

Information Sheet

The First Nations Data Governance Strategy – Pre-implementation Work with Regions



Context and purpose

Beginning in early 2021, FNIGC will work with regions to help prepare for the implementation of the First Nations Data Governance Strategy (the Strategy). As explained below, implementation will occur once *Data Champion team* funding is secured from the federal government.

The Strategy identified two priorities:

- Securing bridge funding for pre-implementation work in 2020-21; and
- Establishing First Nations Data Champions at the regional and national levels.

This information sheet provides FNIGC's regional partners and staff with key information on what pre-implementation includes:

- a) The status of the Strategy as of December 2020;
- b) Our priorities for *pre-implementation* work with regions, through Spring 2021;
- c) The proposed approach; and
- d) Communications materials that are available now, and those to be developed.

Background

- In 2016, the Assembly of First Nations Chiefs-in-Assembly adopted [Resolution #57](#), calling on the Government of Canada to fund the development of a national First Nations data governance strategy, including the establishment of fully functional Regional Information Governance Centres and data champion teams.
- Subsequently, [Budget 2018](#) provided:
 - \$2.5 million over three years to support the First Nations Information Governance Centre's design of a national data governance strategy and coordination of efforts to establish regional data governance centres.
- Due to its strategic importance and First Nations' collective state of readiness, FNIGC and its regional partners chose to deliver the Strategy in two years instead of three.
- First Nations engagement across regions included a national summit on data governance jointly hosted by FNIGC and the Alberta First Nations Information Governance Centre (AFNIGC) in February 2019.
- On March 31, 2020, FNIGC delivered the comprehensive report, [A First Nations Data Governance Strategy](#).
- The Strategy offers an unprecedented path for First Nations to achieve data sovereignty, a cornerstone for nation-rebuilding – which now calls the federal government to support its implementation.

Status (as of December 2020)

- Given the confidential nature of the federal budget process, FNIGC will not receive confirmation on whether or not funding for the Strategy will be provided in the upcoming federal Budget 2021, scheduled for the end of March 2021.
- To-date, however, encouraging and positive feedback on the Strategy has been consistently received from ISC officials.
- ISC released bridge funding in November 2020, approximately 2/3 of which is provisionally set aside to fund “pre-implementation” work with and within regions.
- This bridge funding was requested to support two main streams of pre-implementation work:
 - Stream 1: Develop a comprehensive *business case* with a detailed implementation plan to access funds should they be identified in Budget 2021. This includes scoping out and costing the core functions of fully functional information governance centers; and
 - Stream 2: Support regional capacity needs for pre-implementation work with FNIGC, including communication activities within regions.
- A note on stream 1: Even though FNIGC was not provided with a specific pathway or timeline to advance a funding proposal to ISC, during the period of April through October of 2020, FNIGC moved forward to identify generic core functions that information governance centers would need to be fully functioning. Preliminary high-level costing estimates were also sketched out – for each of these core functions. This document was shared with ISC officials.
- FNIGC also released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for external expertise to assist with defining and costing the Information Management/Information Technology (IM/IT) infrastructure required to support the data governance centers. Work with a selected bidder is expected to commence early in the new year.
- Under stream 2, FNIGC is preparing materials and plans to work with regions and support them in their communication and capacity needs.

Priority work – January through spring/summer 2020

Based on our current status, priority work for *pre-implementation* with and within regions over the coming months will be three-fold:

1. Provide regional partners with the materials they need to communicate and socialize the Strategy within their respective regions to keep stakeholders informed and engaged through existing networks and fora, to Spring 2021.
2. Support on-going conversations between FNIGC and regional partners to ensure that regional perspectives, inputs, and inquiries are addressed and can best inform the development of our *business case* (Stream 1).
3. FNIGC staff will complete a comprehensive *business case* that includes more detailed costing estimates and a step-by-step implementation plan in order to be ready to access funds should they be identified in the next federal budget (expected March 2021).

Proposed approach

- Pre-implementation work with regions will be ongoing, starting in January 2021.
- The Strategy must be communicated and socialized within regions, via the appropriate regional processes, regardless of whether implementation funds are included in Budget 2021 (expected March 2021).
 - If funds are announced in the next Budget, we will have advanced pre-implementation work sufficiently to ensure we can plan a transition from pre-implementation work to implementation, ultimately securing access to the funds identified in Budget 2021.
 - If funds are not in Budget 2021, the necessary pre-implementation work will continue, with a focus on new strategies that will be developed to ensure funding for implementation is secured at a later date.
- Regionally-appointed Directors on FNIGC's Board of Directors will act as conduits for FNIGC staff to engage with the appropriate regional partners.
- The Strategy will need to be reviewed, questions and concerns will be addressed, and discussion will establish expectations and best approaches for moving forward with pre-implementation activities in each region.
- A particular focus of these discussions will be on key inputs that will be needed from regions that will be used to inform the *business case* FNIGC will develop, as well as on how to collect this information.

Regions will be invited to submit a funding proposal to access communication and capacity supports needed to complete pre-implementation related work that will need to include the identification of the budget requirements needed to coordinate meetings and ensure the appropriate parties are engaged, which can include compensation for peoples' time.

- Meeting participants will be asked to help FNIGC better understand
 - a. the regional data landscape (i.e., who the key regional First Nations organizations, data users and data holders are);
 - b. the priorities, opportunities, and challenges given the region's current state and unique situation with respect to data (specifically, gap closure priorities); and
 - c. the data governance, capacities, and infrastructures currently in place in each region that could be leveraged (including physical facilities and infrastructures, IM/IT, HR, and other)
- This process will likely require organizing virtual sessions with targeted individuals in each region based on their roles and specific knowledge (such as individuals working in a Provincial Territorial Organization and/or a First Nations-led service delivery organization). Advice from regional representatives on this matter, including connecting FNIGC staff with key contacts in the region will be instrumental.

- These conversations will be as organic and fluid as possible and take place in a safe virtual environment; they will be guided by a set of prepared questions shared with participants in advance to ensure everyone can contribute meaningfully and FNIGC is able to capture and use the input to inform the *business case*.

Communication materials

- The implementation of data champion teams as first step to realizing fully functioning information governance centres is a significantly complex and ground-breaking undertaking.
- Effective, consistent communication will be required at the national and regional levels and will include the development of video(s), poster(s), placemat(s), presentation(s), and webinars to help convey key messages effectively at the right times, and to the right audiences.
- While some communication materials will be developed as progress is made (subject to available funding), some evergreen (draft) materials are available now. They are attached in the appendices to this document and will be discussed at the first meetings with regions in early 2021.
 - **Appendix A:** The Strategy's story (Q&As)
 - **Appendix B:** The FNGDS's principles and strategic pillars (diagram)
 - **Appendix C:** Generic core functions of functional information governance centers (diagram)
 - **Appendix D:** Visual on the phased approach to implementation (diagram)
 - **Appendix E:** Visual on key timelines at a glance (diagram)

Next steps

FNIGC will work with regional partners to schedule the first series of virtual meetings in **January 2021** with each regional designated representative.

For any questions or suggestions, please contact
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APPENDIX A: The Strategy's story

To complement the background presented in this information sheet, below are some Q&As with messages that can be used for communication purposes.



Where does this national strategy come from?

- The Strategy responds to decades of tireless advocacy by First Nations leadership and addresses numerous recommendations and calls to action (see section 2 of the [Strategy](#), the Case for Change, for more details).
- In 2016, the Chiefs-in-Assembly adopted [Resolution #57](#), calling the Government of Canada to fund the development of a national First Nations data governance strategy, including the establishment of fully functional Regional Information Governance Centres and data champion teams.
- Subsequently, [Budget 2018](#) provided funding to FNIGC
 - \$2.5 million over three years to support the First Nations Information Governance Centre's design of a national data governance strategy and coordination of efforts to establish regional data governance centres.

Why FNIGC?

- The First Nations Information Governance Center is a national, not-for-profit corporation operating with a special mandate from the Assembly of First Nations Chiefs-in-Assembly.
- FNIGC is best known for its suite of national surveys and for promoting the OCAP® principles (ownership, control, access, and possession).
- For almost 25 years, in partnership with its 10 regional partners, FNIGC has helped First Nations revitalize traditional ways of knowing, while addressing the gaps in data and information.
- FNIGC's vision is *that every First Nation will achieve data sovereignty in alignment with its distinct world view.*
- Leveraging federal Budget 2018 funding, FNIGC conducted an extensive engagement with regional partners to develop the Strategy.
- In the spring of 2020, FNIGC released the [Strategy](#), achieving another significant milestone.

What is First Nations data sovereignty?

- First Nations Data sovereignty is the inherent right of First Nations to exercise authority over First Nations information.
- It is the ultimate expression of the First Nations principles of Ownership, Control, Access, Possession – more commonly known by the acronym OCAP®.
- The OCAP® principles are a set of standards that establish how First Nations data should be collected, protected, used, and shared.

- These principles changed the data landscape forever, setting the stage for First Nations to begin harnessing the power of their data.

What is the issue with First Nations data?

- For decades, most First Nations information has been collected by others, including information related to programs and services -- which have been designed for us and delivered to us.
- Our quality of life has been measured by standards and statistics based solely on a Western understanding of what health and well being are.
- In addition, finding, accessing, and using our data held by other governments or organizations represents huge challenges for our communities, notwithstanding the issues with data quality.
- There is virtually no First Nations-led centralized data and statistical agency or hub in any region with the ability or expertise to work meaningfully with the information collected.
- This situation is not acceptable. Unlike many other governments in the world, our communities, nations, and leadership do not have the data they need, to govern effectively and advance self-determination through data sovereignty.

What is the Strategy about?

- The Strategy offers a path for First Nations to achieve data sovereignty, the cornerstone of nation-re-building.
- The Strategy is anchored in community-driven and nation-based collaborative principles.
- It is about nations choosing to come together to create fully functional information governance centres in their regions to oversee and provide the comprehensive suite of data stewardship, statistical, and analytical services they need to control and unleash the power of all their data.
 - These regional information governance centres will also continue to come together to collectively and collaboratively do work that is best, or necessarily, done at a national level, as regional partners currently do in the work of the FNIGC.
- Through the Strategy, First Nations, their governments, and service delivery organizations, will all be empowered by pooling the modern data infrastructure capacities they all need through a shared service network of regional centers.
- In choosing to come together through the implementation of this Strategy, nations will collectively achieve what would be impossible independently, ensuring that no community or nation is left behind.

What data are we talking about?

- First Nations data includes all data about our peoples and that impact our lives – at the individual and collective levels.
- It also includes survey data, administrative data, and all other data generated from or by us.

What is the power of data?

- Data is essential for effective planning and decision making; it is the cornerstone of effective governance, self-determination, and nation-rebuilding.
- As we can see around us every day, data has the power to change lives, economies, environments, countries, and peoples.
- We are living in a rapidly evolving digital revolution; data is everywhere, and it is growing exponentially.
- With new technologies, new ideas are being created, many of which we did not know existed until now.
- Data can create solutions that we never imagined opening path ways to new possibilities.
- We must ensure First Nations are not left behind the digital revolution – and not create another gap.

What will these data centers do?

- The services that these new centres will offer will go far beyond what is available through FNIGC's current survey program.
- Each center will have core functions that are typically found in a statistical office.
- The **first core function** will be to equip each center with a robust governance structure to ensure each center delivers its mandate as determined by rights holders and remains a trusted source of information.
- The **second core function** will be about data collection. This is about inventorying where our data is, who holds it, what the quality is, and how best to access or acquire it.
- Once we have the data we need, the next step will be to “let them speak” and optimize their value. This is the role of the **third core function** dealing with data discovery, analysis, and research – to give meaning and proper context to our data, as well as produce new measures and evidence to support leadership.
- But producing analyses is only useful if the information can get into the hands of those who need it most. That will be role of the **fourth core function**: disseminating findings, responding to public inquiries, and providing data literacy education and training.

- The **fifth core function** will be to provide access to data hubs, which will securely store shared data, in every region. They will allow our people and partners to conduct customized discoveries in a manner that is consistent with OCAP® and that respects confidentiality and privacy.
- To support all the core functions, there will be a need to develop common data standards and methods where required to support data aggregation, comparison, and trend analysis. This will be the role of the **sixth core function**, primarily enabled by the national institution through the collaboration of each region.

How will it work?

- We will begin by establishing Data Champion Teams in every region and at the national level.
- At the very beginning, these teams will act as project offices, each equipped with the resources and infrastructures needed to ensure they can implement the Strategy.
- A first key priority for those teams will be to engage the Nations in their respective regions, through the appropriate regional processes, with the goal to establish new and independent information governance bodies in each region.
- Supported by their Data Champion Teams, these new governance bodies will then oversee the establishment of fully functional Information Governance Centers in their region with all the core functions required to support their data priority needs as directed by right holders.
- Regional centres will have two focuses:
 - Serving the unique information needs of the nations in the region at a variety of levels; and
 - As members of a network of regional centers, carrying out collaborative, collective work that is best, and/or necessarily done at a national level.
- At the national level, the network will orchestrate the development of First Nations data policies, standards and methods – ensuring consistency with OCAP® principles as well as standardizing data, systems and processes where needed in support of collaborative, collective work among regional centers, along with federal and provincial partners.

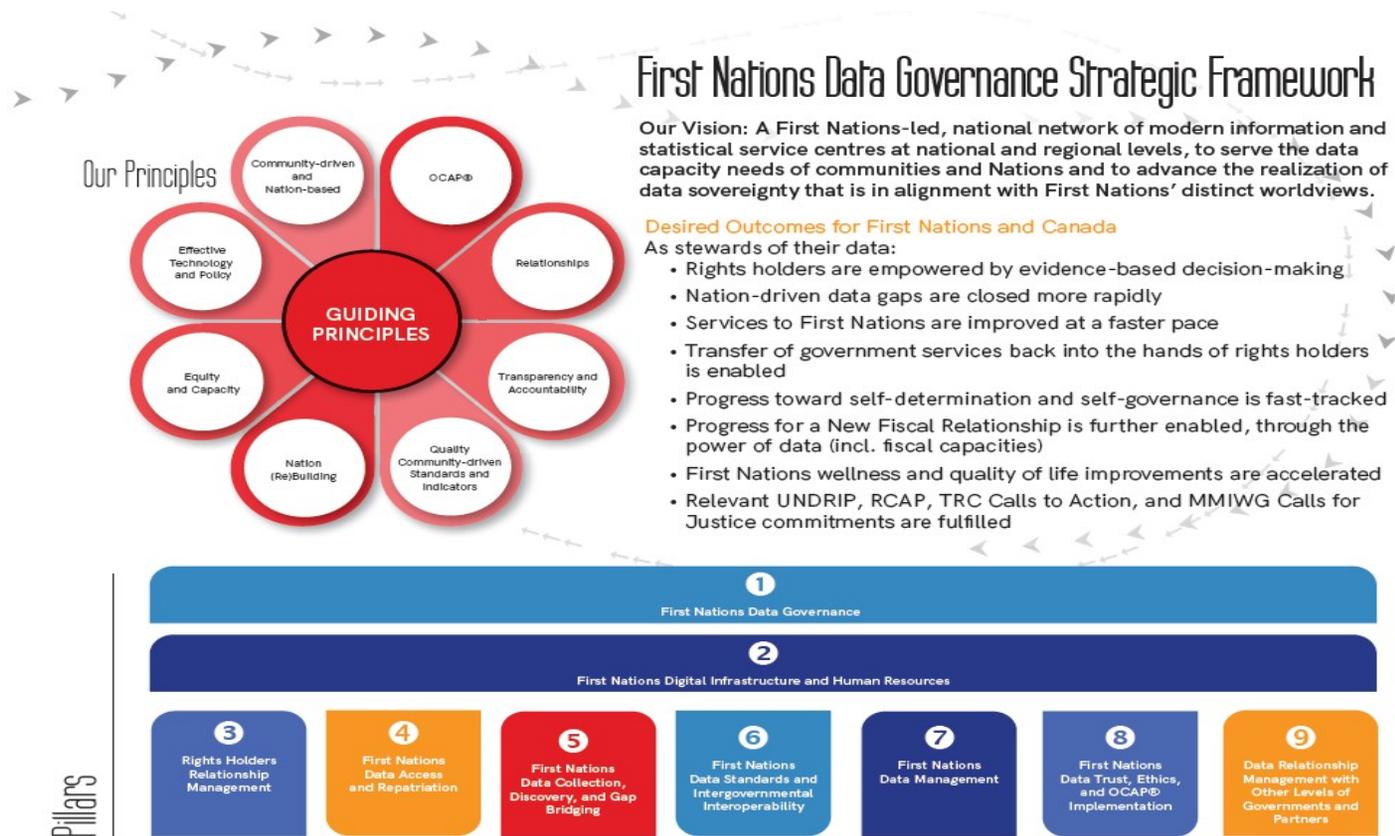
When will all this happen?

- Building institutions from the ground up will take years, and will evolve over time.
- To be successful, implementation will have to be carefully planned, with manageable steps.
- Milestones will be set in order to move from one phase to the next.
- This approach will create the space and time needed within regions to plan, experiment, learn, adapt and scale efforts appropriately.

- Regions will advance at their own pace based on their unique priorities and capacity building requirements.

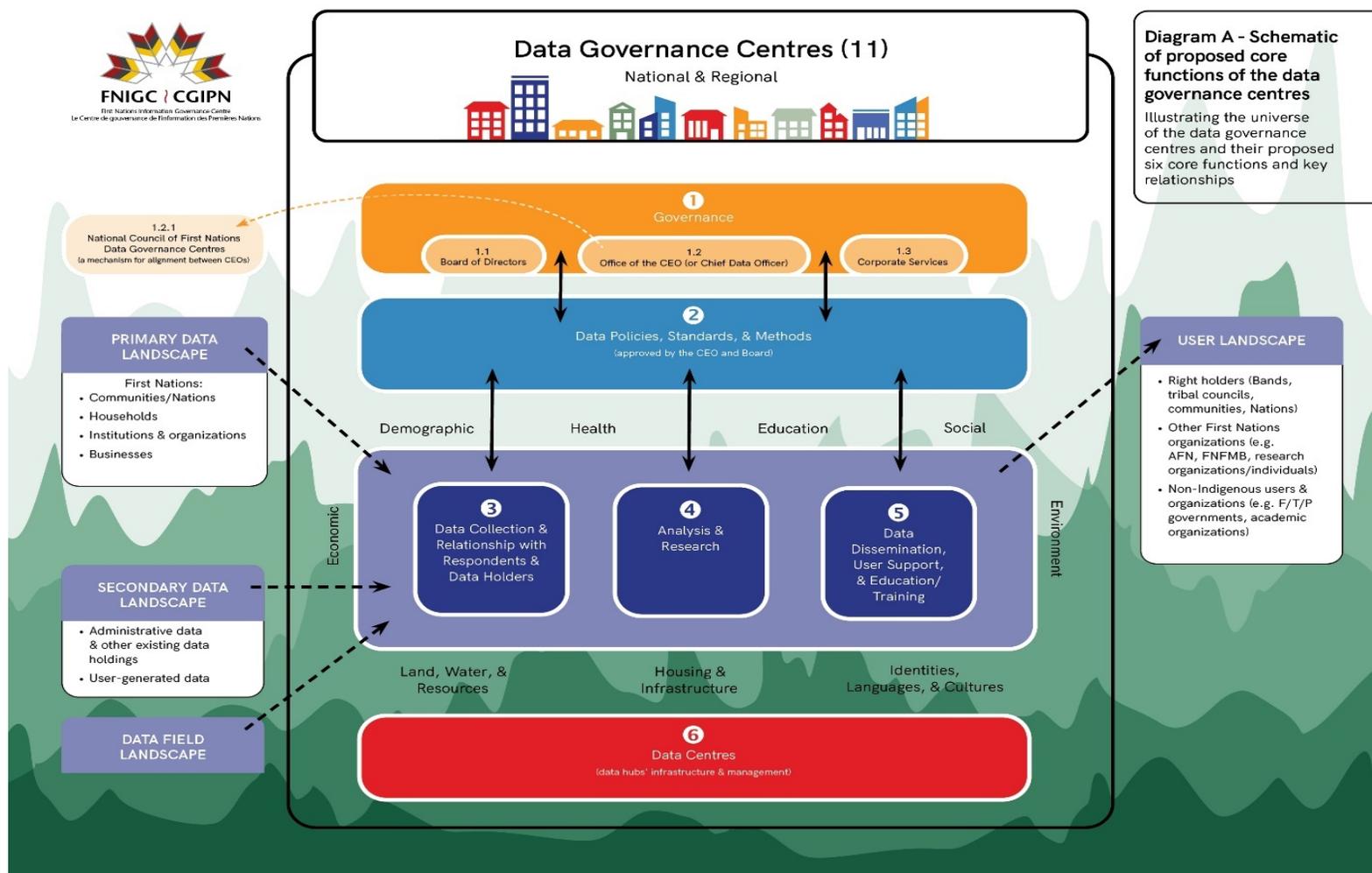
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APPENDIX B: FNDGS Principles and Strategic Pillars (Strategic Framework)

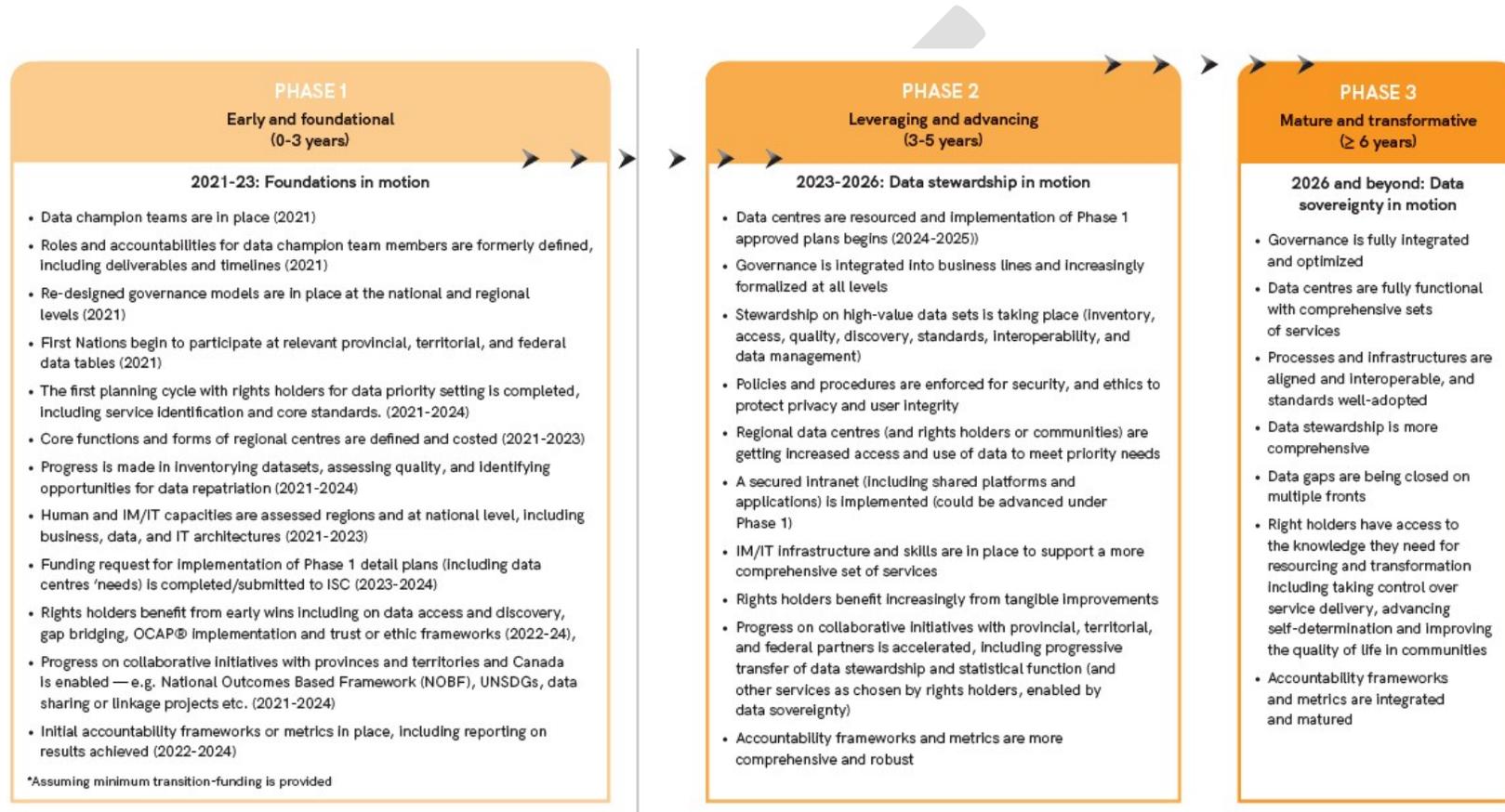


APPENDIX C: Data Centre Generic Core Functions

Due to the unprecedented nature of the work, FNIGC's staff leveraged the [United Nations' Handbook of Statistical Organizations](#) to define the generic core functions for fully functioning information centres across Canada. These generic core functions are presented with a brief description in **Appendix A**.



APPENDIX D: The implementation phases



APPENDIX E: Timeline at a Glance

