSafe Solutions Ltd. will implement a formalized process for **community involvement** and **feedback**. This includes:

- **Regular Community Consultations:** Ongoing engagement with **local community leaders, elders, and youth** to ensure the program aligns with community goals and values.
- **Participant Feedback:** Collecting feedback from program participants to assess satisfaction and identify areas for improvement.
- **Employer and Industry Stakeholder Feedback:** Gathering input from industry partners and employers to understand workforce needs and ensure that our training programs meet industry standards.

