



2023 – 2026

Strategic Plan

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Together, we are working to build an inclusive and resilient coastal economy through reciprocal relationships with communities across the ancestral territories of the Kwak'waka, Nuuchaanuḷ, Éyá7juuthem, Ligwílda'xw, Pəntl'áč, She shashishalhem, Hul'q'umi'num', diitiidʔaatx, SENĆOŦEN, Skwxwú7mesh, Lekwungen, and T'Sou-ke speaking peoples.



Sunrise over the Sunshine Coast, Tla'amin territory.
Cover photo by Brodie Guy.

Transient (Bigg's) orcas travelling on the coast at sunset. Photo by Brodie Guy.

About Island Coastal Economic Trust

The Island Coastal Economic Trust was created by the Province of British Columbia in 2006 with \$50 million to support economic diversification and revitalization across Vancouver Island, the Sunshine Coast, and islands and inlets from the Salish Sea to Cape Caution.

Since our founding, coastal people have been uplifting one another and building healthy, resilient, and more sustainable communities through investments with their Trust. We work in close collaboration — forming high-trust relationships — with people and organizations in urban areas, First Nations governments, small towns, and unincorporated communities across the coast.

Through our steadfast commitment to our vision and strategic goals, we look forward to continuing our work together, as we build and strengthen prosperity and wellbeing in communities across B.C.'s coast for years to come.

Our Region

G R E A T B E A R R A I N F O R E S T

N O R T H I S L A N D

S U N S H I N E C O A S T

Serving over 500,000 residents, we partner with First Nations, local governments, social purpose organizations, and regional partners to develop and finance their economic development and diversification efforts through our unique structure that is led by, and accountable to, communities.

Since inception, we have approved \$59 million to economic development initiatives that have attracted over \$322 million in new investment to our region. These investments have created over 2,750 permanent jobs, and countless positive impacts, across the coast.

And yet, there is so much more we can do, together.

The background of the entire page is a dense, close-up photograph of green fern fronds. The fronds are a vibrant green color and are arranged in a way that creates a textured, layered effect. The lighting is soft, highlighting the intricate details of the fern leaves.

Our Vision

Island and coastal communities are thriving with a resilient economy that strengthens the wellbeing of all people and the environment.

Our Mission

To strategically invest in inclusive economic development, diversification, and innovation in partnership with communities across Vancouver Island, the Sunshine Coast, and islands and inlets from the Salish Sea to Cape Caution.

Our Core Values

Trust and reciprocity

We foster high-trust, reciprocal relationships across our region.

Compassion and collaboration

We achieve more together by embracing empathy and curiosity.

Honesty and integrity

We conduct ourselves with uncompromising honesty and integrity.

Learning and growing

We are always learning, embracing challenges with a growth mindset.

Transparency and accountability

We are responsible for our actions and openly communicate our decisions.

Planning Context

Situation and Strategy at Inception

At our initial, region-wide, strategic planning meeting in 2006, community and business leaders recognized that the Trust's founding \$50 million could not be locked into long-term investments to realize the broad mandate received from the Government of B.C. The initial government direction was to deploy the money, putting it to work in impactful economic transition and diversification projects across the coast.

As a result, our founding Trust board strategically placed the capital as communities' own equity, leveraging new private and public investments into major infrastructure projects and economic development initiatives across our region. This included investing \$5 million — 10% — of the Trust's capital into the Nanaimo Airport expansion.

That single strategic investment has generated more than \$445 million — nine times the Trust's founding capital — in direct new economic impact in our region.

Since our founding, communities have worked together to secure new investment to transform the Trust into a permanent, financially sustainable, regional development organization. This aligns with how other regions of British Columbia are empowered and equipped to grow and diversify their own economies with sustainable trusts.

Independent Legislative Recommendations

The Act that governs the Trust must be reviewed by a qualified, independent committee who makes recommendations to the Government of B.C. every five years.

Since the first review of the Trust's Act in 2011, each legislative committee has recommended that the Government of B.C. amend the Act to remove its limit on provincial funding of the Trust. This would enable further capitalization and allow Indigenous governments a defined role in the Trust's governance.

The most recent independent legislative review was published in March 2022, which states:

“ There is an opportunity to combine recapitalization with a renewed vision for the Trust that sees it as a three-way partnership between Indigenous governments, local governments, and the provincial government. ”

In March 2022, the Government of B.C. published its Action Plan for the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act. In the Plan, government commits to work with the Trust and First Nation partners to develop a mechanism that ensures inclusion of First Nations at a regional decision-making level.

A Consensus Vision Across the Coast

In preparing the 2023–2026 Strategic Plan, community leaders reflected on key learnings from the Trust’s first 16 years, recent independent legislative recommendations, as well as the social and economic situations faced by coastal communities, businesses, and people.

To support the strategic planning process, members of the regional advisory committees, board, and CEO engaged with First Nations, local governments, non-profit organizations, industry associations, businesses, along with provincial and federal government ministries and agencies regarding key decisions ahead in 2023–2026.

From this dialogue, a clear vision was formed and coastal communities called for two vital actions:

- ✓ Provide the Government of B.C. with a comprehensive business plan for a generational investment of at least \$150 million to equip coastal communities with a permanent community-led regional trust that invests in inclusive sustainable development for generations to come.
- ✓ Facilitate dialogue with First Nations governments, local governments, and the Province of British Columbia towards realizing full inclusion of First Nations in the Trust’s governance through a new model of co-governance.

It is from this consensus vision and vital actions that we developed our goals and objectives for 2023–2026.

Looking Ahead

The board of directors has established the following strategic goals and objectives that we seek to achieve by March 2026.

These goals and objectives respond to the questions raised and reflect our dedicated efforts to fulfill our Regional Advisory Committees' (all mayors, chairs, and M.L.A.s from across the coastal region we serve) and the board's long-term vision and mission.

Island Coastal Economic Trust will develop detailed annual implementation plans setting our specific actions and targets to achieve each strategic goal throughout the 2023-2026 period. Results from these efforts will be publicly reported in the Trust's annual Impact Reports.

Our Strategic Goals

Goal 1

Transform the Trust into a permanent, co-governed, regional development organization for coastal communities

Goal 2

Empower communities and partners to build an increasingly inclusive, productive, adaptive, and resilient coastal economy

Goal 3

Strengthen the stewardship and operations of the Trust

Goal 4

Facilitate continuous learning and knowledge sharing



Goal 1

Transform the Trust into a permanent, co-governed, regional development organization for coastal communities.

To achieve Goal 1, we are focused on the following strategic objectives:

- 1. Secure investment that sufficiently capitalizes the Trust to invest long-term; generate sustainable returns that drive local and regional economic impact in perpetuity.**

Result: Consistent with their consensus-based vision, coastal communities are equipped with an investment of at least \$150 million in our Trust by the Government of B.C. to ensure our region has a reliable, self-determining, financial resource to initiate work on their long-term vision for a resilient economy that strengthens the wellbeing of all people and the environment.

- 2. In partnership with First Nations governments, local governments, and the Province of British Columbia, realize full inclusion of First Nations in our governance through restructuring of the Regional Advisory Committees and board of directors' membership eligibility, appointment processes, and our governing documents.**

Results: We have provided an actionable proposal to the Government of B.C. for amendments to the North Island-Coast Development Initiative Trust Act, resulting from a consensus-based decision-making process involving First Nations governments, local governments, and the Government of B.C.

Results:
continued

We have developed new bylaws and policies to realize co-governance of our Trust by First Nations governments and local governments.

3. Develop a comprehensive Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) investment strategy that is inclusive of Indigenous Rights to generate robust and sustainable financial returns.

Result:

The board, with engagement of an independent actuarial firm, has established a Statement of Investment Policy that realizes positive ESG and Indigenous Rights outcomes and strong long-term financial returns for investment in regional economic development initiatives.

4. Engage in partnerships to find new opportunities to fund sustainable economic development.

Result:

We have formed new partnerships to increase our delivery of third-party funding programs that support community-led sustainable development initiatives and economic capacity building efforts.



Goal 2

Empower communities and partners to build an increasingly inclusive, productive, adaptive, and resilient coastal economy.

To achieve Goal 2, we are focused on the following strategic objectives:

- 1. Actively engage with First Nations, local governments, community-owned enterprises, social purpose organizations, regional partners, and industry associations to fund their priority infrastructure projects and capacity building initiatives.**

Results: The funding available for each program we offer is fully subscribed each year.

We have engaged in dialogue with each First Nation and local government across the region to develop short- and long-term economic development priorities we can fund or support.

- 2. Develop community economic development capacity and human capital across our region.**

Results: Coastal communities are increasingly investment-ready through our investments in sector development, investment attraction, regional collaboration, and strategic initiatives.

Our scholarship and bursary practices are evolved to strengthen inclusion and to invest in the human capacity

development of Indigenous People, youth, women, and gender-diverse individuals with respect to community and economic development.

3. Strengthen the financial sustainability and long-term resiliency of infrastructure investments in the communities we serve.

Results: For every major infrastructure investment made, we are collaborating with each community through the project development and funding process to ensure the community has pro forma financial projections for revenues, operations and maintenance, and capital replacement.

We are de-risking project investments by incorporating climate change mitigation or adaptation planning and disaster (i.e., wildfire, flooding) planning into their development.

4. Foster the creation of quality public spaces that capitalize on communities' assets, inspiration, and potential – directly strengthening local businesses and people's health, happiness, and wellbeing.

Results: Communities throughout the region are actively developing projects we are funding through our Community Placemaking program – a partnership with 4VI and Destination BC.

Goal 3

Strengthen the stewardship and operations of the Trust.

To achieve Goal 3, we are focused on the following strategic objectives:

- 1. Establish a Wellbeing Impact Framework to evaluate each prospective project's anticipated positive impacts on human and community wellbeing (economic, social, environmental, cultural outcomes) and to monitor and evaluate the actual wellbeing outcomes each project realizes, following implementation.**

Result: In collaboration with the Regional Advisory Committees, partners, and government, we have developed a leading Wellbeing Impact Framework to quantify the measurable contribution its investments are making in the regional economy.

- 2. Evolve each funding program to strategically focus investments on meaningfully strengthening wellbeing (economic, social, environmental, cultural outcomes).**

Result: Every program we offer is re-designed (Application Guide, Forms, Agreements, Reporting) to embed our new wellbeing-focused monitoring, evaluation, and learning framework.

3. Strengthen internal controls, empower staff to engage more deeply in project development with communities, and enable the Trust to report on its impact through improved systems and processes.

Results: We have implemented an enterprise-level relationship, project, and funding management system to underpin all aspects of our operations.

Applicants can easily and reliably apply for funding online through [our website](#).

Accounting and investment stewardship systems are modernized.

4. Develop the internal human resource capacity to deliver on our evolved mandate, our co-governance model, our ESG and Indigenous Rights investment strategies, and our new impact framework.

Results: Our board and officers have formed a human resource plan encompassing organizational design, required competencies and capacity to deliver on our mandate, employee professional development and retention, management and board succession, and design of a new organizational chart, and design of strong internal controls.

We have developed our internal human capacity, per the human resource plan, to effectively deliver on our mandate.

5. Continuously improve governance policies and processes to support the board's strategic governance and long-term stewardship of our Trust.

Results: We have developed a new board charter for our Trust; we have updated our director competency matrix to inform future director recruitment, including Regional Advisory Committee and Crown Agencies and Board Resourcing Office (CABRO) appointments; we have formed an organization-wide ethical conduct policy and practices; our board has established a process for board self-evaluation and ongoing board development, and more.

Our policies are published on our website to ensure transparency and to serve as a public resource for other organizations in B.C.



Sheringham Lighthouse, Shirley,
Vancouver Island. Photo by Colin Dudeck.

Goal 4

Facilitate continuous learning and knowledge sharing.

To achieve Goal 4, we are focused on the following strategic objectives:

- 1. Monitor and evaluate funded projects for wellbeing outcomes (economic, environmental, social, and cultural) in collaboration with the governments and organizations we fund.**

Result: Organizations who have undertaken projects with funding from our Trust are focused on strengthening wellbeing and learning how their projects are driving positive change across our Wellbeing Impact Framework.

We are learning from publicly reporting on economic, environmental, social, and cultural outcomes and subsequent regional impact on an annual basis.

- 2. In tandem with identifying quantifiable project-based outcomes, we are collaborating with communities and funding recipients to capture key learnings, qualitative and nuanced wellbeing outcomes, and the knowledge gained in the region through project impact stories.**

Result: We are regularly publishing project impact stories that weave together quantifiable project-based outcomes with stories that convey what's been learned and the positive impacts resulting in communities from our investments.

3. Proactively share community-based stories that facilitate continuous learning, peer mentoring, and knowledge sharing across and beyond our region.

Results: We have launched a digital platform for knowledge sharing, connections with/between community champions and changemakers, and resources to support economic development initiatives.

We've established an active social media presence, measured by audience size and level of engagement, that is focused on knowledge sharing and continuous learning supporting regional economic development.

4. Build community leadership capacity across Trust-funded organizations, by deepening connections across the coast, facilitating peer mentoring, and building high performance teams.

Results: In 2024, we will convene our first annual multi-day Social Impact Summit that brings together project leaders from across the region to provide experiential leadership development opportunities and connection and partnership-building opportunities between the organizations that we fund.

We will initiate a new team-based leadership development program for experienced and newly elected First Nations and local government leaders, as well as for community champions who serve on the boards of social purpose organizations. This will focus on principles-based governance training, leading high-performance teams, and conflict resolution to empower local leaders to strategically govern and strengthen the impactful organizations they lead.

A full-page background image showing a dramatic sunset or sunrise over the ocean. The sky is filled with layers of clouds, some dark and some illuminated with bright orange and yellow light from the sun. A single bird is visible in flight in the upper left portion of the sky. The ocean is visible at the bottom of the frame.

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COASTAL
ECONOMIC
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