



Saskatchewan Ministry of First Nations and Métis Relations

ENTERPRISE REGIONS IN THE NORTH – Fact Sheet

Why Enterprise Regions?

The nature of what drives the provincial economy is changing rapidly. Long-term survival in today's competitive business environment requires us to respond to a number of important considerations including: global competitiveness; the need for focus and specialization; the need for differentiation; and the challenge to be world-class producers, manufacturers, and service providers. Industry will require a world-class environment in which to do business.

The new economic reality is that business is a game of survival of the smartest and fittest, with a competitive environment challenging us to be stronger and faster every day. There is great potential for investment opportunities within the North and from outside the region. It is imperative that a new approach to regional economic development is implemented to reorganize and strengthen industry, business and community competitiveness.

Input in recent years from communities, economic developers, industry, and businesses identified a variety of items needed for improved economic development: consistent service in all areas of the province, stable and equitable funding, and clear governance to improve regional development. To address these needs, the Ministry of First Nations and Métis Relations (FNMR) expanded funding for economic development through the launch of the Enterprise Region program to northern Saskatchewan, in April 2010, replacing the Regional Development Corporation program.

What is the Enterprise Region Program?

The new Enterprise Region program is an initiative of the Government of Saskatchewan as part of its new economic development plan, to reorganize and strengthen the way economic development is delivered in the province. It promotes regional approaches to economic development and builds the capacity and independence of northern organizations and businesses.

The Enterprise Region mandate is to provide support to each region to increase business and industry competitiveness and to realize each region's economic potential on the global stage. The ultimate goal is to help business and regions change and become more entrepreneurial and competitive, as well as to foster innovation and success in the new global economy.

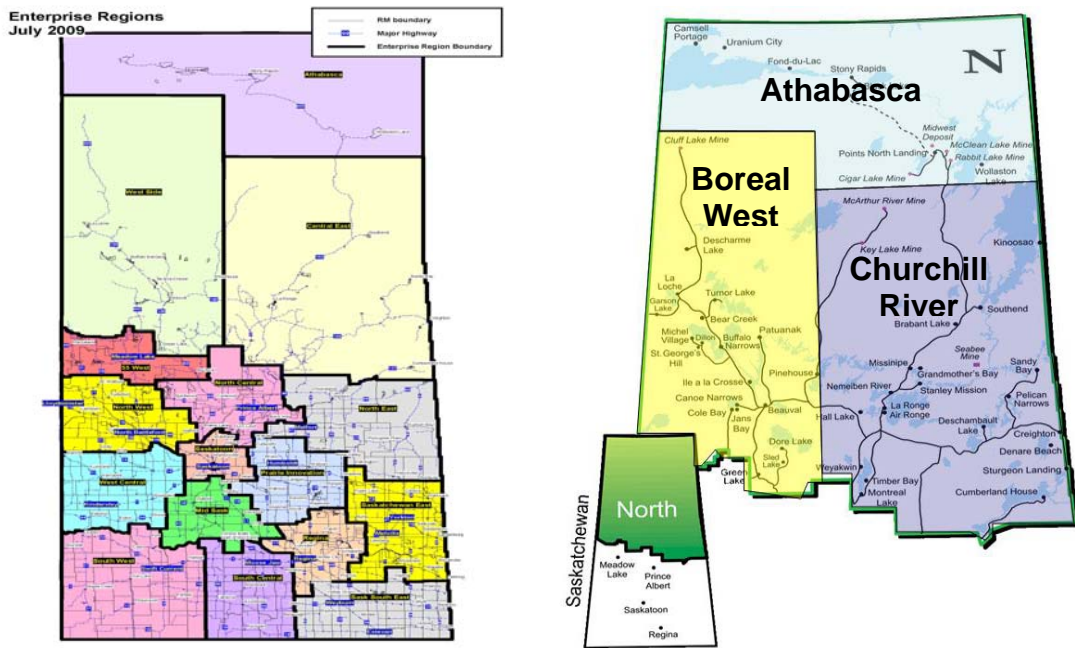
The Enterprise Regions initiative focuses on implementing a new way of approaching business and community development, and represents a move away from a fragmented set of separately administered programs and boundaries. Enterprise Regions will work toward a regionally driven approach that helps local people cross boundaries and build on existing strengths.

It is a move to regionally integrated economic planning and decision making that includes infrastructure; training and development; branding and marketing; business creation, retention and attraction; and investor network building.

Enterprise Regions will be able to access a package of provincial funding from FNMR Northern Affairs Division, in addition to funds from other sources and levels of government. FNMR will provide a bold and innovative approach to creating sustainable economic growth in northern Saskatchewan.

How Will Enterprise Regions Operate?

Enterprise Regions are organized around statistically recognizable commutershed patterns, along with consideration of natural boundaries, road patterns, reasonable geographic sizes, and an assurance that each community within the province of Saskatchewan is serviced by one of the three Enterprise Regions in the North or the thirteen Enterprise Regions in the south.



The Enterprise Region program has been designed to allow regions themselves to determine not only how they will serve their respective regions, but how they will organize and govern themselves. Each Enterprise Region will be governed by a strong and effective board of directors that represents the diversity of membership along with a balanced mixture of skill sets.

Enterprise Region Boards are responsible for providing direct oversight of expenditures and to maintain appropriate staff and services to implement the business plan and multi-year strategic plan. A Chief Executive Officer will report to the board and will be responsible for the operations and activities of the Enterprise Region and its economic development staff.

It is important for the Enterprise Regions to assess and take action on the needs of businesses and key sectors within their respective regions. The program proposes that the actions taken in each region will follow four strategic directions.

- 1. Building Regional Economies:** Enterprise Regions are built around natural regional economies, which are essentially commutersheds (that suggest a level of economic integration occurring within the region itself) – the areas in which people live and/or travel to work, do business, and obtain goods and services. New relationships, new collaboration and new partnerships should be pursued, formed, and developed within these commutersheds to achieve and sustain economic growth. Development of regional capacity to generate new ideas to increase investment, resources, and businesses is essential.
- 2. Fostering a Culture of Enterprise and Innovation:** Enterprise and innovation are part of the foundation of any successful regional economic strategy. Successful regions have a business environment conducive to attracting, creating, retaining, and expanding business. Many regions seeking new ways to prosper will be best served by fostering an entrepreneurial climate and pro-business attitude to encourage local business start-ups, innovation, expansions and investment attraction. Enterprise Regions must be investment-ready and move from a reactive to a proactive mode to create opportunities.
- 3. Building on Competitive Advantages:** All regions must be able to identify, assess, improve or create advantages to maintain a competitive position in the face of global markets. An integrated economic, social and environmental approach will capitalize on a region's natural attributes to sustain and enhance regional wealth. Areas of competitive advantage include: innovation, human capital, financial capital, infrastructure, resources, business climate, marketing, and quality of life.

Determining the region's current economic state is essential in identifying the steps associated with building the ER's competitive advantage. Assessing the region's economic base and planning for economic growth is essential to understanding how the region is placed or could be placed in growth markets. The information gathered on the ER's economy should provide focus and direction to ER boards and staff when building regional strategies and initiatives, and encourage increased regional collaboration. Regional economic development requires an accurate and thorough understanding of the region's competitive advantages and the issues affecting development.

4. Engaging Leadership and Effective Regional Governance: To ensure that regional development and economic growth are maintained, new leaders within business, communities and organizations must be identified and developed. Enterprise Regions must engage leaders and encourage new ideas to effectively govern and coordinate the economic development of each region.

Enterprise Regions will carry out the following core functions:

- Develop and coordinate strategic plans supported by integrated business plans;
- Coordinate business and industry/sector development support on priority initiatives;
- Support the activities of organizations and communities consistent with the plan;
- Coordinate social and economic projects related to economic development; and,
- Promote public participation and community education related to regional economic development.

How Much Funding is Allocated to the Enterprise Region Program?

The Provincial Government has substantially increased its contribution to economic development in the North by investing up to \$1.1M this year (future allocations will depend on annual Provincial Government budget appropriations). The funding is allocated according to the population and size of the region, in addition to a base amount that all regions receive. Additional matching funds will also be available for each region.

Each approved Enterprise Region receives: \$100,000 in base funding, with up to an additional \$100,000 of matching funding, if local sources are found; plus \$3.25 per person; and \$1.164 per square km.

Regional Allocation ER Program Funding in the North

	<i>Boreal West</i>	<i>Churchill River</i>	<i>Athabasca</i>
Annual base funding	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
Population @ \$3.25	\$37,066	\$61,792	\$11,378
Area: km @ \$1.164	\$126,759	\$142,357	\$103,246
Matching funding	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
Total (Maximum)	\$363,825	\$404,149	\$314,624

What are the Next Steps for Enterprise Regions in the North?

Enterprise Region Boards are currently operating with Interim Boards derived from the Multi-stakeholder Working Group exercise that was used to form each region.

Each Interim Board is implementing their first year Operational Plan, as submitted March 2010 in their funding application, and approved by FNMR April 1, 2010.

Each region needs to recruit a CEO and support staff and work towards preparing for their first Annual General Meeting (AGM) to transition the Interim Board into the first elected board for the region. It is suggested that when the first AGMs are held, new board membership will be composed of at least one-third business interests; one-third local leadership (Municipal, First Nations and Métis); and one-third other key groups that support business (post-secondary training, chambers of commerce, financing, youth, transportation, associations, etc).

For More Information: Please visit our website at www.fnmr.gov.sk.ca. You may also contact Doug Howorko, Executive Director, Northern Programs and Policy, FNMR at (306) 798-5167, or by email at doug.howorko2@gov.sk.ca