

## 2023-2 Renewing the Manitoba Social Enterprise Strategy

Mover: BUILD Inc.

The Government of Manitoba should immediately commit to supporting the social enterprise sector by spurring the development and scaling of social enterprises, including through a renewed community-led Manitoba Social Enterprise Strategy. This should include:

- A. 5 years of funding for the strategy
- B. Resourcing and funding a community-led strategy, with a government and sector decision-making body, ability to adjust work plans annually with sector engagement, strategic management by CCEDNet Manitoba, and alignment with other provincial educational and workforce development strategies, including ones developed to support Winnipeg's Sustainable Procurement Action Plan
- C. A set of sector development activities planned using sector-engagement and the 6 pillars of social enterprise development (skills & capacity, markets, finance, impact measurement, regulatory environment changes, and sector network development)
- D. Opportunities to undertake research to further document the sector's needs, current state, and impact
- E. Increasing training funding for social enterprises who work alongside low-income individuals facing barriers to employment and whose mandates include workforce integration

**Because:** There are encouraging opportunities for Manitoba ahead that simultaneously would help address social challenges while building an inclusive provincial economy. Social enterprises can be leveraged in Manitoba's economic recovery from COVID-19 and through tumultuous challenges.

**Because:** Positive stories of socially innovative approaches to complex challenges across the province inspire new thinking and challenge government to invest in and support these opportunities. Social enterprises contribute to outcomes like local employment and addressing labour shortages, reduced recidivism, family reunification, reduced poverty, improved environmental outcomes, and more.

**Because:** Social enterprises are building up our local economies while strengthening the social fabric of our communities. They often take a 'triple bottom line' approach - considering people, planet, and profit. Manitoba needs more of this approach. And the provincial government can help make it happen.

**Because:** Social enterprises grow local and fair economies by strategically using a business model that blends and values both social and financial impact. In social enterprises, surplus revenue is reinvested into the mission of the business, and the focus is on realizing social or environmental outcomes such as the creation of jobs for people facing barriers to employment, providing community services not served by traditional markets, growing green economy products and services, or generating revenue for non-profits. Since 2018, there hasn't been a consistent provincial approach to government relations or support for this impactful and ready-to-grow economic model.

**Because:** This model is innovative and is proving to have social and economic value in a number of communities across Manitoba as evidenced by several SROI and evaluative reports. Social enterprises are contributing to economic growth, providing opportunities for training and employment to people who might otherwise not be able to find decent work, and are filling gaps in the market in often excluded

communities. These businesses make a unique impact in communities, and ensure value created is reinvested in communities. However, social enterprises have unique development and financing challenges as well as a unique relationship with the public sector, because of the blend between social and/or environmental impact and business practices.

**Because:** Social Enterprise is a common and increasingly favourable model for building local and fair economies. It is adaptable, responsive to community needs and assets, and typically collectively owned. Providing resources for overall sector development that are informed by evidence, co-designed and implemented by both community and government stakeholders, and aligned with emerging strategies in other jurisdictions is an effective and efficient way that the Government of Manitoba can support this model. A new phase of the Manitoba Social Enterprise Strategy (MSES) can immediately build on previous work and ready the sector to capture emerging resources from other sectors and government jurisdictions.

**Because:** Across Canada, governments are recognizing social enterprise impacts and needs, and are developing strategic approaches to help this model grow and increase impact. While there have been some supportive programs or initiatives in Manitoba, these continue to be piecemeal and incomplete, with waning support and consistently changing government stakeholders and priorities. For instance, the original MSES, developed collaboratively with government and community stakeholders in 2014 and financially resourced over 2015-2018, had inconsistent government staff involvement, a reduced budget in the final year, and eventually was not renewed at the end of the first phase of activity. At the same time, commitments to social procurement and social finance have been variable, and the government's economic development approach has been changing rapidly.

**Because:** The Government of Manitoba has indicated through its Ministerial Mandate Letters and several overarching statements that it is interested in innovation, effective practice, streamlined economic development approaches, and teamwork. Several existing strategies note social enterprise as a possible approach, including Look North. Concurrently, the Federal Government is developing a Social Innovation and Social Finance Strategy that heavily features social enterprise and will include a Social Finance Fund. The local sector will struggle to leverage those opportunities without well-organized and resourced local development supports. The MSES was an emerging initiative that was working well to prepare the sector for growth, connect sector leaders and relevant government stakeholders, pilot development tools, and document sector needs and a renewed commitment to this approach can ensure the sector is able to capture and leverage opportunity for greater impact in Manitoba communities.

**How the Resolution will be Advanced:** CCEDNet Manitoba will work with existing and potential members of the social enterprise community to advance this resolution. The We Want to Work coalition will champion it through its provincial advocacy and coalition work. The Manitoba Social Finance Working Group will also support advocacy related to the financing recommendations of a Social Enterprise Strategy, including all revenue structures to support social enterprise.