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Indigenous economic
development and well-being
in a place-based context

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Indigenous economic development and well-being in a place-based context

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This paper adapts the OECD Regional Development framework to places with an Indigenous population. It identifies the importance of flexibility in geographic scale for organising policies for Indigenous communities, development objectives that reflect the self-determined and informed choices of Indigenous peoples, and implementing strategies for development based on the identification of local assets.

Key words: Indigenous peoples, place, well-being, regional and rural development, sustainable development goals, culture:

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Executive Summary

This paper adapts the OECD Regional Development framework to places with an Indigenous population. The paper is organised as follows. It begins by providing an overview of Indigenous peoples in OECD countries, their regional development challenges, and the importance of effective regional institutions and governance to overcoming them. Next, the OECD approach to regional and rural development as a framework for understanding Indigenous economic development in a place-based context is discussed. This framework is adapted to Indigenous contexts by drawing upon an asset-based approach to development that incorporates Indigenous values and perspectives. The paper concludes by outlining the five key elements of a framework for understanding and assessing Indigenous economic development:

1. **Place-based view** of an Indigenous community, clan or nation (geography based on economic function and shared political and cultural identity), which differentiates in terms of **level of development**, and a **territorial classification** between urban, rural close to city, and rural remote areas.
2. **A place-based framework for development** that is inclusive of a broad view of progress (encompassing different forms of capital) and is based upon the self-determined development choices of Indigenous communities.
3. **Identification of territorial assets, bottlenecks and growth potential** based on evidence, engagement with community stakeholders, and **effective forms of governance** that enable Indigenous communities to invest in these assets, and leverage the links between them to mobilise development potential.
4. **Strengthening linkages** and realising opportunities for integration with regional, national and international markets.
5. **Assessment of progress** that is based on how levels of well-being are improving over time, and how place-based Indigenous communities compare with other communities of similar size and location (to complement national level benchmarking).

1. Introduction

Indigenous communities play a significant role in OECD national and regional economies. There are estimated to be 38 million Indigenous people who make an important contribution to the culture, heritage, and economic development of one-third of the OECD member countries. In addition to this, Indigenous peoples are important to a number of countries that work closely with the OECD (e.g. Colombia, Costa Rica, and Peru). Indigenous communities within these countries generally experience poorer socio-economic outcomes and can have higher levels of dependency on subsidies and transfers, particularly in rural areas. Indigenous communities are part of the dynamics of regional economies but are often disconnected from efforts to promote regional development, which contributes to continued disparities in socio-economic outcomes experienced by Indigenous peoples.

The purpose of this paper is to establish an analytical framework for understanding and assessing Indigenous economic development in a place-based context. The paper begins by outlining a working definition of Indigenous peoples for this project and identifies the main regional development challenges they face. It then outlines the OECD approach to regional and rural development as a useful framework for supporting efforts to address these challenges. A way of understanding the Indigenous economy in a place-based context is then set out, which is grounded in a community asset-based approach to development. The paper concludes with a framework that will be utilised to develop further work by the OECD on this topic.

2. Indigenous peoples and regional development challenges

The definition and categorisation of Indigenous peoples varies across countries. In recent decades there have been efforts to develop a clearer international legal framework for the rights of Indigenous peoples (Daes, 2008[1]). This section of the paper draws from these frameworks to provide a definition of Indigenous peoples that can guide further work by the OECD on this topic. It also identifies the number of Indigenous peoples across OECD, accession and partner countries. The key challenges facing Indigenous peoples in relation to regional development are then discussed. This includes the relative disparities in socio-economic outcomes, and the importance of self-determination and culturally appropriate and effective institutions to addressing this challenge.

Indigenous status and population estimates

The concept of Indigenous peoples is not straightforward, as the term can have different connotations depending on the context, and is applied differently across countries. To add more complexity and confusion definitions can vary even across governmental agencies within countries (Kukutai and Taylor 2016). International conventions and declarations have been formative in developing globally encompassing definitions of Indigenous peoples. For example, the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention 169 proposes that self-identification as Indigenous or tribal shall be regarded as a fundamental criterion for determining the groups to which its provisions apply, which include:

- tribal peoples in independent countries whose social, cultural and economic conditions distinguish them from other sections of the national community and whose status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions or by special laws or regulations; and,
- peoples in independent countries who are regarded as Indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonisation or the establishment of present State boundaries and who, irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions (International Labour Organisation 1989).

Estimates of Indigenous populations are imprecise, as there is a generalized absence of clear and consistent data on the number of people that can be considered to be Indigenous in a country. In some countries Indigenous status is distinguished between people with formal Indigenous status and those without status. Some countries do not collect data on the basis of ethnicity. Some countries rely on self-identification in their national census of population, and Indigenous groups within countries may define their own status. Virtually all countries have made modifications over time to the way in which they ask ethnicity questions in their census or in how they define membership in the Indigenous population.

Table 2.1 provides estimates of Indigenous populations for OECD member countries that report having Indigenous populations. For France and Denmark these populations are in New Caledonia and Greenland respectively. Estimates for the Scandinavian countries are problematic because the identification of Sami peoples is based around the use of Indigenous languages and the traditional practice of reindeer herding, even though this only holds true for the minority of these peoples today (Lantto and Mörkenstam 2008). In all cases the number of Indigenous people is small relative to the national population, but in

most nations Indigenous people are not uniformly distributed across the national territory, but are concentrated in specific locations. In some instances, for example the two northern territories of Canada or Greenland, they can constitute the majority of the population and can account for a significant share of local and regional populations in all these countries.

Table 2.1. Estimated Indigenous populations in OECD members, and select non-member countries

OECD member countries	Indigenous peoples	Population	% National population
Australia	Aboriginal	798 381	3.3%
Canada	First Nation/Inuit/Metis	1 673 785	4.9%
Chile	Various	2 185 729	9%
Denmark (Greenland)*	Inuit	50 220	(85%)
Finland	Sami	10 000	
France (New Caledonia)*	Kanak	104 958	(39.1%)
Japan	Ainu	28 782	0.02%
Mexico	Various	12 250 947 - 25 699 111	10.1% - 21.5%
New Zealand	Māori	692 300	16.3 %
Norway	Sami	50 000 - 65 000	1% - 1.3 %
Sweden	Sami	20 000	0.2 %
United States	American Indian/Alaskan native	3 739 506 - 6 706 210	1.2% - 2%
<i>Total population</i>		38 026 976*	
<i>Select non-member countries</i>			
Argentina	Various groups	955 032	2.4%
Colombia	Various (65 Amerindian languages)	1 392 623	3.4%
Costa Rica	Various inc. Bruca and Bribri	104 143	2%
Brazil	Various inc. Guarani	896 917	0.47%
South Africa	San people and Khoekhoe	529 819	1%
Peru	Various inc. Quechua and Aymara	1 696 210	5.33%
Russian Federation	Various	257 895	0.2%
<i>Total select non-member</i>		5 832 639	
<i>Total Indigenous population</i>		43 859 615*	

Note: Population data for Greenland refers to population born in Greenland. Greenland is defined as an autonomous country within Denmark, whilst New Caledonia is a special collectivity of France. Data refers to 2017 for Chile; 2016 for Australia, Canada and the United States; 2015 for Mexico; 2014 for France; 2013 for New Zealand; 2011 for Costa Rica; 2010 for Brazil; 2005 for Colombia. * is an estimate of the total Indigenous population. For United States, the first population figure refers to race alone and the second to race alone or in combination. For Mexico, the first population figure refers to population that speaks indigenous language/s and the second one to population that self-identify as Indigenous.

Note: Greenland is defined as an autonomous country within Denmark, whilst New Caledonia is a special collectivity of France. Masyarakat Adat is the official government title given to Indigenous communities and do not represent a tribal group. Data refer to 2017 for Chile; 2016 for Australia, Canada and the United States; 2015 for Mexico; 2014 for France; 2013 for New Zealand; 2011 for Costa Rica; 2010 for Brazil; 2005 for Colombia.

Key regional development challenges facing Indigenous peoples

Indigenous peoples in a place-based context (e.g., groups based on localised kinship relations and on traditional lands) are embedded in highly heterogeneous development contexts across and within countries. Social forms of organisation based around kinship embedded in particular places have an important influence in shaping Indigenous economies (O'Brien et al 2005). Indigenous peoples also practice customary activities and traditional livelihoods that are not well integrated into formal market economies (Altman, 2004[2]). Indigenous businesses can be linked to collective forms of self-determination including objectives such as sustaining indigenous language and culture, and improving socio-economic conditions on traditional lands (Peredo and Anderson, 2006[3]). This fact constitutes an important determinant of the possible linkages between Indigenous and regional economies, as opportunities for local linkages will be determined by the scale and nature of economic activity in the region. In particular, rural remote economies, where an important part of Indigenous economies are located, are characterized by lower levels of economic activity given their low density and distance to markets.

With a few exceptions, Indigenous economies have a lower level of economic activity than the regional average, as evidenced by lower labour participation rates, higher unemployment rates, and lower entrepreneurial rates (OECD 2016a). The difference in the intensity of economic activity generated by Indigenous peoples compared with their local and regional economies could be due to a higher emphasis on customary activities and subsistence against market activities, or it could be indicative of lower opportunities available and lower levels of integration with the broader regional economy.

Across countries, significant gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations have been identified with respect to life expectancy, child development, food security and employment outcomes, among others. For example, a study for Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand found that while these countries have high human development according to the UNDP, their Indigenous populations have only medium levels of human development (Cooke et al., 2007[3]). The key economic development issues identified in the literature on Indigenous communities across a group of developed countries including Canada, New Zealand, Australia and the USA are: high poverty and deprivation rates, low diversity in the sources of income and high dependency on government transfers, low integration in the labour market, substance abuse, mental health issues and high suicide rates, among others (OECD 2016a). In Latin American countries, Indigenous peoples rank at the bottom of multi-dimensional poverty and deprivation indicators, and the areas where Indigenous lands are located often lack basic infrastructure such as access to clean water and sewage systems (World Bank, 2015).

Indigenous and regional economies have often been historically disconnected (Beer, Maude and Pritchard, 2003[3]). The complex situation observed today needs to be understood from a long term perspective. This means that the usual “predictors of success” such as human capital, access to capital, location or resource endowments, while necessary, may not be the key ones for Indigenous economies (Cornell and Kalt, 2003). For instance, in their study on “what works” for Indigenous economies in Alaska, Cornell and Kalt (2005) found that more than the usual determinants, Indigenous control over Indigenous affairs (practical self-rule), a set of capable governing institutions, and a suitable cultural match were key to development success. Others emphasise the need to break away from treating Indigenous development as a summary of issues to be addressed and explained, and instead focus on good governance over resources actually managed and controlled by Indigenous communities (Dodson and Smith, 2003[4]).

3. OECD approach to regional and rural development policies

Over the past two decades the OECD has developed a regional and rural development policy approach based on the identification and assessment of good practices across member countries. This approach is designed to enable regions to identify assets and work in partnership with other levels of government to mobilise their growth potential. It is built on a recognition that there are a wide variety of development contexts across national territories (e.g. metropolitan, smaller cities, rural remote areas), and the widening of gaps in productivity and wellbeing between places has negative impacts on aggregate economic performance and social cohesion. The objective of this section of the paper is to outline this approach and assess its relevance for Indigenous economic development in a place-based context.

Regional development and inclusive growth is a national challenge

Given the unequal impacts of globalisation and technological change across national territories, the OECD promotes place-based policies to ensure different types of regions are able to thrive and contribute to aggregate growth and national well-being. These policies have the following features:

- Use of **regional specific assets** (or create absolute advantages to stimulate competition and experimentation across regions);
- Create **complementarities** among sector policies at the regional (or local) level; and,
- Use of **multi-level governance mechanisms** for aligning objectives and implementation.

OECD regional typology and rural regions

The growth dynamics and relative performance of rural regions is linked to their connectivity to urban areas. The OECD typology classifies regions into Predominantly Urban, Intermediate and Predominantly Rural, based on population density and size criteria. Predominantly Rural regions are further categorized into Close to a City or Remote based on a driving time threshold of 60 minutes to the closest urban centre. Besides this typology, the OECD has also developed the concept of Functional Urban Area (FUA), which is an economic unit that contains an urban core and functionally connected areas that may extend beyond administrative units. FUAs are intended to capture rural-urban linkages of peri-urban areas and the existence of a unified local labour market based on commuting patterns. Rural areas can be classified into different types according to their proximity to urban centres for the purpose of defining specific challenges and opportunities related to their geographic location (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1. Summary of challenges and opportunities by type of region

Type	Challenges	Opportunities
Rural inside functional urban area (FUA)	-loss of control of future-activities concentrate in core-loss of rural identity	-more stable future-potential to capture benefits of urban, and avoid negatives
Rural outside, but in close proximity to a FUA	-conflicts between new residents and locals-may be too far away for some firms, but too close for others	-potential to attract high income households seeking a high quality of life-relatively easy access to advanced services and urban culture-good access to transport
Rural remote	-highly specialised economies subject to booms and busts-limited connectivity and large distances between settlements- high per capita costs of services	-absolute advantage in production of natural resource-based outputs-attractive for firms that need access to an urban area, but not on a daily basis-can offer unique environments that can be attractive to firms and individuals

Source: (OECD, 2016^[5]).

Regional (with country) inequalities are increasing and this presents “untapped” opportunities for growth

Across the OECD countries have sub-national regions that strongly differ in their performance and growth rates (OECD, 2016). These differences persist over time suggesting that regional level factors yield significant differences in productivity and consequently income levels among regions (Garcilazo and Oliveira Martins, 2015^[6]). The barriers to growth that regions must overcome vary widely across regions and levels of development. The OECD has developed a taxonomy of regions based on their performance against national averages, and then against both national and OECD averages to identify those with large catching-up potential, regions with catching-up potential and advanced regions (OECD, 2009; OECD, 2012). For regions with large catching-up potential convergence is important but catching-up can also be accelerated by interventions that address issues at the bottom of the skill distribution and build local institutional capacities. Recent analysis has also shown that proximity to cities and the tradeable sector are important factors in promoting catching-up dynamics (OECD, 2016). Tradeable sectors (such as agriculture, industry, financial and insurance services) are more exposed to international competition and therefore have greater opportunity to catch up to the productivity frontier.

Regional policies can complement structural policies to address these issues

Successful performance therefore requires more than uniform economy-wide policies: a place-based approach is needed (OECD, 2016). Over past decades there has been shift in how OECD countries approach regional and rural development policies. In the past, these policies tended to focus on addressing disparities between regions through the provision of subsidies to compensate them for lower incomes. Policies were designed by central governments through departments of state that delivered narrowly defined programs with support for individual firms, incentives for inward investment, and a focus on infrastructure investment. Over time this approach has been seen as increasingly ineffective and not sustainable from a fiscal point of view. The new approach to regional policies emphasise a focus on competitiveness and working with regions to unlock growth potential based on their unique assets and local conditions (across policy areas influencing human capital development, innovation, and infrastructure) (Table 3). This integrated approach has significant implications for how government works. Different levels of government need

to work in a more integrated way at a regional and local level. Within this framework the specific policy responses for urban and rural areas are different, and aim to develop complementarities between them.

Table 3.2. The paradigm shift in regional policy

	Traditional regional policies	New paradigm
Objectives	Balancing economic performance by temporary compensation for regional disparities	Tapping underutilised regional potential for competitiveness
Strategies	Sectoral approach	Integrated development projects
Tools	Subsidies and state aid	Soft and hard infrastructure
Actors	Central government	Different levels of government
Unit of analysis	Administrative regions	Functional regions
Redistributing from leading to lagging regions Building competitive regions to bring together actors and targeting key local assets

Source: OECD, 2009.

Urban policies can be relevant for some place-based Indigenous communities, particularly in terms of inclusive growth. The physical form of cities can contribute to increasing socio-economic inequalities and segregation and can be influenced by policies through different policy instruments including land use regulation, infrastructure investment, and taxation arrangements (OECD, 2017). Land use and transport policies are the key to influencing urban form and structure and are more effective if they are designed at the scale of functional urban areas (FUA) (urban cores and travel-to-work flows which indicate a high level of economic integration) rather than administrative boundaries. Reforms which reduce administrative fragmentation and strengthen horizontal and vertical coordination (including with surrounding rural areas) are also important in improving urban productivity and segregation (OECD, 2016). Inequality within cities tends to cluster within particular neighbourhoods. However, evidence about the neighbourhood segregation of Indigenous peoples in cities is mixed, and they may also be at risk of being invisible within a larger population (Brand et al., 2016). Addressing this Indigenous disadvantage in cities requires integrated approaches to housing, social welfare, employment and training, entrepreneurship policies (Reeve and Bradford, 2014). There is also the possibility for cities to take a more active role in addressing Indigenous disadvantage with local partners and community representatives (OECD, 2018).

Rural development policies are relevant for Indigenous communities because of the relative concentration of Indigenous populations in rural areas due to defined Indigenous lands and territories (OECD, 2016a). A key focus for rural development policies is how to overcome the challenge of distance and low densities, grow external markets, and diversify locally produced goods and services. This can be achieved through “bottom-up” economic development strategies that focus on regional competitive advantages and open up opportunities for related diversification and participation in global value chains (GVCs) (OECD, 2016). There is no single policy recipe for achieving this outcome but policies tend to share the following characteristics: identification of absolute advantages supported by an evidence-base, working with entrepreneurs to identify bottlenecks/market failures associated with them, an emphasis on building networks, and investing in platforms to

promote technology transfer. Rural development policies also require an integrated approach to investment across levels of government, and a focus on empowering rural communities to participate in decision-making through community capacity building (OECD, 2016). Urban and rural areas also mutually benefit from strengthening linkages such as demographic (population movements, human capital, commuting), economic (e.g. local supply-chain linkages), the delivery of public services, and exchanges in amenities and environmental goods (OECD, 2013). These elements are captured by the OECD Rural Policy 3.0 (Table 3.3).

Table 3.3. Rural Policy 3.0

	Old Paradigm	New Rural Paradigm (2006)	Rural Policy 3.0 – Implementing the New Rural Paradigm
Objectives	Equalisation	Competitiveness	Well-being considering multiple dimensions of i) the economy, ii) society and iii) the environment
Policy focus	Support for a single dominant resource sector	Support for multiple sectors based on their competitiveness	Low-density economies differentiated by type of rural area
Tools	Subsidies for firms	Investments in qualified firms and communities	Integrated rural development approach – spectrum of support to public sector, firms and third sector
Key actors & stakeholders	Farm organisations and national governments	All levels of government and all relevant departments plus local stakeholders	Involvement of: i) public sector – multi-level governance, ii) private sector – for-profit firms and social enterprise, and iii) third sector – non-governmental organisations and civil society
Policy approach	Uniformly applied top down policy	Bottom-up policy, local strategies	Integrated approach with multiple policy domains
Rural definition	Not urban	Rural as a variety of distinct types of place	Three types of rural: i) within a functional urban area, ii) close to a functional urban area, and iii) far from a functional urban area

Source: OECD, 2016(5).

The Rural 3.0 framework is relevant to Indigenous economic development because of the central role that “place” plays as an organising feature of Indigenous language, culture and livelihoods. Indigenous clans, tribes and nations have historically occupied particular territories. In some cases after European settlement land was designated for use by Indigenous communities by formal agreements between tribes and national governments, while in other cases it is land that has been occupied for many generations without any specific land agreement. In those countries where Indigenous people were relocated to new areas there is typically a treaty that assigns specific rights to the tribe and responsibilities

to the national government. These traditional settlement areas can make up a relatively large amount of land area across OECD countries. For example, land controlled by First Nations peoples in Canada totals 3 554 836 million hectares, and for Indigenous people in Australia it is 102 600 000 million hectares (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, 2016; Department of Environment, 2016). Individuals who leave these traditional settlement areas and move to cities can lose their rights and become ordinary citizens. In most OECD countries a large share of the people who self-select as Indigenous on census forms now reside in a city and consequently may not have any formal rights as Indigenous people because they have left their traditional setting, although they remain culturally attached to their society. Despite these urbanisation trends, Indigenous peoples still constitute a large proportion of the population in some rural areas (OECD 2016a).

Place-based Indigenous development and well-being

The literature on Indigenous economic development and wellbeing identifies the multi-dimensional nature of challenges and opportunities facing Indigenous peoples, and the central importance of governance to effectively addressing them. This is consistent with the OECD Rural Policy 3.0, which is inclusive of economic, social and environmental dimensions, and identifies the role of territorially differentiated policies and the need for communities; the private sector and government to work in partnership (see Table 4). A framework to understand and assess Indigenous economic development in a place-based context will need to include these elements, and ensure they are adapted to the unique needs and circumstances of Indigenous communities.

Asset-based approach to Indigenous development

There are diverse conditions and trajectories of Indigenous economic development between and within countries (OECD, 2016a; Cooke et al., 2007; World Bank, 2015). There are many examples of Indigenous communities, clans and nations that have successfully developed their economies and improved the well-being of their people (Cornell, 2006; Coria and Calfucura 2012; NSW Ombudsman 2016). This includes business activities related to mining, food production, tourism, and renewable energy. However, there are also many examples of where economic development has not been successful, and Indigenous communities also tend to experience lower socio-economic outcomes than the general population (Hall and Patrinos, 2010). Although these frameworks focussing on gaps and deficits are a useful “call to action” they do not necessarily lead to policies that can deliver sustainable improvements in well-being because they can orientate policy discussions toward increased public expenditure, subsidies and compensation. The key to improving the well-being of Indigenous communities is to break dependency relationships by empowering them to develop community assets to create opportunities for new businesses and employment. This needs to be grounded in an understanding of community assets that incorporates Indigenous values, interests and perspectives.

There are various forms of place-based assets identified in the regional development literature. Economic geography has traditionally focused upon how differences in resource endowments – capital, natural resources, technology and environmental assets – can help explain differences in economic growth between regions (Stimson, Stough and Roberts, 2006[7]). Human capital – particularly technical skills - that resides within individuals and institutions are also important (OECD, 2009). Another is the value of untraded assets embedded within network relations and their role in facilitating the transfer of ideas and resources to promote innovation (MacLeod, 2004; Sunley, 2008). Given the central role of

kinship networks, relationship to land, and cultural practices and traditional knowledge in the organisation of Indigenous economies it is useful taking a broad view of assets that may be utilised to generate development. Green and Haines (2008) develop a more detailed taxonomy of these endowments and identify seven forms of community assets (Table 3.4).

Table 3.4. Forms of Community Assets

Forms of Community Assets	Description
Physical capital	Built infrastructure – roads, buildings, houses
Human capital	Work skills, leadership, educational attainment, health
Social capital	Norms, networks and trust
Environmental capital	Air, water, land, flora and fauna
Financial capital	Money, access to credit, equity
Political capital	Access to democratic decision making
Cultural capital	Arts and culture, museums, ethnic festivals

Source: (Green and Haines, 2008^[8]).

OECD approach to measuring well-being

The OECD has developed a multi-dimensional framework for measuring well-being (Figure 3.1). Different forms of capital are reflected in this framework, which considers well-being across several dimensions that go beyond material considerations, as well as the resources that are necessary to expand and sustain future levels of societal well-being. This framework is based on the capabilities view, which conceives development as a process that expands people's choices and opportunities to use resources to live the lives they have reason to value (OECD, 2017; Sen, 2005). The consideration of different types of resources as key elements in the sustainability of development underlines the importance of measuring not only the levels of capital, but also how these stocks are managed, maintained or threatened by communities and societies (OECD, 2017).

Figure 3.1. The OECD well-being framework

Source: OECD, 2017.

Well-being has also gained attention as a regional development policy concept because it captures a number of factors that are important to the competitiveness of places, and helps to reinforce the importance of complementarities between different sectoral policies. Regional well-being can be assessed through the OECD well-being framework which encompasses 11 dimensions: income, jobs, housing, health, access to services, environment, education, safety, civic engagement and governance, social connections, and life satisfaction. This multi-dimensional framework covers both material and non-material factors and considers what people value about where they live and work. Well-being indicators related to this framework include both objective and subjective measures, since evidence and perceptions are a complement of well-being as experienced by people. Along these lines, the importance of the distribution of resources within societies across different demographic and socio-economic groups is considered as an integral part of development.

Table 3.5. OECD Regional well-being indicators

Dimension	Regional Indicator
Income and wealth	Regional disposable income per capita Household disposable income
Jobs and earnings	Employment rate Long-term unemployment rate Unemployment rate
Housing	Number of rooms per person
Health status	Life expectancy at birth
Education and skills	Educational attainment
Environmental quality	Air quality (PM _{2.5})
Personal security	Homicide rate
Civic engagement and governance	Voter turnout
Access to services	Broadband connection
Social connections	Quality of support network
Subjective well-being	Life satisfaction

Source: OECD Regional Well-being.

Global approaches to measuring well-being

International legal instruments provide another starting point for considering how to measure well-being and development outcomes for Indigenous peoples. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) was endorsed in 2007 by 144 nations as a universal framework for the basic rights and well-being of Indigenous peoples. The UNDRIP has 46 Articles which identify a number of elements which are important when considering place-based economic development issues for Indigenous peoples. This includes rights to participate in decision-making about development, facilitating cross-border trade and economic activities, free and informed prior consent about development on Indigenous lands, measures that ensure productivity and conservation of Indigenous lands, and maintaining distinct institutions. It also identifies a number of aspects that should be considered when measuring Indigenous wellbeing such as traditional knowledge and cultural practices, and the maintenance of language.

The UNDRIP was also developed in the context of an increasing recognition of the need to go beyond GDP and other economic measures to develop a better understanding of how societies are performing. This recognition is reflected in the United Nations (UN) The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs were adopted by member countries in 2015 and outline shared development goals and indicators across 17 different areas (Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2. The Global Goals for Sustainable Development (2015-2030)

Source: UN, www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals.

The SDGs include a commitment to “leave no one behind” which is particularly relevant given the poorer socio-economic outcomes generally experienced by Indigenous peoples across different countries. Indigenous peoples make up only 5 per cent of the global population; however, it is estimated that they make up 15 per cent of the world’s poor and about one-third of the world’s 900 million extremely poor rural people (United Nations, 2010). The SDGs include 6 specific references to Indigenous peoples including SDG2 (agricultural output of Indigenous small-scale farmers) and SDG4 (equal access to education for Indigenous children). The UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues has identified a number of ways to strengthen the Indigenous perspectives within the SDGs including developing indicators of land use, disaggregation of measures for Indigenous populations, and strengthening the capacity of Indigenous peoples to participate in reporting on the implementation of the SDGs (United Nations, 2018). The sub-national dimension is particularly important given the heterogeneous conditions facing Indigenous peoples across national territories.

Measuring Indigenous well-being and development

In a broad sense, the OECD well-being framework is a useful starting point for considering the case of Indigenous economic development and well-being. Its underlying concept of development based on capabilities is intrinsically linked to the idea of self-determination, as it does not rely on a preconceived idea of what “success” is in terms of development but rather acknowledges that desired goals vary across individuals, households and communities. While the categories included in the OECD well-being framework are potentially relevant, it is clear that some type of assets which are unique to Indigenous communities deserve more attention, particularly those related to social, cultural, political and natural capital. It is important to be aware that a narrow view of development based on predefined objective outcomes is limited, as it ignores dimensions of well-being that are specific to Indigenous communities and places too much emphasis on development gaps with respect to other parts of society that may have different goals and aspirations (Sangha et al., 2015; Yap and Yu, 2016). For example, how economic development can

accommodate Indigenous aspirations related to cultural and linguistic continuity (Taylor, 2008).

Standard measures of cultural and social capital are designed for societies which place less emphasis on kinship and family relations compared to Indigenous communities (O'Brien, 2005). In this sense, subjective well-being for Indigenous communities may have a stronger collective and relational component (Yap and Yu, 2016[9]), which can be incorporated as part of subjective well-being questions in the OECD framework. The framework could also be extended to reflect the key role of social capital for Indigenous development, and broaden the concept to give more weight to cultural components. This includes the continuation of language, cultural artefacts and representations, protection of sacred sites, and traditional knowledge (Taylor, 2008; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010; Productivity Commission, 2014). Alternative ways of measuring social capital stocks in Indigenous communities can also be incorporated to capture their relation to other forms of capital and their contribution to current and future development. In particular, in Indigenous communities where there is a strong connection between cultural and natural capital, policies focusing on expanding economic capital need to balance the community views on the way in which their resources are used (Sangha et al., 2015).

Political capital (access to democratic decision-making) also has different implications for Indigenous peoples. Across advanced OECD nations there has been a shift toward self-determination (the right for Indigenous communities to govern their own affairs and shape relations with institutions with the framework of the nation state) (Daes, 2008[1]). Putting self-determination at the centre of the Indigenous economic development allows a better alignment between policies and development goals determined at the level of communities, as well as more participation throughout the policy design and implementation process (Cornell, 2006a). Political capital for Indigenous peoples needs to encompass issues such as representation, the role of community controlled organisations, the legitimacy and cultural match of Indigenous representative and decision-making bodies, and consultation by governments about matters that impact upon Indigenous peoples (Hunt et al., 2008; Tsey et al., 2012).

Natural capital encompasses three dimensions. The first is the use of renewable and non-renewable natural resources (sub-soil resources, water, forests) in the production process to generate income (Brandt et al., 2013). The second is about the asset value of ecosystems and the flow of ecosystem goods and services (air, clean water, climate, cultural and recreational benefits) into the future (United Nations, 2014). The third is that social and economic relations are a sub-set of natural eco-systems, and cultural, social and economic relationships with nature are central to well-being (Sangha et al., 2015). For Indigenous peoples examples of the first dimension include mining and extractive activities on Indigenous lands with legal frameworks that enable the flow of benefits to community members. In terms of the second dimension, ecosystem services are also a potential source of income recognising how Indigenous peoples manage resources to ensure long term productivity of land. For example, carbon emissions may be priced in some jurisdictions, and mitigation of carbon emissions through management practices on Indigenous lands can deliver monetary benefits directly from governments or through markets (Sangha et al., 2017).

These first two concepts embed the natural environment within an economic framework whether it is through the utilisation of natural resources in the production, or monetising environmental stocks and flows. Indigenous use and harvesting of land can exist outside the formal market through traditional food production that provides subsistence for

community members (Altman, 2004). This can be understood as a form of imputed income, which does deliver welfare benefits that can potentially be monetised (Sangha et al., 2017). Indigenous peoples also have spiritual and cultural values related to land, for example ceremonies and sacred sites. These factors cannot have a price put on them, but are important to Indigenous well-being, and contribute to the overall ‘duty of care’ that Indigenous peoples have with land and natural resources (Taylor, 2008, Jimenez, 2014). To reflect these values natural capital measures for Indigenous peoples should also capture issues such as ownership and control over the use of natural resources, and access to traditional lands (ABS, 2010).

Another aspect of natural capital is the use of land and its proximity to markets and social opportunities. This includes access to affordable, safe and high quality living environments (ABS, 2010). In terms of physical capital (built infrastructure and housing) this can include access to potable water, electricity and sanitation and waste systems and services, and the resulting impacts on the environmental and public health in communities (Jimenez et al., 2014). It also encompasses the stock and quality of housing, and whether these assets are managed by Indigenous communities. In remote areas accessibility is a key issue in terms of the capacity to deliver services, and access markets (phone network coverage, internet and broadband, roads, and airports), which can also be impacted by seasonal conditions (winter, dry and monsoon seasons) (Infrastructure Australia, 2012; Conference Board of Canada, 2014).

In terms of financial and human capital (income, wealth, skills and jobs) there are a number of key issues that need to be considered in relation to Indigenous peoples. The first is that self-determined economic development can generate a range of different development choices for Indigenous people. In OECD member countries standard measures of economic participation (investment, employment, income, and equity), and human capital development (educational attainment) can also be applied for Indigenous populations (National Aboriginal Economic Development Board of Canada, 2012; OECD, 2017a). However, communities also need to be involved in establishing indicators of economic success, and balancing market integration with cultural obligations, customary activities and traditional economies (particularly in remote areas); and community governance arrangements that may result in collective forms of assets ownership and utilisation (Altman, 2004; Taylor, 2008; Sangha et al., 2015). Indigenous controlled business organisations and education and training institutions have also been shown to be effective in delivering improved employment, education and training outcomes (OECD, forthcoming). Another key aspect for Indigenous economic participation is the role of Indigenous owned businesses which can provide a vehicle to generate income and wealth, develop leaders and mentors in communities, and support the maintenance of Indigenous languages and cultural practices (Morrison et al., 2015).

Global, national and regional frameworks to measure well-being and development need to be adapted to include the unique needs and circumstances of Indigenous peoples. Self-determined economic development should enable Indigenous peoples to make a range of different informed choices about the development of their community, clan or nation. This requires investing in different forms of capital, and linking them to governance and policies to make sure they are effectively managed to deliver benefits for community members. Indigenous communities also need to lead the process of developing objectives and designing measures of progress. A number of key considerations have been identified in terms of measuring community assets and the wellbeing and economic development for Indigenous peoples (Table 3.5).

Table 3.5. Community Assets and Indigenous economic development

Forms of Community Assets	Description	Considerations for Indigenous peoples in relation to economic development
Physical capital	Built infrastructure – roads, buildings, houses	Access to basic services, Indigenous ownership of assets
Human capital	Work skills, leadership, educational attainment, health	Customary activities and traditional knowledge
Social capital	Norms, networks and trust	Kinship and family relations
Environmental capital	Air, water, land, flora and fauna	Land stewardship, control over access and use of land, spiritual and cultural values of land
Financial capital	Money, access to credit, equity	Indigenous-owned businesses, collective forms of asset ownership, and customary activities and traditional livelihoods (imputed income)
Political capital	Access to democratic decision making	Self-determination, duty to consult, legitimacy and cultural match of representative institutions
Cultural capital	Arts and culture, museums, ethnic festivals	Indigenous language, traditional knowledge, cultural artefacts

Source: Adapted from Green and Haines, 2008

4. Indigenous well-being and regional development

Based on the analysis contained in this paper a framework for understanding and assessing Indigenous economic development in a place-based context includes the following 5 elements.

Place-based view of an Indigenous community, clan or nation (geography based on economic function and shared political and cultural identity), which differentiates in terms of **level of development**, and a **territorial classification** between urban, rural close to city, and rural remote areas.

- **A place-based framework for development** that is inclusive of a broad view of progress (encompassing different forms of capital) and is based upon the self-determined development choices of Indigenous communities.
- **Identification of territorial assets, bottlenecks and growth potential** based on evidence, engagement with community stakeholders, and **effective forms of governance** that enable Indigenous communities to invest in these assets, and leverage the links between them to mobilise development potential.
- **Strengthening linkages** and realising opportunities for integration with regional, national and international markets.
- **Assessment of progress** that is based on how levels of well-being are improving over time, and how place-based Indigenous communities compare with other communities of similar size and location (to complement national level benchmarking).

The main elements of this framework are outlined below.

Indigenous territories (for the purposes of designing and delivering economic development policies) should incorporate a functional definition that encompasses economic interactions (local labour markets, production and trade, and consumption), and shared social and political institutions. In some countries Indigenous territories are specifically defined in a legal and administrative sense; however, the effectiveness of policies for Indigenous peoples will be reduced if they do not also account for how Indigenous societies or economies function geographically. Regional development challenges and opportunities are also influenced by the locational assets of the territory and the level of development. Policies should also differentiate between Indigenous communities located in urban, rural close to a city and rural remote areas, their relationship to the national productivity frontier and level of development. The OECD has identified a number of development drivers and dynamics for these types of regions, which should be considered in assessing Indigenous economic development in a place-based context.

Self-determined regional development outcomes for indigenous peoples are dependent upon working with Indigenous communities to understand their aspirations for development. This includes recognising and valuing spiritual and cultural values, and customary activities that contribute to the subsistence and well-being of Indigenous peoples. The OECD Rural Policy framework provides a way of identifying the different elements that need to be in place to operationalise this approach. The first is an integrated view of development which encompasses social, environmental and economic issues and how these dynamics differ between types of rural places. This is particularly important for

Indigenous communities who are embedded in and have deep attachment to place, whilst also recognising they are part of a broader economic region. The second is the shift from sector specific subsidies and transfers to investments in **territorial assets** which align with a broader development strategy. This strategic focus enables a shift over time away from subsidies and transfers. The third is a **collaborative approach** which is inclusive of different interests and actors within a region, and improves alignment and coordination across and between different public sector agencies.

Besides the territorial dimension where place-based Indigenous economies take place, it is relevant to establish the level of **connectivity and integration** of these economies with the surrounding territory. Regional and local opportunities and challenges are not automatically extended to place-based Indigenous economies, as they can well operate as islands within regions. Along these lines, Indigenous economies can also directly benefit from stronger rural-urban and global linkages established by their regions only if they are integrated at the local level. Measures to improve levels of integration and connectivity of Indigenous economies to proximate local and regional economies are also needed.

Assessments of progress in improving outcomes for Indigenous communities also need to be carefully considered. Frameworks to measure wellbeing such as the SDGs are important reference points and enable the comparison of Indigenous peoples to regional, national and global averages in a consistent way. However, it is also important that Indigenous peoples have the flexibility to adapt these measures to their circumstances and aspirations (particularly related to land use, traditional livelihoods and customary activities, and language and culture), and they have control over the collection, use and dissemination of this data. There are also considerations regarding how comparisons are made. Comparing Indigenous communities located in, for instance, rural remote regions with other communities located in the same type of region is more informative than comparing them with the average of non-indigenous population that live in territories of all types. The reason is that comparisons between Indigenous and non-indigenous groups without a territorial view magnify development gaps, as they confound development challenges that are intrinsic to certain places (e.g. rural remote areas) with development challenges that are specific to Indigenous communities. In the same way, these comparisons can overlook important assets linked to absolute advantages that are not present in the average region. Comparing wellbeing over time with other Indigenous populations in similar territories would also be illustrative in terms of identifying whether some communities have made progress, identifying the factors which have influenced this progress, and whether these factors are replicable and/or can be influenced by public policies.

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