[00:00:00] **Margareta Dovga...:** All right. I'm gonna just charge on in there and get into our introductions. I'm Margareta Dovgal. I've been your moderator on day two of the Indigenous Partnerships Success Showcase. We're gonna be getting into our next panel here, and I'm so excited to bring it to you with the support of digital sponsor, TELUS. They've been enabling our entire virtual platform this year. It's Vidflex by Wordplay.

And we're now heading into a panel on the opportunity to build infrastructure for Indigenous communities, and that's going to advance socioeconomic wellbeing and prosperity, things that I think we can all agree are pretty essential.

Please note that Slido will be operational all session, and we encourage you to ask questions of our accomplished panelists well in advance. please get those in just so I have a sense of how many questions are coming up.

I'm now gonna start just by introducing who's going to be joining us. The first is Shazia Zeb-Sobani. She's an accomplished multilingual- multilingual, my lingua is not functioning this, this afternoon, as you can tell. [laughs] She's an accomplished senior executive in a highly transformative, multi-stakeholder complex technology driven projects. In her 16 years with TELUS, she has held a variety of leadership roles across wireline and wireless businesses. And in her current role as Vice President Customer Network Implementation, she's focused on accelerating fast and high quality broadband connectivity to boost community-based economic and social outcomes.

Our next panelist is James Delorme, an Indigenous digital disruptor leader and solopreneur. That's a word I haven't seen much before. The former chief of the Klahoose First Nation, he now serves as president of Indigeknow, spending his time in technological innovation and impactful projects with companies like Hypercharge Networks, Briteweb Digital Marketing, NWT FNIGC and many more.

Next will be Ruby Littlechild who is a Plains Cree, and from Maskwacis, Alberty. She previously worked for the government of Alberta and helped launch the Indigenous, Alberta Indigenous Construction Career Center at Norquest College. She's currently the National Director of Indigenous Relations for SNC-Lavalin, and also a board member for Alberta's Indigenous Opportunities corporation.

The former Chief of Kitselas First Nation, Joe Bevan, saw the successful negotiations of an impact benefit agreement and revenue sharing agreement with Coastal GasLink, and the province of BC. He has over 30 years of experience in accounting and finance, business development and governance, and has worked with various First Nations and First Nations organizations.

without further ado, I'm gonna walk on over there, and we're gonna start this panel.

[00:02:56] **Margareta Dovga...:** All right. Thank you for joining us. And for those just joining us, make sure you close the door on your way in. Good stuff.

we're just gonna start with a round of introductions to all of our panelists. You've heard their bios, but what you really wanna know is who are they, where do they come from, what is the lens with which they approach their careers, and what do they have to say more broadly on this topic of connectivity. we're just gonna start with Joe Bevan.

[00:03:22] **Joe Bevan:** Hey, good afternoon, everyone. I always say it's a tough spot to come in right after lunch on a Friday afternoon at the end of the conference. it's gonna be a tough one, right? anyways, yeah, I usually introduce myself as [Indigenous language 00:03:40] aka Joe Bevan. that's my Indian name, which means talks all night. But we think we only got an hour, so I won't be talking all night.

part of the, part Nisga'a, part Tsimshian from the Northwest Coast to BC, my, house or wilp as we call it is [Indigenous language 00:04:02]. part of the Raven Clan, from the village of [Indigenous language 00:04:07]. but I was raised on my father's reserve, Kitselas First Nation, which is Tsimshian.

and my career has been mainly in finance, business development, governance, financial governance. And, yeah, I was,went in as a chief... o- okay. the funny story, I moved to the Northwest Coast and I said two things I'm not gonna get involved in the logging industry and politics. I spent nine years at a logging company [laughs] as the controller of the log, of a small logging company, and, I spent the last 12 years, as either a counselor or a chief, for my nation. And it was funny because I said those are two things I'm not gonna do, and I end up doing them because I saw a need and I saw that it needed to be done. and I jumped in.

[00:04:42] **Joe Bevan:** One thing I forgot to mention is- is also is my father is hereditary chief of the Killerwhale clan. And, between the chiefs, bo- on both sides of my family have given me a lot of great guidance and told me to, follow with my heart at all times. And if you can't follow with your heart, then don't do it. that has led me here today and to speak to you about, some of the great opportunities that lie with First Nations.

And I think,thank, thanks, thanks to everyone for- for setting up this venue and giving us an opportunity to show you what the First Nations are not just having to offer, but also, how we could work together. and we look forward to that. Thank you.

[00:05:21] **Margareta Dovga...:** Thanks so much, Joe. I really appreciate it. Next, we're gonna go to James Delorme for his thoughts.

[00:05:29] **James Delorme:** Hello, everyone. [Indigenous language] And what I said was: I feel good, da-da-da-da-da-da. And I do, actually. And that's in the, the Klahoose [Indigenous language 00:06:06] language. And what I said was, I feel good, and I said that, we come from this place, and I also said that we're all related. And- and we are all related in the human society that we lived in, and, we're all related up here because we're- we're on the same path together.

I wanna also recognize, the elders and our youth and, knowledge keepers that have brought us to this point today, which is so crucial to our betterment and the way we- we are in this world and, recognize the territory that we're in, shared territories of the [Indigenous language 00:06:41] peoples.

so my name is James Delorme, and I'm a member of Klahoose First Nation. Claim to fame, I was Chief of Klahoose for six years in that leadership role. And, but, where I like to talk about my passions is the work that I do in Internet connectivity and, Internet of Things. back in the '90s, mid '90s, I made a realization how important technology was for Indigenous communities, and, so it was... I took it upon my myself, and I said, "James, you need to be,a proponent of getting our people more adapted to the digital world, the digital spaces." And ever since that day, I've been working closer and closer to make that happen. the critical piece is that we're all in this room here together doing this great discussion.

I just... Another thing is I need to represent, and- and as Joe, Chief Joe, clearly did in his speech is, talking about our family. I'm not originally from Klahoose. it's a story of innovation. I originate from... My- my dad is from Cowessess First Nation. It's in Treaty 4 in Saskatchewan. And, so my mosom, my grandfather's from Cowessess, and my grandfather or grandmother, my kôhkom, is from Kahkewistahaw right nextdoor. but then the, [laughs]... [Indigenous language 00:08:00]. but also my, the settler side of my family, they're Scottish and Icelandic. So I- I, generally say that I'm a- a Indigenous Viking and, a- and... but I love that role because that's- that's, that's what I do, yeah.

[00:07:35] **James Delorme:** Anyways, it's really wonderful to be here, today. And I'm just so glad to be joining with this wonderful team who are amazing innovators.

thank you. [Indigenous language 00:08:24]

[00:07:44] **Margareta Dovga...:** That's the highest praise we could get. Amazing innovators, I like it. Next up, we'll have Ruby Littlechild with her intro.

[00:07:51] **Ruby Littlechil...:** [Indigenous language 00:08:33] My name is Ruby Littlechild. I'm from Maskwacis First Nation in, Alberta. I'm Plains Cree. My bloodline is, Wandering Spirit. In 1876, Big... we agreed to Treaty Number Six and Big Bear signed on our behalf. And he had a spiritual warrior, his name was Wandering Spirit, and that's my bloodline. I'm a sun dancer. I'm a... I love the sweat lodge. I love doing ceremony.

I also value higher education. I have an MBA and, in M.Ed. I tend... And I'm... I've been working in the engineering world for the past 13 years, and, engineers love credentials, [laughs] so I got all this education. but it's been a, journey for me and I'm... I love the company I'm working for, the leadership, and the work that they're allowing me to do. Thank you.

[00:08:49] **Margareta Dovga...:** There's nothing like that creative freedom, and, I know all too myself what it's like to have it and to have supportive leadership. And, last but not least, we're gonna get a direction from Shazia Zeb-Sobani.

[00:09:00] **Shazia Zeb-Soba...:** Thank you. Good afternoon, everyone. First of all, I would like to extend my thanks for giving me the space with this distinguished, panel. I feel very humble sitting amongst these. Then I would like to thank Charlene Aleck who started us so well in the morning. And I would like to acknowledge that I come from the traditional territories of region... of the people of region... people of Treaty 7, in Alberta, also known as Calgary. I live and work there.

I'm personally very passionate about reconciliation, and there are a couple of reasons for that. One, I come from a farming family. My connection to the land is a living experience. I have done it for the first 35 years of my life before I moved to Canada. The second reason why I'm so passionate about it is that I'm an immigrant. And being an immigrant, I have experienced the challenges of identity and resettlement personally. And on that topic, I would like to actually mention that I am so grateful to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for their action, calls to action number 93 and number 4 where, in number 93, they call out that how we need to have inclusive Indigenous history in newcomer's package and also in citizenship test, which I did not get an opportunity to actually do that. And then the number 94, which, calls upon the federal government to modify the oath for the citizenship so that,where we call out the people to abide by the laws of Canada, we also remind them to respect the treaties that were signed with Indigenous people.

at TELUS we have been on a journey. We have been very fortunate that we've been working and closely engaging and building relationship with Indigenous communities and Indigenous people. However, our engagement was very limited to, building the relationship to extend the network connectivity. About 18 months ago, we realized that there is a bigger opportunity for us to take on the accountability for the reconciliation and get into deeper relationship building with Indigenous communities and Indigenous people to understand their unique needs around economic, social challenges, and governance, and then work with them through create solutions.

[00:11:26] **Shazia Zeb-Soba...:** That's when we started to engage with elders, Indigenous leaders, Indigenous organizations, TELUS Indigenous team members to hear to the Indigenous voices and to learn from Indigenous experience and to be guided by them to come up with what we call our reconciliation action plan, which is our commitment to work closely with Indigenous communities to find solutions that are important for them, which brought us to a very important milestone last year in November when we went to publicly making a commitment towards that reconciliation action plan and binded us by 15 big commitments that we will deliver by 2026, that stand on four key pillars: first of all, of course, connectivity, that is the baseline; then is driving economic reconciliation; then working with communities to find right solution outcomes for the communities; and then creating awareness around Indigenous history and Indigenous culture.

Once again, thank you very much for inviting me here and giving me an opportunity to be part of this very important conversation, which I hope will lead to some tangible actions.

[00:12:44] **Margareta Dovga...:** it's- it's a good opportunity actually just to appreciate, the companies who are taking that commitment to heart. TELUS, of course, is one of them leading in the field. And,it's moving very quickly. 18 months, ago is, very recently and also very long time ago, depending on how quickly you move and the resources that you leverage.

But, I- I felt really connected to what Shazia said where we're both settlers. my family came from Eastern Europe, Hungary, Ukraine, Russia, just before I was born. And, they came to this place in Vancouver. They were drawn to it for reasons they couldn't understand. All I've ever known being born here is this place but, I know that my ancestors aren't from here. I'm a little bit displaced and disconnected myself. but at the same time, my heart sings when I look at the North Shore Mountains. It's always been like that. I've- I've traveled. I went abroad for my education for a year and, I've always felt this completely inexplicable pull to come back here and to be a part of this space. But I also know, again, I'm a settler here and, I really appreciate that, everyone collectively in this room is here together on this journey of reconciliation.

And I just wanted to give you that a little bit of context about who I am because I think it's really relevant, to the first question we're going to discuss, which is about urban Canadians and their perspectives. Many of the people who are tuning in, do live in cities, they may have fairly limited experiences outside of them, particularly in Indigenous communities. Others are joining us from very far away. they're in a place that, may have had, or continue to have connect- connection difficulties. They may have traveled from one of those places. but it's clear that there continuing to be serious gaps in understanding that persist. And I wanted to just ask this phenomenal panel gathered here today, what they wished that Canadians living in cities really understood? What they wished as we were chatting, just before this panel at lunch about newcomers who are totally new to what is indigeneity if they come from a place where that's not a concept that's well understood. What they should understand in order to meaningfully engage in this journey? We'll start with Ruby for the answers.

[00:14:51] **Ruby Littlechil...:** What I wish? I think the prevalent poverty where I'm from. I come from a Cree-Maskwacis background, in Alberta. We have... we're not near a city, so our... the four nations, they're along Highway 2 between Edmonton and Calgary, but there's no economy. It's the poverty. I think that's what I always... I- I'm always constantly educating my colleagues on the prevalent poverty in our communities, the lack of connectivity. Once we drive into the- the res, we... our- our phones stop working, our battery dies 'cause of the lack of, connectivity. The water... My- my mother, her home, her... my family, their teeth are bad because of, the water. The water's yellow, it's not drinkable. the roads are horrible. This is, Alberta. I think that's what, I'd like... I always would like mainstream to know that there's a... And it's an untapped market and it's the last frontier for infrastructure development, but we... it has to be approached in a good way.

[00:15:59] **Margareta Dovga...:** That's really well put. And no, just- just to underscore that a little bit if- if I may here. my mother was born in Eastern Ukraine and, that's a place where there's potholes this big... for those that can see that... on the roads. it's a place where water comes on for two hours in the morning and two hours at night. It's also one of the poorest countries in Europe.

we live in Canada. lx We live in a country that is incredibly privileged, has a phenomenal resource base, and an economic foundation for prosperity and shared success. And what Ruby's describing is the reality that too many people in this country face.

[00:16:35] **Margareta Dovga...:** At this point, I think I'll pass it to Joe for his answer.

[00:16:40] **Joe Bevan:** Thanks, Margareta. Thanks, Margareta.

we've been fortunate that,Kitselas is bordering on the city of Terrace and the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine. we've had a really good relationship with them, going back, I don't know, 30, 40 years. it hasn't really- real- really been terrible for us. but there are challenges, of course, extreme poverty, and, of course, not being included in the economy. That not being included in the economy really hurts because it- it doesn't resonate well for the people whose resources and land that you are using and, land that you're on. So that,being excluded, was really tough for- for our people considering, what our history was, w- which was, we were rulers of the land, and to be taken back to a- a point of, "No, you can't, y- you can't continue doing what you used to do."

[00:17:33] **Joe Bevan:** And what I mean by that, for Kitselas, we were right at a pinch point on the Skeena River, and we were toll collectors. And, so anybody wanted to trade up or down the river, they would have to pay us a toll. when the Grand Trunk Railway started coming through, we went to stop them. We didn't want them coming through. they had to send, gunships up to stop us,and told us we couldn't continue on with our way of life and, creating and collecting tolls the way we used to, which was very unfortunate,and, and- and stopped our way of life, the way we knew it.

And, yeah. Could you imagine how de- debilitating that would be if I said to you, "Yeah, you can't work anymore. No, this is now mine, and I'm gonna take it over. See you?" "What's gonna happen to me? How am I gonna feed myself?" that doesn't matter to me. I don't care." that's a tough hill to swallow for anyone. For anyone in this room, it would be a tough pill to swallow.

So when- when you're faced with that, what do you do? How do you do it? They're way more powerfully than you. You've just been decimated by smallpox. How do you fight back? What do you do? our- our motto is to just keep, rebuild ourselves and, yeah, and then to start making friends because, we knew that we couldn't do it alone. And we started down that journey of partnerships and, "Hey, what it would be like to actually work with, the [Indigenous language 00:20:35] or the White people?" And it- it started to really turn for us in the '90. And then by the 2000, yeah, we started making some really good partnerships. And, and then lo and behold, an LNG opportunity came along. And we- we had, jumped on it, and started in with negotiations, and- and, got us to a point where we are today.

that was a long road. and- and,But- but what I was always reminded by my father was, "Don't forget your roots. Don't forget what's important. It's great that you're pursuing these things, but don't burn the planet down in your process." Wow. That- that floored me when he said that to me. And when I... it's funny, when we go to the fishing grounds, and I go with him, he always tells me, "Leave your phone in the truck, please. Don't take it with you." [laughs] And, yeah, and he- he's right. it's, it's- it's great advice, to get back to the land and realize where you're from, and this is how your ancestors once lived. yeah, there's- there's been a lot of growth opportunities, in- in the last few years, but we're not, we're- we're fortunate. I feel very fortunate. And I, I wish that all my Aboriginal brothers and sisters all have the same opportunities that we did, but they don't. what are we doing to bring them along as well? We have to keep that in mind.

yeah, that's my answer. Thanks.

[00:20:13] **Margareta Dovga...:** That was a very thoughtful answer. Thank you so much, Joe. Next up, James.

[00:20:19] **James Delorme:** Yeah, that- that's a interesting question. and I'm gonna approach it from the, technology space and technology companies. And, because I know that, my own experiences, the- the companies I work with digital media companies,web developers, you name it, software as a service, companies in Canada, companies in the US, global companies,they- they all have that dream, that goal to- to do, support, the technology that they're- they're working with, to scale it up, to build it up as a business, to see it as, something that's gonna change, social impact, There's- there's a lot of great things that are going on in the world and are changing our lives through technology.

But the one key thing that I- I wanna see happen more is, as we work with these, industries and these sectors that they understand the Indigenous lens. And what I mean by that is that we're- we're not linear. we think more in broader sense, and we think less in silos and more in, partnerships and unique situations. And when industry starts to look at that in that lens, then you start to see the partnerships and the opportunities that lay in front of you. And- and they're huge. They're massive. And we're lucky because the folks that... up here know what those experiences are because they've seen them firsthand.

And, so to answer the question, it's to have that sector become more, take that... take on that role as being an ally, as being a supporter of the Indigenous lens, and- and getting more of us in... to do that work. And it's starting to happen. I gotta give kudos to TELUS, and obviously SNC-Lavalin, because they're investing. They're- they're take- not just the words, but they're actually taking the revenue and they're putting that into that effort. And so that's what answers that question is what- what would be my request or what I want to see, and that's for more private companies to invest out those dollars, time, and energy into learning more about that Indigenous lens. So thank you. [inaudible 00:24:26].

[00:22:25] **Margareta Dovga...:** It's a great answer. It's very meta as well. we're... I think on some level, some of us have arrived to that conclusion. You- you need to be a part of that understanding. You need to take off that lens and use it, as a way to filter what you learn and the way you engage with- with others in the world. But, many of us are just in the process of learning many things simultaneously. I've- I've often felt this, this moment of things just clicking into place. And I think, from my experiences working with Indigenous communities, both for this event and, elsewhere, in the work that, resource work, society, and I have done, there's been moments where I've just felt it. Just, there was like- like a snap and, suddenly something had really landed. And that's the perspective of I'll encourage everyone to just speed themselves up and, hopefully embracing, but, it's not just the Western, the colonial perspective that we need to be a part of. It's this- this broader piece.

and I think on this note, how do we apply that lens to success? How do we turn it into good practice, into things that actually make a meaningful impact for communities that have been systematically left behind? that's gonna be our next question. I'd love to hear from Ruby, from Joe, James, and Shazia in their work, and they have a lot more subject matter expertise than I do, so I'm definitely gonna be learning as well, what are examples of successful partnerships? How have they functioned, and how are they helping Indigenous communities build needed infrastructure?

[00:23:48] **Margareta Dovga...:** We're gonna start in the answer with Ruby.

[00:23:51] **Ruby Littlechil...:** two weeks ago, I was, a newly appointed board member for the Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation. And we're backing big capital projects for Indigenous communities in Alberta. Our motto is partners in prosperity. And in my work as national director seeing, how First Nations are treated across Canada, I find I'm really proud of this board. I wanted to be... I applied, I wanted to be on it because I- I saw it was leading edge where the province is stepping up in closing the infrastructure gap. I don't wanna call it offloading. I just wanna call it- it as a, it- it's a... it makes good business sense to invest in First Nations people, and I'm really proud of the government level for the... for that.

[00:24:39] **Margareta Dovga...:** That's well-put. No, perhaps to anyone who's taking the leap here need to stop talking about it, and you actually need to do. Next, we'll hear from Joe.

[00:24:47] **Joe Bevan:** Thank you. we have a lot of great, partnerships, that I'm very proud of and that Kitselas had the,the foresight to- to pursue. One of the biggest ones that we had done was- was the, relationship that we had with the city of Terrace. And we had signed a protocol agreement to work together instead of opposing one another. Even though they were on our traditional territory, we said, "Let's develop it together." we signed a protocol agreement and we- we developed the, Skeena industrial lens right beside the airport up in Terrace.

that brought me to China. I went to China twice with, with the, folks in,the mayor and- and, his- his, the- the counselors. And it was a very interesting trip to- to go to a foreign land and- and to see how things are done in a communist country. And that really opened my eyes to, wow, how lucky we... and how fortunate we are to live in Canada and to have those freedoms.

another great partnership that we've, put together was, having one with the regional district. that- that was another great, y- I guess it's- it's at its small beginnings but they- they were really wanting to change some of the names, going out on the highways and- and, one of, one of the ones was, Indigenous language 00:28:17] Ellis Lake, which is, w- which we pronounce [Indigenous language 00:28:20], and they were saying, "Joe, how- how could we go about changing that?" And I said,why don't you put [Indigenous language 00:28:26] our name? It's a Timiskaming name which means fresh- freshwater clams, and, put- put the English name underneath it?" And they thought, "Oh, yeah, okay. We never thought about that."

we have a lot of great relationships with,with- with some of the LNG industry folks. and- and we never thought we would ever have it,they wanted to cross through our territory, and we were like, "Wow, okay, what can we do about this?" we spoke with some of our elders and some of our people, and they said, if you think about it, we used to be at toll collectors. Let's collect our tolls. This is a modern day toll." And I thought, "Wow, thank you for that." And, what we ended up doing after that was- was educating the folks on what it meant, we did an LNG 101, 201, 301, and it really explained what this, what was going on. We hired Aboriginal consultants to come in and work with us, and to give those presentations.

[00:26:49] **Joe Bevan:** And once we upped the education side and- and the First Nations knew, it really made that, discussion of, do we sign an, an IBA with the... do we sign an IBA with LNG Canada and Coastal Gaslink or PGRT and- and the, Lelu Island, facility. And, the- the answer was yes. And- and, and you never... we never would've gotten there had we not taken a step back and- and actually talked to our elders and said, what can we do?" And I really enjoyed that- that story because, I- I was just like, "Wow, modern day, this is our modern day toll collecting again. This is beautiful."

and then the next one I- I thought was the big one was- was the relationship we had with, of course, TELUS, that- that brought, broadband Internet out to one of my communities. here's a community, 22 kilometers outside of Terrace, and didn't have broadband. And it was just so frustrating for... and that's where our main administration building is. And we have quite a few of our people living out that way. It was very frustrating for a lot of people to get connected to the world,in more ways than one. if we think about it, we're gonna be transacting that way in the near future. And if we don't have broadband, that means we're excluded. so happy for that relationship.

the only one thing I could say about that one that it was a- a bit of a challenge was- was getting through the regulatory or getting through government to, get that... get us that subsidy; took 17 months for an application to- to funding. that just, that's just way too long. We need to do something about,cutting that regulatory. And I know government is trying, They're trying to modernize and- and, and- and let's- let's revamp this and... to make things faster and make those decisions go better,for- for right, for the right reasons. But, yeah, they need to really concentrate on that because 17 months. if we were in business together, business would've went sideways real quick, And we are in business together right now. we really need to rethink these ways of going forward.

thank you.

[00:28:39] **Margareta Dovga...:** hear. We are in business together. There's exchanges. There's exchanges of money. There's exchanges of ideas. It's all value for value. And I really appreciate that lens.

just before we go to James for his, take on this, I'll just remind you that there is a Slido. You've probably seen the little disclaimer flash across the screen. This is your chance. If you feel prompted, submit a question. But without further ado, over to James.

[00:29:03] **James Delorme:** Slido, another, API that works really well. I love it. I love it.

really good discussion. And, I- I don't wanna, I don't wanna showcase, one project. There's a lot of great projects in the province right now. And I'll- I'll just say Connected Coast, there's one. but, the- the... I think the message here and- and the- the message I... we've had on- on this panel is, it's where local area networks are going to be, fruitful and productive. And,I work in the IXP. So it... IXP is an Internet exchange point. And- and my- my friends here tell us, they know exactly what that entails, but not a lot of us do. I'm a big proponent of- of IXPs and what they do with Internet connectivity in the province and- and throughout the world.

[00:29:44] **James Delorme:** But, the key piece though is at the ground level with the ISPs and what's happening in community, because that is where our communities get a chance to, to be a part of the Internet connectivity in a real, important way. And so it's not so much a project that I would highlight here today, it would be the relationship that you can bring with an ISP that are- are bringing that local network and finding solutions to the connectivity problems that they're having because, as in the province of BC, we've got lots of trees, we've got lots of mountains. And so that's gonna be a huge issue a for line of sight. And, so if we already know that, if we already address that, then we can start talking about how do we find those solutions, and where are we gonna find those solutions? And we can talk to folks like TELUS, and other providers who are gonna help us along the pathway. So that's- that's where I really, would like to focus.

Thank you.

[00:30:37] **Margareta Dovga...:** That's really well-put. I feel like I could, spend hours just listening and relistening to the segments. And anyone who feels like you missed something, maybe you stepped out for a second, you can always, rewatch the recording, which will be on Vidflex. You shall have received a login.

and just before we go to Shazia for her take on this coming from, from TELUS specifically, I thought it just, weave in one of the questions. Shazia, sorry for the surprise here, that, we've gotten, on, on Slido. And, t- this person anonymous is wondering about the challenges preventing companies from building infrastructure. I'm sure that's something you're gonna dive into in your answer, but, why don't I hand it off to you?

[00:31:12] **Shazia Zeb-Soba...:** Yeah. T- thank you. I think before I speak about some examples of partnership, I would like to define that how we look at the partnership, right? the partnership outcomes are determined how the partnership is set up. And at TELUS, we start partnership with deep relationship building, then progress it to mutual trust and, and respect for the unique capabilities that each party or each partner brings to the table. by combining those unique skills, then we can go stronger together. So in- in the realm of connectivity, we work with the nations directly. And Joe, thank you very much for the reference. We would not have been successful without your cooperation. really working closely and understanding what the unique needs are, and then going together with the Indigenous communities to provincial and federal governments, then to broaden that partnership, agreement.

there are lots of challenges, right? And when we think about our beautiful country and it- it's diverse geography, it's difficult. It's difficult to build infrastructure, and it- it's difficult to apply a single technology solution across various types of footprints and geographies. We need to have a very rich tool set, and we need to stay flexible with the use of that tool set.

Margareta, you've started me on something I'm very passionate about which is challenges to extend infrastructure. so that's one challenge is vast geo- geography and- and what type of technology will really serve the best. And I'll share a couple of examples there where, by creating the right type of partnership, we were able to actually solve it in an efficient and economic way. The first partnership example is with Cariboo Chilcotin. That partnership dates back to 2019, when ANTCO, Interior Health, nine Indigenous communities and us started a small project, which we viewed small at that time with 2200, premises to be connected across 13 communities.

we had to bring our- our unique skillsets and co-brought their, advice, guidance funding. We brought our technology expertise, our funding. Communities brought their unique perspective that what their requirement was and what type of connectivity could serve it well. and that partnership, which started then continued to progress. And it continued to invite other partners such as government of BC, such as federal government universal broadband funding. And the great news is that the... by the end of next year, that entire region will have connectivity. And that entire region will have the pure fiber connectivity except for one reserve. And why we were not extending it there? Because we worked with that community closely, and they did not want a very intrusive solution to the land. So we're, we are extending fixed wireless solution for that community. this is what we call partnership, where everybody has a place at the table, where everybody's capabilities and their unique perspective is respected and integrated to create a beautiful outcome.

[00:34:31] **Shazia Zeb-Soba...:** Another example of partnership is in Quebec. in Quebec, North Shore, we started to work with the government of Quebec and with the federal government and Innu communities of, [Indigenous language 00:37:57] and Unamen Shipu. And they had a- a desperate need for connectivity because 5,500 people living across 14 communities on 400 kilometer-long coastline without roads and connectivity. You can just imagine that what they were deprived of and how they were constrained not to participate in economic and social activities of their lives. So that was a very difficult geography to extend connectivity that led... that strong partnership led to, one- one of its kind solution of one of world's largest microwave-based, cellular technology to be extended there. And today all 5,500 residents across the coastline enjoy the connectivity. So that is our view of partnerships. And that's what great partnerships can accomplish when they are established with mutual respect. And everybody's perspective is invited and integrated into the solution.

[00:35:53] **Margareta Dovga...:** I really appreciate that approach to it. And, wow, 5,500 people who didn't have access. you- you emphasized, I think, the important part, which is the very detrimental effect that has on those people and their community and their children's children. You- you start off on the back foot functionally, but, I'll also add to that a little bit just by saying we're deprived of their contributions when geography keeps you apart from those that have wisdom. They have experience, they have cognitive abilities, they have talents, they have skill, they have things that they wanna share with the world, but they're not close enough and they can't be brought in their ideas into the conversation. We've really missed out. Don't we?

at this point, I heard a couple of comments about government and, I went on a, I went on a really good road trip, a little while ago with a friend of mine who works in telecommunications. And, all I heard about was spectrum policy. I don't know if anyone knows someone who works in telecoms, you've probably heard a little bit about it, but lx there's a lot more to it. There's funding. There's, conversations that need to happen around regulation and ways of enabling communities to take the lead on important things. But, I think at this point, we'll pass it right back to Shazia. from your perspective, what is the role of good policy and government funding in bridging the connectivity gap?

[00:37:04] **Shazia Zeb-Soba...:** Yeah, thanks. I think before I go there, I- I do want, us to, to understand at how big the problem is of the lack of connectivity to rural and, particularly, to Indigenous. when we look at our vast, land, only 88% of Canadians actually have access to reliable connectivity. But when you start to divide it, that might be a handsome number. When- when you start to divide it across geographies, 99% of urban residents, urban Canadians have access to reliable connectivity. When you take it to rural, that numbers drop to 46%. And when you take it to Indigenous communities, that number drops to 34%. And when you actually start to look at the provinces, BC is one of actually really well-connected comparatively where Indigenous connectivity is about 63%, but as Ruby was talking about Alberta and I come from Alberta, the connectivity for Indigenous there, communities there is sub 20%, 18.4%. the majority of people are being constrained from participating into digital economy constraint, to participate in digital health, in remote learning and education.

I think that the federal and provincial governments have a very strong role to play there. And we have seen some very encouraging response in the last two years from- from both fronts. we have seen federal government set up universal broadband fund, and then we have seen provinces set... stepping up, especially the province of- of BC has stepped up significantly to- to match that contribution funding.

[00:38:42] **Shazia Zeb-Soba...:** And- and also going back to what Joe was saying, 17 months for approval is unacceptable. what I would like to call upon is that we have actually seen now speedy a, approval processes, especially with the government of BC. We are seeing that the applications are invited and they are accepted and being provided feedback on, in a rather quick way. what is the result of that? The result of that is that us alone at TELUS, through that change in the policy and availability of funding, we have connected 19 Indigenous communities just last year. We are working on 22 Indigenous communities to be connected with pure fiber this year, and then we have another 19 communities on the books for the next year. That is progress. Maybe it's not fast enough, but I'm a very optimistic person and a positive person. I think it is progress, right? So we are moving in the right direction, but does that mean that there's nothing left to be addressed? There's still a lot to be addressed.

So two things I will mention. one is that we really need to look at that, what are the provincial and municipal bylaws and procedures for helping the telecom operators to- to go through, the [inaudible 00:43:25] process, quickly. And the second one, Margareta, that you touched upon is the spectrum policy. When we look at- at how spectrum has been dispersed and awarded, a very big part of that spectrum has not been used and has not been developed. And some of the companies are actually using that spectrum to generate more revenue and money for them instead of developing it to fulfill on the connectivity gap. those two areas still have a lot of work to be done, and I would really like to draw everybody's attention towards that.

[00:40:25] **Margareta Dovga...:** I appreciate that. And, there was something you said. I heard the words timelines, I heard the word certainty. Are those things s- sound familiar to someone in mining or energy or other sectors? [laughs] Lots of, very similar, asks I think, from across sectors. But, I think, you guys probably wanna hear from, the next person. at this point, I'm just gonna pass it to Jill.

[00:40:46] **Joe Bevan:** Sorry, what was the question again? [laughing]

[00:40:48] **Margareta Dovga...:** Oh, gosh. [laughing] hold on. Let me just read it. no, just, just some policy government.

[00:40:52] **Joe Bevan:** Oh.

[00:40:52] **Margareta Dovga...:** You- you spoke earlier about that.

[00:40:53] **Joe Bevan:** yeah. yeah. Of course, there needs to be a change to public policy, whether that's federal, provincial, municipal, in order to move things, faster, more... expedite these things a little faster, such as, sorry, permitting right of ways, of course, faster processing of paperwork, shouldn't have taken 17 months, and also stable long-term funding for... to- to support this infrastructure going forward because there's gonna be maintenance, of course, and upgrades as- as we move forward in order to- to stay on top of it.

those are the, those would be the fundamental changes that I would think, that- that need to happen in order to have a stable,infrastructure and- and,to stop this, as we see, as we've heard the digital divide. it- it is real,And it does exist. that was the World Economic Forum's top 10, risks to the global economy. It was unfortunate... I- I just read it a few years ago, and then I just read it recently, and it's now listed at number nine. It used to be number three. It used to be in the top five. I- I guess what it's saying is it's getting better. But still, 3.8 billion people are still not connected today. That's a lot. if we're gonna be transacting all over the Internet in this new digital economy, that's- that's 3.8 billion people that are not gonna be able to participate or,or- or transact services. That's huge. and- and I think we really need to think about this, going forward.

[00:42:16] **Joe Bevan:** Thanks.

[00:42:17] **Margareta Dovga...:** Every time my phone dies, I feel like I've lost a part of me. And, lx it's- it's a big part of the way we run the world these days, the way we run our personal lives. And, either not having that fundamental access to it or even just not being able to access technology, it's such- such a constraint from the progress that the whole world has seen over these past several decades.

James, you're someone who works in the tech space, and you know all about, the importance of, technology being integrated, but, what do you have to share with us on the policy on the government side?

[00:42:46] **James Delorme:** Oh, you got a couple days? Oh, I'm just joking.

[00:42:48] **Margareta Dovga...:** Yes.

 No, not really.

[00:42:49] **James Delorme:** lx Yeah, no, I... it's great discussion, and not always exciting, of course, but, we're not gonna see... I- I think about, my good friend, James Hobart, and he's the chief of, Spuzzum First Nation just up the valley. And, really raised the awareness about, spectrum. And, so I- I think that, in the policy changes or, at least, the discussion towards, policy change, in innovation, that has to be... clearly has to be addressed. but, let's take it a step further and- and talk about, individual companies, private utilities, and their involvement, with- with finding solutions. railways, and hydro projects and infrastructure that's already there, they may even have in a relationship already with the First Nation, but we need to actually start to have policy that's actually gonna reflect in an easier path for those folks to work together.

And, to get through those regulatory,backlogs... and- and thank you for, showing that the provinces of BC is actually doing some effort in that way because it... we have to do that. We have to make it quicker for... if we want Indigenous communities to be a part of this solution. And and that reflects on the industry because then they can see a path forward, and there'll be more interested in working,on those solutions. So absolutely, policy is a key piece. But really, let's- let's focus on where we know that there's some problems, and let's dive into it, and- and come up with some solutions.

[00:44:10] **Margareta Dovga...:** Ruby, I know, you don't work in the connectivity space but, you did mentioned something pretty exciting earlier, the Alberta Indigenous opportunities Corporation. Folks that were here yesterday heard the presentation, I'm sure. I know it's just one model, A sovereign guarantee is- is one exceptional way of bridging the, capital gap that exists. There's others out there and many other forms of policy. What are your thoughts on this more generally?

[00:44:32] **Ruby Littlechil...:** I think AIOC has to address the, the shortfall in funding when it comes to O&M. Just I'm thinking about the water infrastructure projects we work on in communities and a lot of our on-reserve technicians lack capacity, and that- that they have... they faced those shortfalls in funding. Again, Indigenous Services Canada has... they can alleviate those funding gaps. And, like I said, I... and I'm hoping that... my worldview, my Cree worldview is that , in Eastern Canada, they- they were colonized longer, and the oppression and sys- systemic oppression is more embedded in the First Nations out east. When the railroad was coming west... we're in Alberta... we just got colonized 146 years ago. And so we have... there's the relationships I find they're fragmented more out east whereas, out west, because we just got colonized, there's more eagerness to work with communities. But I- I... and so what am I getting at? I'm- I'm getting at that provinces have to step up their game as well. Industry has to step up their game as well, lose the- the old school mentality of oppression. And, we just have to work together to make the world better. lx

[00:45:59] **Margareta Dovga...:** Sounds like inclusion needs to be a foundation for doing business. interesting. lx we're getting up to the clock here. We just have another 10-minute chunk here. But, I did wanna make sure we didn't neglect,one important, question here that, we'd want it to just cover around, Indigenous-led innovation and entrepreneurship. And I think the way we're gonna make it work is a bit of a rapid fire round. I'm going to ask each panelist just to give me a couple of sentences. Don't worry if you feel like you have things you need to finish saying, you can go over a little bit. we're gonna start with James, go to Joe, Ruby and Shazia, just to hear your thoughts on unleashing the potential of Indigenously-led innovation. Let's, start off with James.

[00:46:41] **James Delorme:** Hello? Hello? Yeah, unleash it now and... because we're ready, we're here, we're- were doing the work, we're- we're in the industry. We're... a lot of people throw that at me is like, "We don't have enough Indigenous participation," but we do. We're ready to do this work, and we just need the help, participation from the industry and the government, of course.

Thank you.

[00:47:02] **Margareta Dovga...:** [inaudible 00:51:18] Joe?

[00:47:04] **Joe Bevan:** I have a great example. there's a young lady I know. Her name is Elaine Alec, a young Syilx-Secwepemc First Nation who developed a teaching program to decolonize the way we do business, and to cultivate safe spaces. During the pandemic, she delivered all of her workshops online, didn't miss an opportunity to teach, all thanks to connectivity. she promoted her book, Calling My Spirit Back. her- her consulting Alderhill, planning has made revenue in the millions. Her talent and success, and self promotion is all thanks to the Internet, and the connectivity to host workshops. I can only imagine the,the- the untapped potential that is waiting for an audience,for their talent, to show their talents, their products or services. But all requires connectivity. I- I think, connectivity will introduce Indigenous entrepreneurs, and- and improve the lives of the folks living in rural communities 'cause there's a hidden talent there. And I think we need to search it out.

[00:48:06] **Margareta Dovga...:** Thank you. Ruby, how do we do it? How do we get there?

[00:48:24] **Ruby Littlechil...:** I think by hiring the grassroots First Nations, professionals with education with a lived experience. That's how you create systemic change in, companies. I've always worked in mainstream organizations, but I've always brought my, my grassroots lived experience to the, to these companies, and they've listened, they wanted to learn. I've always had to work with a non-Indigenous man with power and influence who was pro-Indigenous. I've always been like t- telling him that we gotta go this way, we gotta do this. And he would... because of his power and influence, he- he... we would get, we got stuff done. We accomplish lots. And so I am really grateful for those non-Indigenous allies who, who partner and, who partner and- and they... all my, all my engineer colleagues and friends who, say, we gotta do better. We need to do better, and we need to do it right.

[00:49:11] **Margareta Dovga...:** Allyship, that is so- so key here. Thank you for sharing that. Shazia, what do you think?

[00:49:17] **Shazia Zeb-Soba...:** I couldn't agree with James more. I- I think the opportunity is now, right? The time is now. we are so ready. It's hard to find any positivity around the pandemic, but there was one: it propelled digitization, it propelled virtualization. It... So it's, it's... I think all sectors of economy are ready. There are Indigenous entrepreneurs with great ideas, but those ideas are not getting fostered, are not getting any support because of systemic racism, colon- colonization, and lack of access to resources. We all need to work together to remove those barriers because we are not tapping into an extremely important resource, and an extremely important sector of our economy.

[00:50:01] **Margareta Dovga...:** Absolutely. It's setting priorities. I- I've heard this theme through all these answers here. You have to ensure you're making it a priority. It's not, an afterthought. It's not a checkbox. It's, something central. It's a building capacity. we- we talked about O&M, operations and maintenance, and that's a piece. It's capacity in the planning the strategic vision. It's, analysis capacity. It's technical capacity. It's scientific knowledge. It's, ability to maintain and ensure your facilities, and your infrastructure are well managed all across that spectrum. And, I- I love how James has,shared a little bit around, the educational piece. There's, I think there's a lot of opportunity here to, create opportunities for entrepreneurs and those who are seeking to... actually, sorry, it wasn't James, it was Joe. apologize, backtrack there... to ensure that they have the resources they need to learn what they need to- to reach the audiences that they wanna reach. And, that's how you build capacity and you enable it to be your priority.

So I, at this point,I'm- I'm pretty happy to say, that we've covered a lot of ground. But there's also lots of pockets in this broader space around infrastructure and connectivity that we haven't yet reached. I'm gonna just go in order here and, we're gonna have some final closing thoughts from our panelists, starting again with James.

 [Indigenous language

[00:51:12] **James Delorme:** 00:55:50] That's wonderful. Thanks, Margareta. a round of applause for Margarita for the work that she's done, last couple days.

one- one organization I- I got a little shout out to and that's the First Nations Technology Council and Denise Williams, CEO, always the champion for, digital equality. And so just wanna rai- raise a little note to her and- and thank you for that. But also wanna say thank you for, Stewart and, the hard work of the teams here today in the last couple days, really meaningful because, just in the first... I'd say in the first two hours, I was able to connect with folks that were incredible. I actually got a nice gift. And- and this is, my... a- a gift that I felt very, personable. And that was I got the, Reconciliation Action Plan, like a hard copy from the TELUS folks. So that- that... I know it- it seems, it seems like a silly thing but, actually, it's very important to me.

and I was able to get a DRIPA, a BC action plan, hard copy. And, now, I can use that going forward. I can use that when people ask me, "What does reconciliation actually mean?" it's here in the action plan, and we can use that as a template." that's my message here today is that,we- we have a long road to go. But you're in the room, and you're listening, and you're hearing my story. You're hearing my relative story, and you're hearing my ancestors' story. And- and that's critical to this work. And- and you- you're on this journey. I've heard that word used about 50 times this morning, and- and that's what we're on here today.

I'm really grateful to be part of this, and I'm grateful that we're going to keep this conversation going, and the work that we're doing together. [Indigenous language 00:57:34]. I feel really good. Thank you very much.

[00:52:51] **Margareta Dovga...:** I'm grateful too. Oh, actually, little bit of a side note here, you guys are probably on social media, right? I imagine some of you are. People wanna keep listening to your stories. Is there, a format that they can maybe go to? James, do you have Twitter?

[00:53:03] **James Delorme:** Absolutely. LinkedIn is like the best and easiest way to get ahold of me. Of course, I'm on Twitter and Facebook. But, let's- let's go on LinkedIn. And, and let's talk about this more and contact me directly. I- I would appreciate that. my hashtag is Keep Going. Keep going, folks.

[00:53:17] **Margareta Dovga...:** Also, hashtag IPSS 2022. lx Needed to plug that. any other social media credentials we should toss out into the field? You know how to find these guys. Yeah, they're nodding. at this point, I will just continue the wrap up. And, Ruby, it's, your turn for some closing comments.

[00:53:34] **Ruby Littlechil...:** wahkohtowin in Cree. That means we are all related. And kinanaskomitin, I'm grateful for this day.

[00:53:44] **Margareta Dovga...:** Thank you. All right. Shazia. Oh, no, sorry, a little bit, of a backtrack there. Joe.

[00:53:52] **Joe Bevan:** Thank you. it's great to have this venue to discuss with you what the First Nations perspective and lens is on moving forward. I think discussions like these are very important for all of us to attend, and it works both ways. We get your perspective, and you get ours. the First Nations Major Projects Coalition, Indigenomics, and now Indigenous Partnerships Success Showcase, these are very important venues to hear that discussion. Keep supporting it. Keep having this discussion, because it's not gonna go away if we just try to hide this under the carpet again. Let's just keep that discussion going, and- and remind, and just remind yourself it's- it's... if you don't know, ask. A lot of us don't know, and that's fine 'cause we haven't really developed that relationship. But, we're open to those questions. We- and we wanna give you those answers. don't feel, afraid to ask, what you may think is a silly question. The only silly question is the one that's not asked.

thank you very much, and it's great to see you all. You'll find me out LinkedIn, Joe Bevan, and I'd be happy to answer your questions.

[00:55:08] **Margareta Dovga...:** Thank you so much, Joe. Shazia, parting comments?

[00:55:12] **Shazia Zeb-Soba...:** Yeah. Just quickly, I just want to thank and congratulate Stewart and the entire team of Indigenous Partnerships Success Showcase. It takes a lot of effort and courage to put together conversations like this. I hope that these conversations lead to some- some significant actions at TELUS. We are on a journey, and- and we are very keen to be guided by Indigenous voices and experience. And we might make some mistakes on our way, but we are not afraid to keep going, humbly apologize, and course correct. Thank you very much.

[00:55:44] **Margareta Dovga...:** And thank you to TELUS for making this whole conversation possible. Thank you to the audience for being here and away, and, sharing your comments and your thoughts. I've tried to weave them in as much as I could, but, it looks like we're up against the clock now. at this point, we're gonna wrap up. as we leave the stage, you're gonna see a video from one of our supporters, the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers. Thanks so much, and, we'll be back in a couple of minutes. Thanks and round of applause for these panelists.

# [00:56:13] CAPP Video

[00:56:13] **Speaker 1:** The industry that really cares about the environment, they're- they're given back in more ways than one.

[00:56:36] **Speaker 2:** The Indigenous communities we support 100% around here, natural resources to them i- is again such a big thing, such, economy boost, and- and nothing but opportunities.

[00:56:46] **Speaker 3:** Natural resource projects, I believe, is a clean energy that we could give to the world. I believe Indigenous communities benefit from the use of, true benefits, agreements, and opportunity with the industry and partnerships.

[00:56:58] **Speaker 4:** I spoke with Indigenous community leaders who fought really hard for decades to bring the LNG community to the- the highest lineation. They saw a need and opportunity to take people, from relative difficulty, intergenerational, dependence, poverty, and to transform their lives.

[00:57:16] **Speaker 5:** the LNG project alone or that- that industry is... it can contribute up to, I think, the estimated amount was $7 billion annually to our Canadian economy. And for Indigenous people to be able to participate, it's huge.

[00:57:33] **Speaker 6:** if they plan on more LNG to the coast, it'll benefit, everybody, not just Indigenous communities.

[00:57:39] **Speaker 7:** For my- myself, for instance, it's changed my life 100%.

[00:57:42] **Speaker 8:** In my community alone, there's 25 member-owned businesses that provide a service to the oil and gas industry.

[00:57:49] **Speaker 9:** And I think it's critically important that the people living in urban environments, understand what major projects like this can mean for Indigenous communities.

[00:57:57] **Speaker 10:** So I just wish there was a lot more education in our... from our point of view rather than, "Okay, this person said that, so I guess it's true," the louder voice of the media.

[00:58:09] **Speaker 11:** I encourage all First Nations to have a look at what they could do with their resources that have been there.