



Summary of Proceedings: Export Development Canada's Sustainability Advisory Council Meeting

Date: April 16, 2026

ESG Advisory Council Members:

Janet Annesley, Former Chief Sustainability Officer, Kiwetinohk Energy Corp.

Dave Collyer, Former President, Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers

Judy Cotte, Head of ESG, Onex

Tomislav Ivancic, Global Advisor, Responsible Sourcing and Agricultural Supply Chains Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

From Export Development Canada (EDC):

Alison Nankivell, President and CEO

Julie Pottier, Senior Vice-President, Small Business and Partnerships

Miguel Simard, Senior Vice-President, Customer Experience and Chief Legal Officer

Todd Winterhalt, Senior Vice-President, International Markets, Public Affairs and Communications

Leah Gilbert Morris, Vice-President, Public Affairs and International & ECA Relations

Rachel Guthrie, Vice-President and Chief Sustainability Officer

Absent:

Karen Clarke-Whistler, Senior executive, business strategist, and environmental scientist

Fred Di Blasio, CEO and Managing Partner, Longhouse Capital Partners

External Guests from Mokwateh:

J.P. Gladu, Founder and Principal

Patrick Watson, Director, Economic Development

SESSION OVERVIEW

The April meeting of the Sustainability Advisory Council focused on EDC's role in advancing Indigenous economic participation and examining sustainability risks and opportunities in Canada's agri-food trade.

President and CEO Alison Nankivell opened the meeting, sharing top of mind issues for the organization:



- EDC's efforts over the past year have centered on advancing the Government of Canada's trade diversification agenda amid shifting geopolitical realities. EDC participated in Prime Minister Mark Carney's market visits to China, India and Japan, reinforcing the organization's role in strengthening commercial partnerships and opening doors for Canadian companies.
- As Canada enters a new phase of nation-building, with the federal government prioritizing major projects across energy, mining and infrastructure, EDC is exploring how its products, networks, and relationships can be leveraged more effectively to advance Indigenous economic participation.
- EDC's 2030 strategy targets six key sectors, among them agri-food – an area with strong potential for Indigenous ownership and participation – where Canada can build global leadership and EDC will deepen its expertise and partnerships.

Following the President's remarks, the conversation turned to the topic of advancing Indigenous economic participation. The Council heard from guest speaker J.P. Gladu, Founder and Principal of Mokwateh and member of the Indigenous Advisory Council for the Major Projects Office.

Key highlights from the discussion include:

- Indigenous economic participation has advanced significantly over the past 20 years and is expected to accelerate further over the next decade.
- Access to affordable capital remains a major barrier for Indigenous economic participation, driven by Indian Act constraints and limited intergenerational wealth. Federal and provincial loan guarantee programs are a key enabler of Indigenous equity participation, providing revenue streams for future generations.
- The success of projects depends on early Indigenous engagement and meaningful participation. Indigenous communities should play a central role in defining whether, how, and under what conditions development occurs on their lands and territories. This requires an approach that moves beyond consultation toward collaborative, long-term partnerships grounded in respect for Indigenous rights.
- Indigenous labour and leadership in northern communities remain significant and untapped pillars of Canada's economy.
- With respect to the agri-food sector, Indigenous Nations have deep interest and expertise throughout the value chain from research and innovation to accessing international markets, with deep connections to sovereignty, wellness and culture.
- In some cases, Indigenous opposition to some projects reflects differing world views, including a long term, seven-generation view of economic prosperity. Therefore, alignment on industrial development objectives will require genuine relationship building and new project governance models. In the majority of cases, early engagement, economic partnership and Indigenous ownership of environmental assessments and planning are key to strengthening due diligence processes and building durable relationships. Relationship-building and development collaboration cannot be viewed by Canadian business as separate and distinct.



The discussion then shifted to the agri-food sector, an integral part of EDC's corporate strategy and where Canada can build its global leadership. Council member Tomislav Ivančić - Lead Advisor, Responsible Sourcing and Agricultural Supply Chains, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations - shared his perspectives on the sustainability-driven changes that are set to impact agri-food trade in the next five years.

Key highlights from the discussion include:

- Climate impacts on agriculture are driving losses. Examples include floods, droughts, extreme heat, reducing yields, alongside soil degradation, and declining water quality. The economic impacts are significant: an estimated USD 3 trillion in losses linked to climate hazards.
- Social and labour impacts are equally material: the sector accounts for approximately 26% of the global workforce and relies on seasonal migrant workers and small-holder farmers, increasing labour and human rights risks.
- For Indigenous communities, agri-food priorities are often closely tied to food security, affordability and sovereignty, and the ability to sustain local and traditional food systems. Climate impacts, rising input costs, and supply chain disruptions can intensify existing barriers to affordable, reliable, and culturally appropriate food, underscoring the importance of incorporating Indigenous perspectives.
- Standards continue to evolve beyond food safety, organic and fair-trade certification toward multi-stakeholder and responsible sourcing frameworks focused on risk-based due diligence.
- Sustainability legislation is expanding globally, including measures addressing deforestation, child and forced labour. Regulations can drive improvements but also have an impact on trade flows as buyers must comply with regional laws.
- While large Canadian exporters are well-positioned to meet sustainability requirements, small and medium-sized businesses may need EDC's support in understanding and complying with supply chain requirements.
- In addition to priority markets such as Asia-Pacific and Europe, EDC should also pursue significant agri-food opportunities in South America and other emerging markets.

