



# Is it time for CEDS?

**MARCH 2025 BRIEFING**

**PREPARED BY**

SASKATCHEWAN ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE



Saskatchewan Economic Development Alliance (SEDA) has been working since 1984 to support communities by enabling them to become investment ready and by promoting economic, environmental, and social well-being through collaborative development.

Focused on strategic solutions and outcomes, SEDA engages stakeholders to coordinate and innovate. As a systems convener, we drive economic development in Saskatchewan by creating synergies between communities and sectors, promoting transformative change and innovation.



The Saskatchewan Investment Readiness Initiative (SIRI) engages industry and communities to determine investment and growth opportunities, build more capacity through investment readiness initiatives, and identify industrial and commercial sites for business development in Saskatchewan.

Working within designated geographic areas, SEDA assesses economic development and investment attraction opportunities. Financial support for SIRI is provided by PrairiesCan and the Province of Saskatchewan.



With respect and gratitude, we serve Treaty 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 10 territories, the ancestral lands of the Cree, Saulteaux, Dene, Dakota, Lakota and Nakoda peoples, and the traditional homeland of the Métis.

# COLLABORATIVE AND COMPREHENSIVE.

---

"CEDS is locally based and regionally driven, an ideal foundation for investment readiness"

A Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is a locally based, regionally driven planning process that involves a range of partners. Strategies are developed through collaborative efforts involving public, private and non-governmental sectors, aiming to create long term viability for the communities within a region.

As a strategic framework designed to enhance economic growth and resilience, CEDS is often referred to as a 'system,' as well as a strategy. It provides the capacity-building foundation by which the public sector, working in conjunction with other economic players (individuals, firms, non-profits, institutions), creates the environment for comprehensive and collaborative economic prosperity.



Adopted and well utilized in the United States, CEDS reflects the current practice of economic development which includes traditional economic drivers such as infrastructure and industry operating interdependently with well-being drivers such as healthcare, housing and the various livability aspects of a community.

CEDS leverages both local and regional partners to assist in adapting to global economic conditions and maximizing local advantages to attract investments, create jobs and maintain a standard of living.

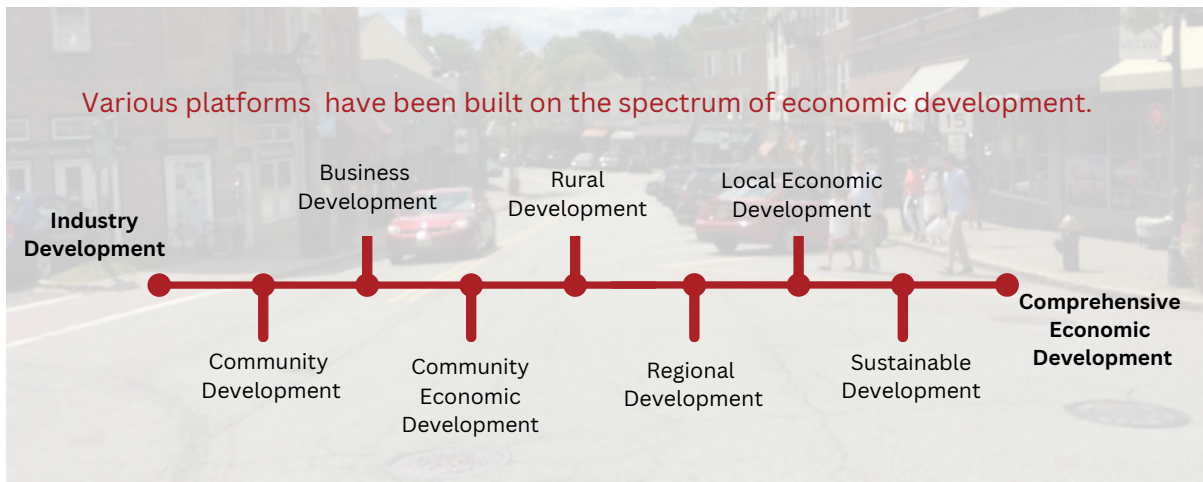
# THE PATH TO CEDS.

Over the last century, consistent efforts have been made to define and differentiate economic development.

Non-Indigenous communities have struggled to come to terms with economic development in policies, programs and practice. Various terms to refine function and approach have been introduced in an effort to shift the founding focus away from 'industry development' to reflect the inclusive nature and integration of various sectors required for effective long term socioeconomic solutions.

First Nations and Indigenous cultures have always based their planning and development efforts on the community as a whole, recognizing that governance along with economic and well-being drivers are key building blocks to ensure generational prosperity.

Economic development is an ongoing process rather than a result. Various strategies are often employed to achieve a desired destination. Examples are investment attraction, housing and placemaking programs, entrepreneurship and workforce development. However, at the core of economic development is the interdependent economic, political and social systems that contribute to this process. Together, these systems work to enhance socioeconomic well-being, resulting in wealth generation, job creation, and community renewal. The relationship between economic and social capital ensures that economic activities remain resilient.



# Key Components.

CEDS incorporates a planning process designed to build capacity and guide the economic prosperity and resiliency of a community or region. It provides a vehicle to engage in a meaningful conversation and debate about what capacity building efforts would best serve the process of economic development.

## **An Inclusive Planning Committee**

Securing representatives from various community groups will ensure diversity in viewpoints and capitalize on local skills in building the plan. This includes engaging neighbouring communities and First Nations. In addition to members of local governments, ensure there is a seat at the table for business, agriculture, health and education sectors, as well as groups representing special interests such as Elders, youth, the disabled and the underemployed.

## **Comprehensive Planning Process**

The planning process includes standard situation and SWOT analysis, setting a vision and goals, and creating action plans to achieve those goals. Identification of action plans should be as broad-based as possible and involve those impacted by the proposed activities, as well as those who can support their success. Action plan implementation with a variety of organizations and the private sector in the region (and beyond) is central to the CEDS approach.

## **Implementation Framework**

An implementation schedule is a crucial element. It outlines action plan activities with an associated timeline, including multiple phases if necessary. The detail level of the implementation schedule will support assigning roles and resources to the various public, private and non-profit partners. The schedule will assist in identifying potential external programs and financial resources that may be accessible to support plan implementation.

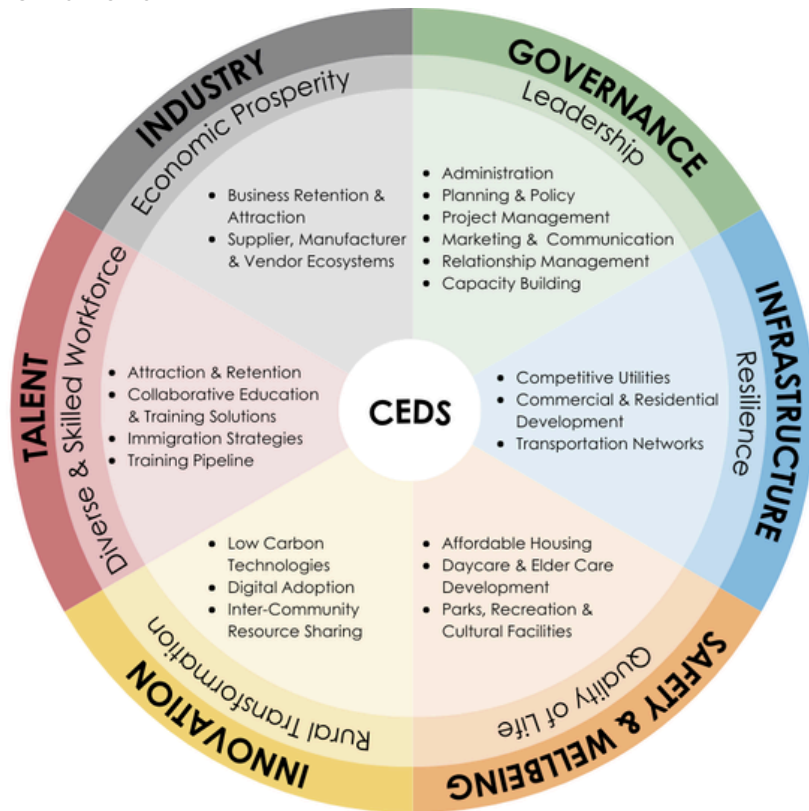
## **Ongoing Evaluation**

The CEDS plan must include regular check-ins on progress in order to mitigate roadblocks, action new opportunities and respond to changes in the socioeconomic environment. Convening the implementation team every 30-days is recommended. The plan should be treated as a living document and be adapted as required.

# A systems approach.

CEDS serves as a strategic roadmap that aligns public, non-governmental and private sector efforts to diversify and strengthen local economies. It differs from other economic development plans primarily in its inclusive focus and structure. Figure 1.1 illustrates a potential regional implementation framework based on using CEDS.

Figure 1.1 Example of a CEDS Framework



# How does CEDS support investment readiness?

CEDS provides a structured, data-driven framework to guide local and regional economic growth. Through the following elements, CEDS builds capacity, fosters sustainable growth, and positions communities and regions as ready and reliable destinations for investment.



## **Strategic Prioritization**

CEDS establishes a vision, goals, and measurable objectives for economic development along with a detailed assessment of economic conditions and strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Action plans prioritize initiatives and align resources to address critical needs and enhance competitive advantages, making the region more attractive to investors.

## **Collaboration and Partnerships**

CEDS engages public and private sectors, workforce development organizations, non-profits, and other stakeholders to create a unified approach to economic development. This collaboration encourages innovation and leverages diverse resources, ensuring broad support for investment priorities.

## **Infrastructure and Workforce**

Improving infrastructure and aligning workforce skills with industry needs are inclusive components of the process, and are essential to investment readiness.

## **Economic Resilience**

By addressing risks and promoting ongoing adaptability in implementation, CEDS ensures that communities and trading areas can withstand economic shocks, which is attractive to investors seeking stability.

## **Accountability**

Performance measures within a CEDS, track progress toward goals, ensuring accountability and demonstrating the region's readiness for further investment.



# WHAT MAKES IT INCLUSIVE?

CEDS can be the foundation of a robust economic ecosystem by helping to build capacity that contributes to individual, industry, and community success.

**CEDS is inclusive and participatory due to the following practices:**

**Local and Broad Based Engagement**

CEDS involves diverse stakeholders, including government agencies, private sector entities, non-profits, and community groups, ensuring all voices are heard in shaping the region's economic future.

**Adopting an Equity Centered Approach**

It prioritizes addressing racial, gender, and geographic disparities by incorporating the experiences of underrepresented groups and fostering equitable decision-making and outcomes.

**Transparency and Accountability**

The process emphasizes openness about goals, challenges, and community input, building trust and ensuring stakeholders see their contributions reflected in the final strategy.

**Providing a Collaborative Framework**

CEDS integrates feedback from First Nations leaders, businesses, and residents through various mediums (e.g., in-person meetings, online surveys), creating a sense of collective ownership.



# Upside of CEDS.



## **Establishes a Foundation for Funding and Partner Support**

CEDS enhances competitiveness for funding from both public and private sources.



## **Collective Ownership of the Process**

It emphasizes inclusive, community-driven planning by engaging stakeholders across sectors, fostering stronger partnerships and collective ownership of outcomes.



## **Maximizes Local and Regional Economic Potential**

With a structured, data-driven framework for identifying priorities, CEDS aligns resources and implements targeted actions to maximize local and regional economic potential.



## **Long Term Sustainability is Prioritized**

A collaborative foundation and focus on partnerships ensures it is positioned to withstand and recover from economic shocks or disasters, ensuring long-term sustainability.



## **Evaluation and Adaptability**

Regular monitoring and updates ensures its continued relevance by adapting to changing conditions and priorities.





# Contact

Jackie Wall

Manager, Special Programs

Saskatchewan Economic Development Alliance

[ecdev@seda.ca](mailto:ecdev@seda.ca)

[www.seda.ca](http://www.seda.ca)