



Cat Lake First Nation Partners with Finnish Companies for Sustainable Forest Biomass and Innovative Health Diagnostics Initiatives

(Thunder Bay, ON CDN, Feb 26, 2024) Cat Lake First Nation signed Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with two leading Finnish organizations to collaborate on forest biomass and long-distance healthcare diagnostic initiatives. The signing ceremony took place at the Victoria Inn in Thunder Bay, Ontario,

The first partnership involves a health diagnostics initiative with 73Health, focusing on deploying advanced remote medical diagnostic solutions for the benefit of remote communities, including Cat Lake First Nation. This initiative is part of 73Health's expansion plans across North America, with Ontario being a priority location.

Teemu Nikkanen, Co-Founder of 73Health, described how “73Health’s Remote Health Diagnostics delegation will be further exploring the logistics and partnership roles of the “pilot project roll-out” with Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority, other agencies, and Far North NAN communities. The Pilot will use latest hardware and software technology for the most comprehensive remote diagnostic capability on the market.”

Enthusiasm for the initiatives was summarized by Sonia Isaac-Mann, CEO and President of the “Sioux Lookout First Nation Health Authority, “We are happy to witness collaboration between Cat Lake First Nation and their international partners to develop innovative solutions to meet the needs of the community.”

The second partnership with Natural Resources Institute Finland (LUKE) aims to advance a Northern Bioeconomy Network, focusing on scientific and academic exchange and the sustainable utilization of forest biomass resources for economic growth. The intent is to complete an ecological and economic master plan within a year.

Dr. Lauri Sikanen, Group Manager and Principal Scientist at LUKE observed “LUKE will conduct an assessment of renewable resources in the Cat Lake area of northwestern Ontario. This will underpin the recommendations for the sustainable utilization of resources for the production of biomass-based products that include mass timber, dimensional lumber, wood cellulose fibre and biomass energy”.

The collaboration, funded in part through the Ontario government’s Indigenous Bioeconomy Partnerships stream of Ontario’s Forest Biomass Program will specifically target and promote economic growth and opportunity by assessing the region’s forest biomass supply, identifying opportunities to increase their use and developing a strategic plan to guide development.

“Ontario’s Forest Biomass Program is making strategic investments to realize the economic, social and environmental benefits presented by forest biomass innovation,” noted Graydon Smith, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. “Funding delivered by the Indigenous Bioeconomy Partnerships

stream will ensure Ontario's growing forest bioeconomy builds prosperity for Indigenous businesses and communities like Cat Lake First Nation."

"We are excited about the opportunities these partnerships bring to our community and the region," stated Russell Wesley, Chief of Cat Lake First Nation. "The support of these collaborations represent a key step towards sustainable development, prosperity and improving the health of our community and surrounding areas."

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For media inquiries, please contact Vicki Blanchard, Advisor at Cat Lake First Nation, at 807-220-3585 or blanchardvicki21@gmail.com. Hi-Res images of the signing ceremony are available upon request.

In attendance and available for interviews will be:

- Kimmo Nikkanen, Special Advisor and Samuel Nikkanen a technical specialist.
- Dr. Sikanen of LUKE is an expert on international technology and know-how transfer, forest bioenergy and forest industry supply chains. He has +15 years of experience in international R&D projects. He is a leading Finnish expert on Canadian forestry and External Adjunct Professor of Lakehead University
- Dr. Routa is Research Manager of Productive Forests at LUKE. She is a forest bioenergy and international value chain development expert with 10+ years of experience in international R&D projects.

Cat Lake First Nation (CLFN) is a remote fly-in First Nation reserve located 180 km northwest of Sioux Lookout, Ontario, CLFN is a member of the Windigo First Nations Council, a non-political regional chiefs' council. In turn, the Windigo First Nations Council is a member of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation which represents 49, Treaty 9 communities.

Natural Resources Institute Finland (LUKE) (*Finnish*: Luonnonvarakeskus) is a Finnish research institute under the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. It was formed by merging the Agrifood Research Finland, the Finnish Forest Research Institute, the Finnish Game and Fisheries Research Institute and the statistics production of the Information Centre of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. The organizations mandate is the promotion of competitive economic activity based on the sustainable use of renewable natural resources, as well as the promotion of well-being and rural vitality.

Indigenous Bioeconomy Partnership (IBP) The Ontario Forest Biomass Program is a key component to implementing the Forest Biomass Action Plan which will unlock the enormous potential of Ontario's forest biomass, drive further prosperity in the forest industry, and support job growth, investment, innovation and sustainability. The IBP stream supports Indigenous businesses and communities to become more active participants in the forest sector and to lead the development of a forest bioeconomy.

73Health <https://73health.ca> has developed the market leading eEVA SaaS Remote Diagnostics service which combines latest hardware and software technology for the most comprehensive remote diagnostic capability on the market. The service is offered as Software as a Service SaaS business model and can be operated over the internet all over the world. The service enables medical doctors, physicians to 100% remotely diagnose the patient's ears and throat, listen to heart and lung sounds, bowel sounds, measure blood pressure, pulse oxygen saturation and temperature. The system combines software and medical equipment with live high-definition video and audio that allows the doctor and patient to be separated by vast physical distance.

Neeganii Ishawin – Taking the Lead in our Prosperity, a three-day gathering, running from Feb. 27 to 29 hosted by Windigo Community Development Corporation, Shibogama First Nations Council, Matawa First Nations, Keewaytinook Okimakanak and Independent First Nations Alliance, collectively representing more than 30 communities.