

USET Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy



Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

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Section 1: Background

A Tribal Nation's ability to exercise and promote its sovereignty and self-determination is tied, in part, to the economic wellbeing of its people. Many Tribal Nations are rich with assets but lack the capacity to convert those assets to scalable economic development. Limited resources, geographic isolation from viable markets, poor or non-existent economic development planning, staff without formal training, and a disconnection to the established infrastructure to foster economic growth adversely impacts Tribal economic development efforts. In order to succeed in Tribal Nation rebuilding viable economies need to be established and sustained that attract capital investment, create quality jobs, and develop strong Native businesses. USET's initiatives for economic development are aligned with President Obama's vision for Indian Country expressed below,

I believe that one day, we're going to be able to look back on these years and say that this was a turning point. This was the moment when we began to build a strong middle class in Indian Country; the moment when businesses, large and small, began opening up in reservations; the moment when we stopped repeating the mistakes of the past, and began building a better future together, one that honors old traditions and welcomes every Native American into the American Dream.

Throughout the United States highly functioning regional economic development agencies have established an infrastructure to provide financing and quality technical assistance to local governments and businesses looking for growth. These organizations manage over \$15 billion in assets, including \$10 billion in loan capital annually. They function on a regional basis enabling them to leverage resources to maximize impact. Regional economic development organizations are able to efficiently and effectively deliver training and technical assistance to a critical mass of entrepreneurs, economic development professionals, community organizations, and others looking to improve the quality of life in a community, more so than local or government based programs simply because of the resource sharing. As a result, regional economic development agencies help create and sustain tens of thousands of jobs on an annual basis. They expand market opportunities for small and midsize businesses to grow. And, they often facilitate the development of public infrastructure to serve both business and community needs.

Unfortunately, this infrastructure and capacity is not replicated in Indian Country. *Growing Economies in Indian Country* outlined eight issues as fundamental challenges to realizing

economic growth in Indian Country. USET and the eastern Tribal Nations, with few exceptions, face these same challenges:

1. Insufficient access to capital
2. Capacity and capital constraints of small business
3. Insufficient workforce development; financial management training; and business education
4. Tribal governance constraints
5. Regulatory constraints on land held in trust and land designated as restricted use
6. Underdeveloped physical infrastructure
7. Insufficient research and data
8. Lack of regional collaboration

Recognizing USET member Tribal Nations are at varying levels of capacity and development, there are overarching challenges that impact economic development. The complexity of the establishment and implementation of tax codes and fees, as well as associated business incentives, present significant barriers for Tribal Nations to fully exercise their sovereignty. A general lack of internal capacity amongst Tribal Nations, coupled with a lack of understanding from state and federal agencies of settlement agreements, Tribal tax policy, and incentive programs specifically related to Tribal Nations, limit self-determination and sovereignty.

Education and workforce development also present challenges to many USET member Tribal Nation's economic potential. Limited employment opportunities in the region, misalignment of skills with available jobs, and issues associated with social ills perpetuate the cycle of poverty. These issues impact the aspirations of young Tribal citizens both in terms of education attainment and professional vision. Although many USET member Tribal Nations have policies or ordinances associated with Tribal employment, there are a limited number of full-time Tribal Employment Rights Ordinance (TERO) departments that support workforce development.

The lack of accurate, current, and reliable data on USET member Tribal Nations affect the ability to access certain federal programs, grants, and services as a limited number of Tribal Nations are recognized as a census designated place (CDP). Collecting sound sociodemographic data will not only increase access to programs, it provides leadership with timely information they need to make good decisions.

USET lacks the necessary infrastructure – Community Development Financing Institution (CDFI), business lending, direct economic development technical assistance, professional development and training, and a data depository with current and reliable Tribal statistics – as

well as a comprehensive economic development strategy (CEDS) to deliver quality economic development support at a regional level. Compounding this challenge is the limited capacity within individual USET member Tribes - few number of professional economic development staff, lack of knowledge of business development programs, limited access to capital and credit, and non-existent systems to evaluate and advance economic development opportunities - and the lack of Tribal-level comprehensive economic development strategies (CEDS) that prevent sustained economic development, minimizes capital investment, and hampers the creation of quality jobs that impact cultural, social, and economic conditions necessary to strengthen Tribal sovereignty, realizing self-determination, and achieve Tribal Nation rebuilding.

USET and its partners have established a strong foundation to adopt/develop sound economic development programs and services to transform the quality of life on reservations, fully recognizing the unique challenges facing Tribal economies need to be considered in the development process. To achieve impact and sustain community change, infrastructure and capacity building must be develop internally within USET, establishing a truly regional Native economic development agency; externally within the member Tribes; and integrated across USET's sphere of influence. Over a period of time with the necessary support community economic development capacity at USET and member Tribes can be realized focused on asset-based development, market opportunities associated with value-chains, and the alignment of cultural values.

USET Overview

United South and Eastern Tribes, Incorporated: United South and Eastern Tribes, Incorporated (USET) is comprised of 26 federally recognized American Indian Tribes in Maine, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas. USET was developed to work as an advocate for its four founding Tribes (**Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians** [Cherokee, North Carolina], **Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida** [Miami, Florida], **Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians** [Choctaw, Mississippi], and the **Seminole Tribe of Florida** [Hollywood, Florida]) on national issues and to promote nation-to-nation resource sharing.

In 1969, USET was officially incorporated and received 501(c) 3 status. Over the 45 years of USET's existence, 22 additional Tribes have become members: **Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana** (Charenton, Louisiana-1971), **Seneca Nation of Indians** (Salamanca, New York-1972), **Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana** (Elton, Louisiana-1974), **St. Regis Mohawk Tribe**

(Hogansburg, New York-1976), **Penobscot Indian Nation** (Indian Island, Maine-1979), **Passamaquoddy Tribe Indian Township** (Princeton, Maine-1979), **Passamaquoddy Tribe Pleasant Point** (Perry, Maine-1979), **Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians** (Littleton, Maine-1981), **Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana** (Marksville, Louisiana-1984), **Poarch Band of Creek Indians** (Atmore, Alabama-1984), **Narragansett Indian Tribe** (Charlestown, Rhode Island-1984), **Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation** (Mashantucket, Connecticut-1984), **Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head-Aquinnah** (Aquinnah, Massachusetts-1987), **Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas** (Livingston, Texas-1989), **Oneida Indian Nation** (Verona, New York-1991), **Aroostook Band of Micmacs** (Presque Isle, Maine-1992), **Catawba Indian Nation** (Rock Hill, South Carolina-1993), **Jena Band of Choctaw Indians** (Jena, Louisiana-1995), **The Mohegan Tribe of Connecticut** (Uncasville, Connecticut-1996), **Cayuga Nation** (Seneca Falls, New York-2000), **Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe** (Mashpee, Massachusetts-2007), **Shinnecock Indian Nation** (Southampton, New York-2011).

Mission: United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc. is dedicated to enhancing the development of Federally recognized Indian Tribes, *to improving the capabilities of Tribal governments*, to assist the USET members and their governments in dealing effectively with public policy issues and in serving the broad needs of Indian people.

Economic Development and Entrepreneurship Committee Purpose: The Economic Development and Entrepreneurship Committee guides the United South and Eastern Tribes' economic development core competency by developing programs and services that build capacity, facilitate collaboration, and advocate on behalf of member Tribal Nations that leads to a strong social, cultural, and economic future.

Statement of Unity: *a. To promote Indian leadership in order to move forward in the ultimate, desirable goal of complete Indian involvement and responsibility at all levels in Indian affairs; b. To lift the bitter yoke of poverty from our people through cooperative effort; c. To promote better understanding of the issues involving Indian Tribes and other people; d. To advocate for more effective use of existing local, state, federal, and international resources; e. To promote a forum for exchange of ideas; f. To combine our voices so we can be heard clearly by local, state, federal, and international governments; g. To dedicate ourselves to improvement of the quality of life for American Indians through increased health, education, social services and housing opportunities; h. To reaffirm the commitments of our Tribes to the treaties and agreements heretofore entered into with the Federal Government in a government-to-government relationship and to promote the reciprocity of this relationship and those agreements and treaties; and; i. To provide protection of Tribal natural resources.*

Capacity Building Leading to CEDS

Part of the initial vision for USET was advocacy to overcome the historic trauma and challenges preventing Tribal Nations from becoming healthy communities. Economic development has been a primary focus for the organization. Its efforts to promote business development, employment, and infrastructure has been limited to the work produced by the USET Economic Development committee. To have a greater impact on making positive change, members of USET Tribal leadership have requested assistance from the organization to develop resources and services that will promote these desired changes and impact their economies. As a result, USET has worked diligently since 2012 to work closely with the 26 member Tribal Nations to determine the need and expected valued resources and services that would be needed to create formal regional economic development core competency within the organization. These resources are expected to begin the process of rebuilding or promoting a Tribal Nation's capacity to richly engage in economic development activities. USET has hired a development director, Brandon Stephens (Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians) to begin the program development process for establishing a regional economic development program. Mr. Stephens has done extensive outreach to the member Tribal Nations to gain an initial sense of the current capacity within each Tribe, the challenges they face, the need for and interest in specific programs and services, and the opportunities for collaboration. To shape this proposal, discussions have been held with Tribal leaders, economic development directors, urban planners, various employees and Tribal members committed to economic development. The following are the outreach activities conducted over the last two years:

- Monthly conference calls with USET's Economic Development and Entrepreneurship Committee members
- Two-day economic development workshops held at USET Impact Week, Annual-meeting, and Semi-annual meetings
- Economic development survey with 18 Tribal Nations responding inquiring about current state of their economic development efforts, current needs for support, and vision for the future
- Telephone interviews with all 26 member Tribal Nations
- Six-month USET organizational strategic planning process
- Site visits to 23 Tribal Nations and corresponding meetings with Tribal leadership specifically related to economic development

11 other committees at USET also complement work of the Economic Development and Entrepreneurship. They include:

- Housing
- Health
- Culture and Heritage

- Education
- Natural Resources
- Social Services
- Transportation
- Tribal Administration
- Tribal Emergency Services
- Tribal Justice
- Veteran’s Committee

Leadership from the USET member Tribal Nations, who are subject matter experts in these 12 fields or disciplines, serve on the various committees to address issues, challenges, and seek opportunity to promote nation rebuilding among their communities.

Sociodemographic Data

Geographic barriers, cultural differences, and variable federal regulations along with state and Tribal laws are all typical examples of the challenges USET Tribal Nations encounter in pursuit of economic development opportunities. The result of these challenges for USET Tribal Nations has inadequate or high cost infrastructure like broadband Internet, electrical power, poor highway access, or a lack of developable property.

Household Income Below Poverty: The percentage of households with income below the poverty line provides a true perspective of economic distress. According to the 2007-2011 American Community Survey (ACS) 14.3 percent of all households have incomes below the poverty level. As the table below indicates, the percentage of American Indian households living in poverty is significantly higher with Maine (29.9%) reporting more than twice that of the nation (14.9%).

Table 1: Poverty Rates for American Indian and Alaska Native by State: 2007-2011

State	Percent	State	Percent
Alabama	22.9	Mississippi	23.4
Connecticut	14.3	New York	22.3
Florida	20.9	North Carolina	26.9
Louisiana	24.7	Rhode Island	25.5

Maine	29.9	South Carolina	23.3
Massachusetts	20.9	Texas	18.1

US Census Bureau, 2007-2011 American Community Survey

Unemployment: In considering unemployment reported in the 2007-2011 ACS, Native American unemployment rates were 45.3% higher than national rates in 2007 and are currently 38.9% higher than national unemployment rates. This trend holds true for USET Tribal Nations as the Bureau of Indian Affairs American Indian Population and Labor Force Report shows unemployment at an average of 26% compared to 6.9% nationally.

Table 2: American Indian/Alaska Native of Tribal Service Population 16 and Older Civilian Unemployment by State; 2007-2012

State	Percent	State	Percent
Alabama	35.5	Mississippi	39.8
Connecticut	45.0	New York	49.8
Florida	42.1	North Carolina	53.6
Louisiana	48.3	Rhode Island	50.7
Maine	53.2	South Carolina	49.5
Massachusetts	38.0	Texas	40.7

Education and Training: USET Tribal Nations report higher rates of Tribal members graduating high school and earning post-secondary educations today than any other point in time. Most Tribes are extremely close to a major state university or have a junior/community college in close proximity. This provides a tremendous opportunity for economic growth. Unfortunately, as a result of limited opportunities, graduates are unable to find work or develop private businesses within their Tribal Nations. Most graduates must work for Tribal or federal government, gaming, or healthcare. Tribes are reporting outmigration of the Tribal Nations' best and brightest which diminishes the number of people in the skilled labor force, another determinant for private business investment and development.

Business Landscape: Almost all Tribal Nations report having little to no retail business on their reservation or trust property. The majority of Tribal Nations have beautiful vistas, vast natural resources, and attractions that have potential to promote tourism on their reservations. However, the lack of retail, hospitality, and other tourism infrastructure greatly restricts economic opportunity. Three Tribes report that they have an active tourism authority, chamber of commerce or simply being engaged in tourism. The overall economic characteristic is small businesses and convenience stores. Major employers are Tribal, federal and state government and seasonal agriculture (farming and aquaculture). Some form of gaming, from high stakes bingo to Class III casinos, is operated by 16 of the 26 Tribal Nations. Due to a lack of retail businesses, reservations have less ability to generate money. Tribal economic development directors have stated Tribal employees must buy goods and services off the reservation after they are paid with Tribal dollars.

Legal: Most Tribal Nations do not have adequate legal policy or codes to support economic development activities. In a survey conducted of all USET Tribal Nations in 2015, those responding reported not having a Uniform Commercial Codes (UCC), tax code, zoning, or TERO. Some Tribes stated a need to develop laws regarding highway, utility right of ways and tower placement.

USET Region: Primarily, USET Tribal Nations are east of the Mississippi River with the exception of four in Louisiana and one in Texas. A map illustrating the Tribes' locations has been included in the Appendices.

Land: USET Tribal Nations have an average of 45 square miles of reservation or trust property. The smallest is a 200-acre territory on a 424 square mile reservation. A majority of the reservations are in rural and isolated areas.

Section 2: Economic Development Analysis

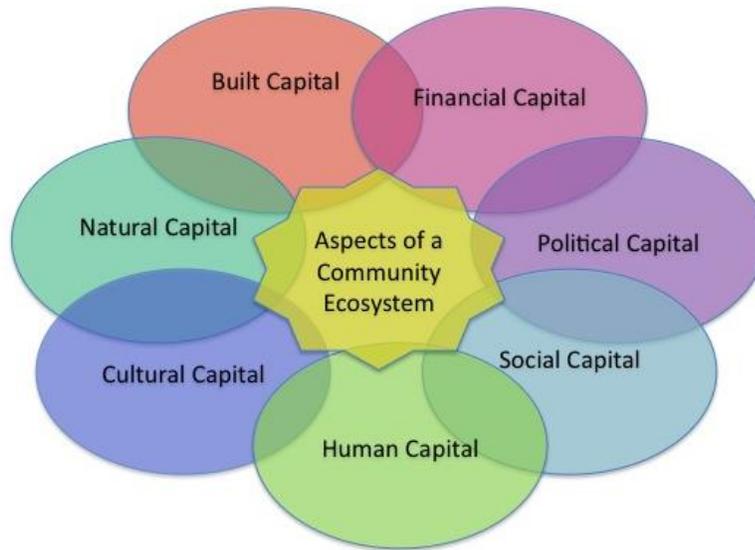
To gain a sense of the economic landscape USET member Tribal Nations face, an analysis was conducted. Through a series of site visits, interviews, and secondary research an environmental scan was conducted of USET's 26 member Tribal Nations. Using the community capital framework based on seven forms of capital, an analysis was conducted that identified assets present across multiple USET Tribes. Also considered is the definition of economic clusters that emerged across multiple Tribal Nations that create opportunity for economic growth, job creation, capital investment, and increased household income. The section culminates in a SWOT analysis.

Community Capital Analysis

The concept of “community capitals” offers USET and its member Tribal Nations an overarching framework that puts in context Tribal assets associated with multiple forms of capital. The notion of “capital” is usually associated with business and investment. A fundamental definition for “capital” is a resource or asset that can be used, invested, or exchanged to create or leverage new resources. Community capital considers seven forms of capital that interact in the development process.

Taking a systems approach using the seven forms of capital as a framework allows the CEDS process to map assets, identify resources, surface opportunities, and leverage support in an integrated fashion that creates programming, partnership, funding, and policy opportunities to advance the strategic direction of both USET and its member Tribal Nations. The figure below outlines characteristics within each form of community capital relevant to the CEDS.

Figure 1: Community Capitals Framework



Source: Community Capitals Framework & Sustainable Communities, Cornelia Butler Flora, Rural Studies Research Seminar, July 4, 2006, University of Guelph

Table 1: CEDS Community Capitals–Overview

Natural	Cultural
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant land holdings • Forest – Tree Growth • Oceanfront • Agricultural • River access • Lakes • Fisheries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural traditions • Language • Ceremony and ritual • Artisan work • Music and dance • Cultural centers/Museums • Events and festivals
Human	Social
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elder tradition • Growing population • Younger population • Strong Tribal leadership • Entrepreneurship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USET Mission of Unity • Strong social bonds across Tribal Nations • Sense of community that extends across Indian Country

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health professionals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive formal and informal partnerships
Built	Political
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality community facilities • Sewer and water infrastructure • Established housing departments • Gaming facilities • Facilities that support economic development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unity • 501(c)(4) • Policy and legislation commitment • Washington, DC presence • Strong relationship with federal agencies • Partnership – Native and non-Native
Financial/Economic	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy • Building development capacity/opportunities • Gaming revenue • Economic diversification • Tribal enterprise • Tourism • Film/Digital media • Inter-tribal markets • 8(a) opportunities • Corporate supplier diversity • International trade • HUBZone • Minority Business Enterprise • Dedicated capital pools 	

USET Community Capital Overview

USET and its member Tribal Nations enjoy an abundance of community capital and assets that enhance economic development potential. The analysis of community capital indicate that capital structures vary across USET member Tribes with the majority having significant capital

accumulation in certain forms of capital. However, a number of non-gaming Tribal Nations struggle to realize capital accumulation in key forms such as economic, and as a result other forms of capital are impacted. All forms of capital are well represented across the USET region; unfortunately there are significant gaps in capital accumulation at the Tribal level.

Throughout the USET region capital can be leveraged through partnerships and collaborative efforts that lead to increased accumulation and impact without having to establish considerable new infrastructure and relationships. Uncertainty of financial capital presents a challenge to the long-term sustainability of economic growth. There is a growing need for economic diversification that augments gaming and builds on the strengths of the Tribal Nations. Diversification should include investments in ventures both on and off-reservation.

Below offers an analysis of assets associated with the seven forms of capital.

Natural Capital

USET member Tribal Nations have nearly 900,000 acres of land held in trust or as fee land. The land is situated throughout the eastern and southern United States and includes considerable forestland, water frontage – both ocean and freshwater, and agricultural lands. Tribal Nations with land holdings in excess of 50,000 acres are:

- Cayuga Nation
- Eastern Band of Cherokee
- Oneida Indian Nation
- Passamaquoddy Tribe
- Penobscot Indian Nation
- Seminole Tribe of Florida
- Seneca Nation of Indians

Cultural Capital

Assets associated with cultural capital are immense given the cultural traditions that continue to be practiced across member Tribal Nations. Culture serves as a foundation from which community values are based, social capital formed, and economic opportunity shaped. The following outlines the cultural landscape across the USET Region:

- Nearly every Tribal Nation has either an established cultural center or a desire to develop a cultural center.

- With a few exceptions, USET Tribal Nations have a rich tradition of artisans that have established a small business to sell work.
- Roughly half of USET Tribal Nations maintain their Native language and several others are actively seeking ways to restore Native language.
- A wide range of events, festivals, Powwows, and community gathers are held across all USET member Tribal Nations. These gathering often highlight Tribal dancing, music, drumming, and ritual. The majority of these events are open to the public and attract tourists.

Human Capital

Cultural traditions influence human capital as the Tribal Nations have a strong, valued elder population that plays an integral role in community. This is juxtaposed with a growing population of young people 18 years and younger. Tribal leadership is strong across member Tribal Nations and a growing number of young people are actively engaged in Tribal affairs. Education attainment remains below national standards but is improving considerably across the USET region. With economic opportunity education is likely to continue to rise, which will further enhance human capital. A strong entrepreneurial culture has emerged across Tribal members including the growing number of artisans generating income through the sale of artwork, as well as other Native entrepreneurs who have established small businesses.

Social Capital

Strength in unity is at the core of USET's purpose and mission, which points to the significant accumulated social capital to support economic development capacity building. The sense of community extends across member Tribal Nations and throughout Indian Country. USET serves as a facilitator of social capital and its programs and services promote partnerships and collaborations that help build capacity that can support effective economic development. A full analysis of partner and collaborators is outlined below.

Built Capital

Built capital varies across USET member Tribal Nations and is somewhat correlated to the presence of gaming. Gaming Tribes have the financial resources to establish and maintain extensive built capital including gaming operations, health clinics, social and community services, and housing. To support economic activities associated with gaming Tribal Nations have built the necessary infrastructure – water, sewer, solid waste, etc. This infrastructure is available for economic diversification. Non-gaming Tribes have much of the same built capital to support government activities, however, it is not as extensive and it was not as well maintained. Many non-gaming Tribal Nations have plans for expanded built capital and struggle to secure the financial capital for development.

Many USET member Tribal Nations maintain a waiting list of Tribal members interested in returning to the reservation. It is not unusual for 60 to 100 individuals or families within a Tribe to wait for housing. Across the USET region additional housing is needed to meet demand and there is opportunity for USET and its partners to support capacity building associated with housing development.

Political Capital

Through its policy and legislation agenda, USET has established strong political capital that is leveraged both regionally and nationally. The organization is committed to a unified voice and building a visible presence in Washington, DC. USET’s partnership with both Native and non-Native organizations broadens the organization’s influence, reach, and impact. The recent establishment of a 501c4 will provide USET more options to exercise its political capital.

Financial Capital

USET is financially strong and, as an organization, working to build the necessary capacity to increase charitable contributions, secure public and private grants, and diversify earned income streams. Gaming Tribes within the USET region have the financial capital to invest in economic development activities beyond gaming. The majority are looking at the economic diversification of Tribal enterprise both on and off-reservation to ensure financial health as increased competition in gaming develops. For non-gaming Tribal Nations access to capital remains a barrier that USET and its partners must address through the development of loan capital and through leveraging its political capital to influence appropriation levels.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunity and Threats (SWOT)

A SWOT analysis was conducted based on the environmental scan. The SWOT focused on economic development and those issues related specifically to generating economic activity, job creation, wealth, and capital investment. The SWOT considers both USET and its member Tribal Nations.

USET/Tribal Nations Economic Development SWOT

Strengths - USET	Weaknesses – USET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unity of Tribal Nations • Political capital • Longevity • Recognition • Respected voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic diversity • Top level support • Economic development not a priority • Limited staff • Lack of revolving loan fund

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased funding for economic development • CDFI • Success of Tribal Nations • Sharing of data • Increase staff capacity • Established committee structure • Momentum – economic development <p>Tribal Nations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 900,000 acres land base • Economic health of some Tribal Nations • Successful Tribal ventures - retained earnings • 8A/Section 17 • Political relationships • Examples of strong regional economies to build upon • Private sector experience • Decision making process • Federal recognition • Tourism and gaming • Natural resource base • Transportation Networks • Political Stability • Culture • Hub Zone Status • Preferential Status • Skilled labor • Enterprise managed profitably • Financial stewardship • Empowered staff • Younger generation actively involved • Culture of entrepreneurship • Continuity • Clean audit • Strong project management (Int. /Ext.) • Healthcare infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical assistance capacity • Lack of integration/organization culture • Limited non-federal funds to support activity <p>Tribal Nations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure • Tribal politics • Land base for certain Tribal Nations • Trust process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Expensive ○ Slow • Lack of capital • Remote location • Infrastructure • Ability to bond • Broadband • Insufficient economic diversity • Skilled labor • Tribal leadership need for control • Political capital of some Tribal Nations • Risk averse • Long decision making process • Top level support • Prioritization of economic development • Limited resources • Oil/Gas Leases • Due diligence process
<p>Opportunities – USET</p>	<p>Threats – USET</p>

- Political influence
- Partnership and collaboration
- Funding diversification
- Revolving loan fund
- Data depository
- Clearinghouse of business development
- Experian market research
- Expanded technical assistance
- Expanded federal funding partners

Tribal Nations

- Local partnerships
- Strong regional economies
- Preferential status – Sect. 17/8A
- Training for employment
- Federal and state funding
- Private foundation focus
- Acquired land – Natural resources
- Strong economic clusters
 - Wood products
 - Film/Digital Media
- Emerging clusters
 - Energy
 - Healthcare
 - Niche manufacturing
- Public perception
- Technology
- Access to education
- Private sector experience
- Increased government spending
- Improved economy

- Complacency
- Government regulations
- Competing interests
- Relevancy
- Funding

Tribal Nations

- Funding
- Credit markets
- Gaming compact
 - Tied to financing
- Access to capital
- Federal and state agencies
- Government regulation
- Public perception
- Macroeconomic forces
- Competition
- Technology
- Complacency
- Policy/Rule changes
- Setting benchmarks
 - Performance standards
- Competing interests
- Not In My Backyard (NIMB)

Economic Clusters

In conducting the environmental scan, a series of economic clusters emerged where critical economic activities are currently being practiced and significant opportunity can be leveraged through cooperative efforts. USET is strategically positioned to lead sector development activities across the 26 member Tribal Nations. There is a strong desire amongst USET members to work collaboratively. As USET's capacity increases with the development of a formal economic development program the organization will increasingly be in a position to facilitate collaborative work.

Given scarce resources it is important that USET target aspects of its economic development strategy on a limited number of key economic clusters to minimize dilution of both capacity and service, and to ensure impact. Seven economic clusters surfaced:

- Agriculture, Aquaculture, and Fishing
- Artisan – Handmade
- Digital Media and Film
- Forest/Wood Products
- Tourism
- Gaming
- Energy

Agriculture, Aquaculture, and Fishing

Considerable activity in agriculture, aquaculture, and fishing exist across the USET region. Well established agricultural enterprises such as the Passamaquoddy blueberry operation or the Coughatta hydroponic venture serve as a foundation, while other Tribal Nations are exploring agriculture, aquaculture, and fishing for both commercial purposes and for food security.

An area of opportunity for USET member Tribal Nations is in value-added production. A number of Tribes produce raw material that is sold to either a broker or value-added producer. In considering the agriculture/aquaculture/fishing value-chain and cross-sector development, USET member Tribal Nations active in this sector have an opportunity to explore Native-to-Native markets through tourism and gaming establishments. Below is a general outline of activity in this sector.

Agriculture

- Aroostook Band of Micmac – Farm stand
- Coushatta – Hydroponics
- Houlton Band of Maliseet – Lease agricultural lands
- Mashantucket Pequot – Food security initiative
- Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida - Cattle
- Mississippi Band of Choctaw – Organic produce
- Passamaquoddy Tribe – Blueberries, maple syrup
- Seminole - Cattle

Aquaculture

- Aroostook Band of Micmac – Trout hatchery infrastructure
- Eastern Band of Cherokee – Trout hatchery
- Mashpee Wampanoag – Oysters and other shellfish
- Wampanoag of Gay Head – Oysters and other shellfish

Fishing

- Mashpee Wampanoag – Commercial fishing
- Passamaquoddy – Lobster, eels and commercial fishing
- Shinnecock Indian Nation – Commercial fishing
- Wampanoag of Gay Head – Commercial fishing

Artisan-Handmade

With a few exceptions, artisan-handmade activities are flourishing across USET member Tribal Nations. The rich cultural tradition fosters economic activity by artisans and supports economic growth in this sector. However, access to markets remains a significant barrier to sustained economic growth. In addition, building capacity in business acumen, specifically financial literacy, accounting, and marketing is essential for increasing household income. USET can play a range of activities to strengthen the artisan-handmade sector ranging from business training and technical assistance to establishing an artisan cooperative that represents artists across the USET member Tribal Nations.

Film and Digital Media

Film production and digital media surfaced as an economic cluster as a critical mass of Tribal Nations are either actively engaged in film, animation and digital media or are exploring

development of significant film production ventures. The Oneida have established a critically acclaimed film production company that has established clients, a staff of roughly 10, and products that have realized national and international exposure. Native entrepreneurs within Coushatta operate a regional production company working throughout the Gulf Coast. Other Tribal Nations including the Catawba, Penobscot, and Mashantucket Pequot are in the early development and feasibility phase of establishing film/media production. These enterprises are either Tribal ventures or pursued by Native entrepreneurs.

- Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana – Native entrepreneur production company
- Oneida Indian Nation – Tribal enterprise
- Catawba Indian Nation – Tribal enterprise and partnership with established film studio
- Penobscot Indian Nation – Native entrepreneur production company
- Mashantucket Pequot – Tribal enterprise (education based) and partnership with global technology firm

Energy

A number of Tribal Nations are exploring various forms of alternative energy generation and distribution. Significant potential exists in solar, wind, biomass, and waste to energy conversion. Federal funds have supported project feasibility in alternative energy and development is being advanced albeit slow.

Gaming

Over 70% of USET member Tribal Nations operate some form of gaming, which contributes significantly to the Tribal Nation's economic development. Recognizing the importance of gaming to employment, development of ancillary businesses, and revenue generation to support a wide range of Tribal services, the gaming cluster plays an essential role in economic development. The gaming cluster presents great opportunity to support Native 2 Native business development, workforce development, broader tourism development, and expansion of needed infrastructure.

Tourism

All USET member Tribal Nations have some economic interest in tourism. For many Tribal Nations tourism is an integral economic engine that accounts for significant revenue for the Tribal Nation and its members, as well as job creation for the region. Tribal tourism creates

destination locations that attract visitors for a variety of reasons from gaming to fishing and the arts in the case of the Eastern Band of Cherokee.

Tourism has been a consistent economic sector in Indian Country and as a result there are Tribal Nations that have a long-standing economic tradition creating ways visitors can experience the Tribal Nation and its community. Because of the breadth of the tourism sector, USET and its member Tribal Nations must consider strategic product development and diversification. There is opportunity to create vertical integration of tourism products and assess gaps in the value-chain that can be filled. For instance, the class of hotels available on or around reservations may present opportunity.

Wood/Forest Products

Given the forestland holdings of several Tribal Nations, coupled with the expansion of biomass energy production, opportunities are emerging for Tribes to diversify their economic activities and pursue sustainable economic development through a renewable resource. As a raw material, several Tribal Nations are managing and harvesting forestland, employing Tribal members as foresters, loggers, and truckers. A number of Tribes are actively engaged in wood pellets or are in the process of developing manufacturing operations. The Mohegan have aggressively pursued wood pellet production and operate three mills and are entering into production agreements with a host of other manufacturing facilities. Other value-added products such as cabinetry and furniture production have been pursued or explored in recent years.

- Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana – Value-added production
- Eastern Band of Cherokee – Timber management, harvest, and value-added production
- Jena Band of Choctaw – Regional presence of value-added production
- Mohegan Indian Nation – Value-added production
- Passamaquoddy Tribe – Timber management, harvest, and value-added production
- Penobscot Indian Nation – Timber management, harvest, and value-added production

Emerging Economic Clusters

Four emerging economic clusters have been identified that have increased potential for growth. With capital investment, secure contracts and markets, and increased capacity Tribal Nations can establish viable economic interests in these sectors. USET can play a role in sector development similar to their role above. The emerging sectors include:

Niche Manufacturing – Niche manufacturing has been an integral part of Tribal economies over time. The number of Tribal Nations working in manufacturing has ebbed and flowed. Currently, there is a decline in Tribes operating manufacturing facilities. However, there appears to be a shift towards piecework and niche manufacturing that may take hold.

Business Services – A few Tribal Nations operate business service enterprises that support office systems from furniture to technology.

Healthcare – Tribal Nations have developed significant healthcare capacity and infrastructure through Indian health clinics. Partnering with regional non-Tribal healthcare providers may create opportunity to generate earned income, particularly as the Affordable Care Act continues to take hold.

The economic clusters provide USET focus areas for economic development technical assistance and capacity building. Establishing sector specific working groups will provide the necessary technical assistance and peer-to-peer mentoring that will advance multiple Tribal Nations efforts in economic growth and diversification. Areas working groups can impact are:

- Product development
- Value/Supply-chain enhancement
- Market development
- Distribution channels
- Cooperative marketing program
- Capital formation
- Education, training, and workforce development
- Shared staffing
- Technology/Systems development
- Policy and legislation influence

Section 3: Goals and Objectives

The planning process revealed a series of core themes in which goals have been defined. The core themes serve as a means to define goals and objectives, organize activities, and effectively evaluate impact. The core themes and associated goals are:

THEME: THRIVING ECONOMIC CLIMATE

GOAL: Encourage and promote programs to provide access to capital, credit, and markets, particularly those focusing on economic clusters and targeted sectors that lead to capital investment, job creation, and increased household income.

THEME: NATION REBUILDING – SOVEREIGNTY

GOAL: Advance Nation rebuilding and Tribal sovereignty by realizing self-determination through economic development, job creation, income generation, and the accumulation of assets.

THEME: CAPACITY BUILDING

GOAL: Provide targeted technical assistance to build the capacity across USET member Tribal Nations that sustains economic growth and better prepares USET member Tribes to recognize and respond to viable, high value economic opportunity.

THEME: PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

GOAL: Foster inter-tribal partnership and collaboration that supports and advances nation rebuilding, economic growth, capital investment, and an improved quality of life.

THEME: QUALITY OF LIFE AND PLACE

GOAL: Enhance the quality of life and sense of place within Tribal communities by celebrating Native culture, developing quality housing, and conducting sound community planning that changes the way of life in Indian Country.

Section 4: Community and Private Sector Participation

USET has developed various strategic alliance partnerships to facilitate its work to reach its goals and objectives, which support its service mission. These partnerships are developed and employed with organizations, federal agencies, academic research institutions, and governments through written covenants, contracts, memoranda, and expressed actions of their authority to support economic development and other complementing actions that support the rebuilding of Tribal Nations to construct healthy Tribal Nations.

Collaboration has been recognized by USET and its many partnerships as an essential, if not critical, component to ensuring success with implementing projects and initiatives, especially when utilizing scarce resources, and to making meaningful impact throughout Indian Country. These partnerships work locally, regionally, and nationally. USET strives to create strategic alliance partnerships that will promote its service mission. Recognizing its strength with government and non-government partnerships, a goal for USET is to build private sector partnerships to promote economic activity and development with its member Tribal Nations.

Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, Inc. (ATNI) – A covenant was created between USET and ATNI to promote collaborative actions on initiatives and activities that will promote building capacity for Tribal Nations to rebuild their communities so they may exercise their sovereignty and ability to determine their own future. The covenant was passed and recognized by both organizations on October 10, 2010.

National Congress of American Indians, Inc. (NCAI) – A strategic alliance partnership exists between USET and NCAI on the premise of promoting activities that will strengthen Tribal communities. The agreement promotes the open interaction of both organizations to develop resources and pursue initiatives that promote policy and legislation that help rebuild Tribal communities.

Minnesota American Indian Chamber of Commerce, Inc. (MAICC or NDN-PTAC) – USET and MAICC signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to signify willingness to work together to promote economic development in the USET region. Specifically, USET and MAICC are working to build capacity of business throughout Indian Country, enabling them to obtain government contracts (federal, state, and Tribal). The MOU was signed on March 8, 2014.

Four Directions Development Corporation, Inc. (Four Directions) – USET and Four Directions signed an MOU to signify willingness to work in a collaborative manner for the promotion of economic development and housing initiatives for USET Tribal Nations and with Tribes throughout Indian Country. The MOU was signed on March 12, 2013.

Sequoyah Fund, Inc. – USET and Sequoyah Fund signed an MOU to signify willingness to work in a collaborative manner for the promotion of economic development for USET Tribal Nations and with Tribes throughout Indian Country. The MOU was signed on March 11, 2013.

National Indian Health Board, Inc. (NIHB) – USET and NIHB signed a memorandum of partnership in order to develop a regional extension center to promote Tribal medical providers' ability to meet meaningful use of electronic health records and complementing technology. USET also has a regional representative which serves on the NIHB Health Board. The partnership was established in 2011.

Native American Indian Housing Council, Inc. (NAIHC) – USET and NAIHC established an alliance to work in a collaborative manner for the promotion of housing initiatives for USET Tribal Nations and throughout Indian Country. Through this alliance, the USET Housing Committee serves as the regional housing council for the eastern and southern Tribal Nations for NAIHC.

Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc. (ITCA) – USET and ITCA have formed an alliance to work in a collaborative manner for the promotion of initiatives that strengthen a Tribal Nation's ability to exercise sovereignty and Indian self-determination for USET Tribal Nations and with Tribal Nations throughout Indian Country. The alliance began in 2014.

United States Small Business Administration (SBA) – USET and SBA signed a strategic alliance memorandum (SAM) to signify willingness to work in a collaborative manner for the promotion of economic development. The SAM was signed at the USET IMPACT Week meeting in February 2014.

United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS or IHS)

- **Indian Health Service**
- **Center For Disease Control and Prevention**

USET and IHS have entered into multiple contracts to provide services and assist with research that promote health and wellness within USET member Tribal Nations and with Tribal Nations throughout Indian Country. These initiatives have varied through the years.

United States Department of the Interior - Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) – USET and BIA have entered into a 638 contract to help promote initiatives that help build healthy communities through Indian Country. The 638 contract was initiated in 2015. USET has been working with BIA to provide representation to the Tribal Interior Budget Council prior to the 2015 638 Contract.

United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – USET and EPA have developed a strategic alliance partnership to promote protection of natural resources through Indian Country. EPA seeks input and representation for its Tribal-focused Environmental Risk and Sustainability Region 1 and Region 4 councils. USET and EPA have been working as strategic alliance partners since 2004.

National Tribal Water Council (NTWC) – USET and NTWC have developed a strategic alliance partnership to promote protection of water and water quality data exchange networks through Indian Country. USET serves as membership on NTWC and provides subject matter experts.

Vanderbilt University – USET has received a letter of interest from Vanderbilt University stating it will engage its Owen Graduate School of Management to assist with initiatives to promote business development in the USET region. The letter was received in 2013.

Navajo Nation – USET and Navajo Nation are working to initiate a cooperative covenant to promote collaborative actions on initiatives and activities that will promote building capacity for Tribal Nations to rebuild their communities so they may exercise their sovereignty and ability to determine their own future. The covenant is expected to be signed in 2016.

Northern Arizona University – Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals

Association of Boards of Certification 2010 (ABC) – USET and ABC work cooperatively to support a certification program to train, test, and certify water treatment and waste water treatment operation in Indian Country. This relationship began in 2010.

Northwest Fisheries Commission – USET and the Northwest Fisheries Commission established a partnership to assist Tribal Nations with establishing, operating, and monitoring water quality data exchange networks. The partnership was established in 2010.

Alabama Fire College – USET and the Alabama Fire College established a partnership to promote training for Tribal fire fighters and safety officers throughout the USET region. The partnership was established in 2015.

Inter-tribal Agriculture Council (IAC) – USET and IAC established this strategic alliance partnership to promote Tribal participation with beneficial United States Department of Agriculture programs. The partnership was created in 2013.

Native American Finance Officers Association (NAFOA) – A strategic alliance partnership exists between USET and NAFOA on the premise of promoting activities that will strengthen Tribal communities. The agreement promotes the open interaction of both organizations to develop resources and pursue initiatives that promote policy and legislation that help rebuild Tribal communities and economies.

National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development (NCAIED) – USET and NCAIED signed an MOU to signify willingness to work in a collaborative manner for the promotion of economic development for USET Tribal Nations and Tribal Nations throughout Indian Country. The MOU was signed in 2011.

Great Plains Tribal Chairman's Association (GPTCA) – A strategic alliance partnership was created between USET and GPTCA to promote collaborative actions on initiatives and activities

that will promote building capacity for Tribal Nations to rebuild their communities so they may exercise their sovereignty and ability to determine their own future.

California Association of Tribal Government (CAT-G) – A strategic alliance partnership was created between USET and CAT-G to promote collaborative actions on initiatives and activities that will promote building capacity for Tribal Nations to rebuild their communities so they may exercise their sovereignty and ability to determine their own future.

Section 5: CEDS Plan of Action

THEME: THRIVING ECONOMIC CLIMATE

GOAL: Encourage and promote programs to provide access to capital, credit, and markets, particularly those focusing on economic clusters and targeted sectors that lead to capital investment, job creation, and increased household income.

Projects

Highest priority projects within Thriving Economic Climate are associated with USET establishing a Native CDFI, followed by economic sector focused support. Projects that are not considered a high priority are those that only a few Tribal Nations can take advantage of, such as pooled investment. Below are projects by priority order:

USET Certified CDFI

- Meet the requirements and become certified as a Native CDFI.
- Create necessary corporate documents and become incorporated by 9/30/2016.
- Enter into a partnership with other Tribal CDFI's to gain initial knowledge and utilization of Fund activity, and develop how a USET CDFI would complement current capital investment in Indian Country.
- Contract with a qualified organization to provide comprehensive training, document creation and the flow and content of the revolving loan fund program.

Funding Plan:

- Native American CDFI Assistance Funding

CDFI: Revolving Loan Fund (RLF)

- Establishment of a revolving loan program to support Tribal ventures and Native small business development. Deploy a minimum of \$500,000 in loan funds to qualified Tribal ventures or Native enterprise.
- Identify funding for RLF.

- Apply for funding that may have a solicitation during FY 2017 for implementation during 2018.

Funding Plan:

- Native American CDFI Assistance Funding
- Research and potentially make application to USDA Intermediary Relending Program, EDA Revolving Loan Fund, HUD Rural Housing Economic Development Program to support funding for activities in FY 2018
- Research and potentially make application to private foundations (Ford, Kellogg, and SURDNA) to support funding for activities in FY 2018

CDFI: Development Services Program

- Provide a host of development services to support business development, business planning, financial literacy, and other technical assistance to sustain business development, growth, and job creation. Assist a minimum of eight Tribal ventures or Native businesses annually.
- Search out and get funding from additional grants to expand the department adding additional employees for greater availability of required assistance, this includes but is not limited to a possible CEDS Planning Grant with EDA Atlanta to fund the continued development of the USET CEDS and two EDA Technical Assistance Grants from EDA Atlanta and EDA Austin to fund continued TA support of all 26 member Tribal Nations.
- Work with member Tribal Nations in creating /completing their own Tribal CEDS. Encourage Tribal Nations to apply for future EDA Assistance and Planning Grants to further build the Tribal CEDS as a meaningful tool to greater self-sufficiency and enhanced sovereignty.

Funding Plan:

- Native American CDFI Assistance Funding
- Will research and proposal new Technical Assistance funding to support this activity through NACA 2017 solicitation for proposals.

Patient Capital-Mentorship Technical Assistance

- Develop a patient capital pool and mentor network to support and sustain high potential ventures.
- Investment in three ventures that create a minimum of 10 jobs and attract a minimum of \$1.5M in additional capital investment.

Funding Plan:

- Native American CDFI Assistance Funding

Economic Cluster/Sector Specific Program

- Establish working groups for each economic cluster or target sector to develop access to markets, support innovation, and provide technical assistance. Sectors include:
 - Tourism
 - Forest/Wood Products
 - Agriculture/Aquaculture/Fishing
 - Artisan/Handmade
 - Digital Media
- Working groups meet quarterly with a minimum participation of three per working group.

Funding Plan:

- Native American CDFI Assistance Funding
- EDA Technical Assistance Funding

Business Investment Diversification

- Economic/Business diversification program targeting Tribal leadership that encourages moving beyond traditional economic sectors by considering Tribal assets. Training provided to a minimum of six member Tribal Nations.
- Provide ongoing economic development news and reports, in addition to technical assistance and training to member Tribal Nations.
- Increase the work of the ED&E Committee to promote and support peer reviews and exchange economic development information across member Tribal Nations to increase collaboration, enhance organizational resources and create additional building blocks for a strong foundation for continued economic growth.
- Encourage partnerships and joint ventures where practicable and economically feasible.
- Encourage the ED&E Committee to become proactive.

Funding Plan:

- Native American CDFI Assistance Funding
- EDA Technical Assistance Funding
- Will research and proposal new Technical Assistance funding to support this activity through NACA 2017 solicitation for proposals.

Business Attraction

- Support Tribal Nations in business attraction efforts through technical assistance and support services. Assist a minimum of three Tribal Nations with business attraction efforts that result in securing one business partnership.
- Search USDA, BIA, SBA and other federal agency grant programs and federal contract opportunities to help fund new endeavors related to For-Profit Activities for USET. These include but are not limited to Medical Staffing opportunities, Resale of Medical Equipment and Supplies, THGS Services and Administrative Services.

Funding Plan:

- Native American CDFI Assistance Funding
- EDA Technical Assistance Funding
- Will research and proposal new Technical Assistance funding to support this activity through NACA 2017 solicitation for proposals.

Pooled Investment Program

- Facilitate pooled investment fund to diversify business development and investment. Participation by a minimum of five Tribal Nations in a pooled investment program.

Funding Plan:

- Native American CDFI Assistance Funding
- EDA Technical Assistance Funding
- Will research and proposal new Technical Assistance funding to support this activity through NACA 2017 solicitation for proposals.

THEME: NATION REBUILDING – SOVEREIGNTY

GOAL: Advance Nation rebuilding and Tribal sovereignty by realizing self-determination through economic development, job creation, income generation, and the accumulation of assets.

Projects

Nation rebuilding is the foundation for much of USET's activities and all three projects identified under Nation Rebuilding-Sovereignty are considered high priority and should be the focus of the economic development program.

Economic Self-Determination Program

- Technical assistance program to support sovereignty and nation rebuilding through legal/tax codes, organization structures, and tax incentives. Materials developed to provide technical assistance and a minimum of five Tribal Nations supported.
- Create a sub-committee of the ED&E Committee to identify, study and recommend what actions can be taken by member Tribal Nations regarding the various tax issues identified by USET.

Funding Plan:

- Native American CDFI Assistance Funding
- EDA Technical Assistance Funding

Economic/Business Incentives Technical Assistance

- Training and technical assistance provided highlighting business incentives available to Tribal Nations ranging from 8(a), HUB Zones and Business Incentive Training to various tax incentives. Materials developed to provide technical assistance and a minimum of five Tribal Nations supported.
- Provide training programs to demonstrate the benefits of the SBA 8(a) and HUBZone Programs, and how to effectively utilize these benefits to establish for-profit business entities to increase unrestricted revenues to member Tribal Nations.
- Provide training to build an effective business model and marketing strategy to support the procurement needs of federal procurement activities.

Funding Plan:

- Native American CDFI Assistance Funding
- EDA Technical Assistance Funding
- Will research and potentially submit proposal to DLA for the development of a PTAC office at USET.

Advocacy/Policy Agenda

- Ensure USET’s ED&E Committee establishes an active policy and legislative agenda that is tied directly to the USET Sovereign Protection Fund (SPF), focused on economic development, taxation, and incentive programs that increase accountability and upholds, protects, and advances sovereignty.

Funding Plan:

- USET Indirect Cost Pool

THEME: CAPACITY BUILDING

GOAL: Provide targeted technical assistance to build the capacity across USET member Tribal Nations that sustains economic growth and better prepares USET member Tribal Nations to recognize and respond to viable, high value economic opportunity.

Projects

Projects associated with capacity building that have immediate impact and support current activities of Tribal economic development staff have the highest priority – web portal and a due diligence program. Although the leadership institute has value, the other projects are more critical.

Due Diligence Program Feasibility Study

- Conduct a feasibility study to determine the need to assist Tribal Nations
- Conduct due diligence related to business and economic development – vetting potential partnerships, assessing the viability of investments, conducting market research for specific ventures, and running background checks on potential partners. Due diligence performed for a minimum of six ventures.

Funding Plan:

- EDA Technical Assistance Funding
- Research and potentially develop a proposal to USDA RCDI fund

USET Website Portal

- Launch of a website portal that supports economic development, professional development, and the dissemination of data, with secure access for member Tribal Nations.
- The website portal would incorporate a host of existing resources to uphold, protect, and advance sovereignty, particularly material for Tribal leaders in the basics of governance, economic development, financial management, and sovereignty.
- The Economic Development Department will initiate project based on actions completed in 2017.
 - Native American CDFI Assistance Funding
 - EDA Technical Assistance Funding
 - Will research and potentially submit proposal to DLA for the development of a PTAC office at USET.

Data Collection and Repository

- To strengthen the collection and dissemination of critical data associated with USET member Tribal Nations, adopt a standard community survey process available to all USET member Tribal Nations that provides valid and reliable socio-demographic information that is cost effective.
- The ED&E Committee will initiate discussions about a partnership with a university and the availability of federal funding to initiate a Data Collection Program for USET member Tribal Nations.

Funding Plan:

- EDA Technical Assistance Funding
- Native American CDFI Assistance Funding

THEME: EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

GOAL: Strengthen education and workforce development within USET member Tribal Nations to meet the needs of a 21st century economy.

Projects

An emphasis is placed on building a strong entrepreneurial spirit within young Tribal citizens and developing programs for young people to succeed in business pursuits. For many Tribal Nations with successful gaming operations that generate significant per capita shares incredible opportunity exists for young people to consider launching a small business or investing in a small business. In addition, professional development for Tribal citizens interested in economic development, financing, and business support is important.

Youth Entrepreneurial Development

- Foster entrepreneurial development amongst young Tribal members and provide the technical assistance, mentorship and support needed to bring innovative business concepts to reality.
- Adopt youth entrepreneurial development program and support 10 young Tribal members through a pilot.
- Identify business contract opportunities that would support a related workforce training program for Tribal Nation members.

Funding Plan:

- EDA Technical Assistance Funding
- Native American CDFI Assistance Funding

Workforce Development Program

- Establish a broad workforce development program Tribal Nations can take advantage of that would include culturally relevant WorkReady employment service and skill development.
- A comprehensive study of all Federal and State programs that may be relevant.

Funding Plan:

- EDA Technical Assistance Funding
- Native American CDFI Assistance Funding

Economic Development Professional Development Program

- Professional development program for economic development professionals and community planners that provides a foundation in general theory and gives participants the tools to employ at the Tribal level. Five Tribal Nations participate in professional development.

- To be initiated after activation of the USET CDFI.

Funding Plan:

- EDA Technical Assistance Funding
- Native American CDFI Assistance Funding

Sector Specific Workforce Development

- Sector specific workforce development that is aligned with high potential sectors tied to Tribal assets and existing enterprise.
- USET and area Workforce Investment Boards will partner to develop a workforce program for three target sectors.

Funding Plan:

- EDA Technical Assistance Funding
- Native American CDFI Assistance Funding

THEME: PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

GOAL: Foster Inter-Tribal partnership and collaboration that supports and advances nation rebuilding, economic growth, capital investment, and an improved quality of life.

Projects

Partnerships and collaborations are essential for USET's economic development program to succeed. Exploring Nation 2 Nation and international trade, supporting Native 2 Native business development, forming a Native CDFI network to expand access to services across USET's region, and continued engagement with the Native PTAC are of the highest priority.

To be initiated following completion of the USET CDFI Revolving Loan Fund.

Nation 2 Nation Feasibility Study

- Conduct a feasibility study to explore trade between indigenous peoples globally and USET member Tribal Nations. The feasibility will consider the opportunities for trade, potential industry sectors defined, the nature of the trade agreements, incentives related to trade with sovereign Nations, operations, and financial models and impact.
- To be initiated once a comprehensive business development program has been established.

Funding Plan:

- EDA Technical Assistance Funding
- Native American CDFI Assistance Funding

International Trade/Development Program Feasibility Study

- In addition to Nation 2 Nation trade, explore the feasibility of international trade between USET member Tribal Nations and international business interests.
- To be initiated once a comprehensive business development program has been established.

Funding Plan:

- EDA Technical Assistance Funding
- Native American CDFI Assistance Funding

Native 2 Native Business Development Program

- Development of a Native 2 Native business development network to facilitate the exchange of goods and services across Indian Country and decrease economic leakage to non-Native firms and businesses.

Funding Plan:

- EDA Technical Assistance Funding
- Native American CDFI Assistance Funding

Native CDFI Network

- Strengthen collaboration of the Native CDFI's working in the USET region by developing a referral system for technical assistance and lending.

- Increase access to capital, credit and development services for Tribal ventures, Native entrepreneurs, and Tribal housing efforts.
- To be initiated after USET CDFI Certification is completed.

Funding Plan:

- EDA Technical Assistance Funding
- Native American CDFI Assistance Funding

Native PTAC

- Increase the outreach and impact of the Native PTAC across USET member Tribal Nations.
- Introduce all USET member Tribal Nations to Native PTAC and encourage utilization of the system for business development activities.
- Provide an ED&E Committee training course for all member Tribal Nations on the benefits and opportunities to be provided by the USET CDFI.

Funding Plan:

- EDA Technical Assistance Funding
- Native American CDFI Assistance Funding

THEME: QUALITY OF LIFE AND PLACE

GOAL: Enhance the quality of life and sense of place within Tribal communities by celebrating Native culture, developing quality housing, and conducting sound community planning that changes the way of life in Indian Country.

Projects

Quality of life and place are critical to Native culture, its relationship with the natural environment, and fostering strong, healthy communities. With the priorities outlined above, quality of life and place initiatives were not considered the highest priority but remained essential to USET meeting its goals and objectives in the CEDS.

Community Planning Technical Assistance

- Develop a community planning technical assistance program to support sound economic development, housing development, community planning, and placemaking activities.
- Build capacity in community planning at USET and with member Tribal Nations. An initiative within the Quality of Life and Place theme focused on placemaking is outlined below.

Funding Plan:

- EDA Technical Assistance Funding
- Native American CDFI Assistance Funding

Native Placemaking Initiative

- An initiative that considers the Tribal Nation's various assets/forms of capital – natural, cultural, built, human, social, political, and economic – that support economic development and improve the quality of life.
- Development of a community assessment tool that considers assets and capital in the context of community transformation.

Funding Plan:

- EDA Technical Assistance Funding
- Native American CDFI Assistance Funding

Section 6: Strategic Projects, Programs, and Activities

The following tables reflect strategic projects, programs and activities for USET, its member Tribal Nations, and key partners to consider over the next three to five years as development of a robust economic development program continues. Some projects are currently under development, while others are proposed for development.

THEME: Thriving Economic Climate

GOAL: Encourage and promote programs to provide access to capital, credit, and markets, particularly those focusing on economic clusters and targeted sectors that lead to capital investment, job creation, and increase housing income.

Priority	Project	Description	Responsible Parties	Expected Outcome	Total Cost
1	USET Certified CDFI	Meet the requirements and become certified as a Native CDFI.	USET	Native CDFI designation.	\$150,000
2	CDFI: Revolving Loan Fund	Establishment of a revolving loan program to support Tribal ventures and Native small business development.	USET and Native CDFI Partners	Deploy a minimum of \$500,000 in loan funds to qualified Tribal ventures or Native enterprise.	\$1,000,000
3	CDFI: Development Services Program	Provide a host of development services to support business development, business planning, financial literacy, and other technical assistance to sustain business development, growth, and job creation.	USET and Native CDFI Partners	Assist a minimum of eight Tribal ventures or Native businesses annually.	\$100,000
4	Patient Capital-Mentorship Technical Assistance	Develop a patient capital pool and mentor network to support and sustain high potential ventures.	USET	Investment in three ventures that create a minimum of 10 jobs and attract a minimum of \$1.5M in additional capital investment.	\$2,000,000

5	Economic Cluster/Sector Specific Program	<p>Establish working groups for each economic cluster or target sector to develop access to markets, support innovation, and provide technical assistance. Sectors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism • Forest/Wood Products • Agriculture/Aquaculture/Fishing • Energy • Gaming • Artisan/Handmade • Digital Media 	USET, Native PTAC	Working groups are established and meet quarterly with a minimum participation of three per working group.	\$70,000
6	Business Investment Diversification	Economic/Business diversification program targeting Tribal leadership that encourages moving beyond traditional economic sectors by considering Tribal assets.	USET and member Tribal Nations	Training provided to a minimum of six member Tribal Nations.	\$15,000
7	Pooled Investment Program	Facilitate pooled investment fund to diversify business development and investment.	USET, Cherokee Nation	Participation by a minimum of five Tribal Nations in a pooled investment program.	\$1,000,000
8	Business Attraction	Support Tribal Nation's in business attraction efforts through technical assistance and support services.	USET	Assist a minimum of three Tribal Nations with business attraction efforts that result in securing one business partnership.	\$25,000

THEME: Nation rebuilding – sovereignty

GOAL: Advance Nation rebuilding and Tribal sovereignty by realizing self-determination through economic development, job creation, income generation, and the accumulation of assets.

Priority	Project	Description	Responsible Parties	Expected Outcome	Total Cost
1	Economic Self-Determination Program	Technical assistance program to support sovereignty and nation rebuilding through legal/tax codes, organization structures, and tax incentives.	USET, Hobbs Straus, Dean & Walker, LLC (HSDW)	Materials developed to provide technical assistance and a minimum of five Tribal Nations supported.	\$50,000
2	Economic/Business Incentives Technical Assistance	Training and technical assistance provided highlighting business incentives available to Tribal Nations ranging from HUB Zones to various tax incentives.	USET, HSDW	Materials developed to provide technical assistance and a minimum of five Tribal Nations supported.	\$50,000
3	8A, Hub Zones, and Incentive Programs	Training in the various incentive programs available for Tribal Nations to conduct business development.	USET	A series of trainings specifically designed to showcase business incentives.	\$25,000
4	Advocacy/Policy Agenda	Active policy and legislative agenda focused on economic development, taxation, and incentive programs that increase accountability and strengthen sovereign rights.	USET SPF	Increased understanding of policy and legislative affairs associated with economic development.	\$25,000

THEME: Capacity Building

GOAL: Provide targeted technical assistance to build the capacity across USET membership that sustains economic growth and better prepares USET member Tribal Nations to recognize and respond to viable, high value economic opportunity.

Priority	Project	Description	Responsible Parties	Expected Outcome	Total Cost
1	Due Diligence Program – Feasibility Study	Feasibility study to determine the need for assistance to Tribal Nations for conducting due diligence related to business and economic development – vetting potential partnerships, assessing the viability of investments, conducting market research for specific ventures, and running back ground checks on potential partners.	USET, Four Directions, Sequoyah Fund	Due diligence performed for a minimum of six ventures.	\$50,000
2	USET Website Portal	Launch of a website portal that supports economic development, professional development, and the dissemination of data. Secured access for member Tribal Nations. Web portal can serve leadership development and be facilitated through distance learning.	USET	Website draws traffic from throughout USET’s membership and is considered valuable resource.	\$100,000
3	Data Collection and Repository	Adopt a community survey process that is available to all USET member Tribal Nations that provides accurate and reliable sociodemographic data that is cost effective.	USET, member Tribal Nations, USET Committees	Sociodemographic data and repository available for analysis and dissemination.	\$500,000

THEME: Education and Workforce Development*GOAL: Strengthen education and workforce development within USET member Tribal Nations to meet the needs of a 21st century economy.*

Priority	Project	Description	Responsible Parties	Expected Outcome	Total Cost
1	Youth Entrepreneurial Development	Foster entrepreneurial development amongst young Tribal members and provide the technical assistance, mentorship and support to bring innovative business concepts to reality.	USET, Sequoyah Fund	Adopt youth entrepreneurial development program and support 10 young Tribal members through a pilot.	\$75,000
2	Economic Development Professional Development Program	Professional development program for economic development professionals and community planners that provides a foundation in general theory and gives participants the tools to employ at the Tribal level.	USET	Five Tribal Nations participate in professional development.	\$25,000
3	Workforce Development Program	Establish a broad workforce development program Tribal Nations can take advantage of that would include culturally relevant WorkReady and skill development.	USET, Regional Workforce Investment Boards	Workforce training program that can be delivered at the Tribal level.	\$75,000
4	Sector Specific Workforce Development	Sector specific workforce development that is aligned with high potential sectors tied to Tribal assets and existing enterprise.	USET and area Workforce Investment Boards	Sector workforce program for three target sectors.	\$100,000

THEME: PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

***GOAL:** Foster Inter-tribal partnership and collaboration that supports and advances nation rebuilding, economic growth, capital investment, and an improved quality of life.*

Priority	Project	Description	Responsible Parties	Expected Outcome	Total Cost
1	Nation 2 Nation Feasibility Study	Conduct a feasibility study to explore trade between indigenous peoples globally and USET member Tribal Nations.	USET, Tribal Nations	Expanded markets for Native goods and services.	\$25,000
2	International Trade/ Development Program Feasibility Study	Conduct a feasibility study to explore international trade between Tribal Nations and international business interests.	USET	Expanded markets for Native goods and services.	\$25,000
3	Native CDFI Network	Strengthen collaboration of the Native CDFI's working in the USET region by developing a referral system for technical assistance and lending.	USET, FDDC, Sequoyah Fund, Mississippi Band Credit Union, Seneca, Oweesta.	Increased access to capital, credit and development services for Tribal ventures, Native entrepreneurs, and Tribal housing efforts.	\$10,000
4	Native PTAC	Increase the outreach and impact of the Native PTAC across USET member Tribal Nations.	Native PTAC	Introduce all USET member Tribal Nations to Native PTAC and encourage utilization of the system for business development activities.	\$25,000

5	Native 2 Native Business Development Program	Development of a Native 2 Native business development network to facilitate the exchange of goods and services across Indian Country and decrease economic leakage to non-Native firms and businesses.	USET, Native PTAC	Increased economic exchange across USET member Tribal Nations.	\$40,000
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THEME: QUALITY OF LIFE AND PLACE

GOAL: Enhance the quality of life and sense of place within Tribal communities by celebrating Native culture, developing quality housing, and conducting sound community planning that changes the way of life in Indian Country.

Priority	Project	Description	Responsible Parties	Expected Outcome	Total Cost
1	Community Planning Technical Assistance	Develop a community planning technical assistance and education program to support sound economic development, housing development, community planning, and placemaking activities.	USET, THPS, OERM, Economic Development	Built capacity in community planning at USET and with member Tribal Nations.	\$500,000
2	Emergency Preparedness Technical Assistance Feasibility	With increased occurrence, weather events are creating challenges for governments, which require mutual aid, technical assistance, and lobbying efforts. Revival of the TEMAC program and/or business opportunity to support FEMA response and recovery.	USET, Tribal Emergency Services	Improved response to emergencies and increased federal assistance to support relief efforts.	\$100,000

Section 7: Economic Resilience

The limited economy many Tribal Nations experience make them far more vulnerable to economic adjustment, cause prolonged economic recovery from natural disaster, and expose them to greater jeopardy in an emergent, global economic climate. These factors require capacity building, focused planning, and intentional action that fosters greater long-term resilience. USET is uniquely positioned to strengthen economic resiliency across the eastern and southern region of the United States. The CEDS outlined within puts into action specific programs that build capacity across USET member Tribal Nations, facilitates the diversification of economies through asset-based and value-chain development practices, and supports market development and diversification through a Native 2 Native initiative and international trade.

USET was founded on the notion of strength in unity. Partnership and collaboration, coupled with capacity building are essential to building resilience. Since its founding, USET Tribal Nations have come together to support cultural development, environmental conservation, social well-being, and economic growth that upholds, protects, and advances sovereignty. Resilience in Indian Country is grounded in cultural values, mindful of the environment, dedicated to social well-being, and motivated by economic growth. USET's programs and services, both within the CEDS and across other core competencies, take a holistic approach to community economic development that recognizes the dynamic community system and support an integrated approach facilitated by increased access to resources.

Economic resilience is in part achieved by increasing access to capital and strengthening development services for Tribal enterprise and Native entrepreneurs through the CDFI providing a scaffolding that is currently unavailable to most member Tribal Nations. The creation of the CDFI is the highest priority outlined in the CEDS and will serve as the foundation for USET's economic development program. The CDFI, coupled with the programs established through the Tribal Emergency Mutual Aid Compact (TEMAC), provide infrastructure and response protocols to better serve the Tribal Nations in time of distress. Similar to programs offered through TEMAC for natural disasters, USET's CDFI will design a similar integrated system that draws from resources across Indian Country and supports resilience.