



Leaders Forum

Data & AI Vancouver Island

Led By:

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Hosted By:

Diane Gutiw



Making the Future



www.VictoriaDataSociety.ca

www.CircleInnovation.ca

Agenda

9:00

DOORS OPEN – COFFEE AND NETWORKING

9:30

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS – Diane (CGI Canada)

DAVI NEXT STEPS – Cynthia (VDS)

10:00

REVIEW ASSUMPTIONS, STRATEGY

DAVI GOVERNANCE, PRIORITIES, PROJECTS

10:30

LEADERSHIP DISCUSSION

11:30 NEXT STEPS, WRAP and NETWORKING

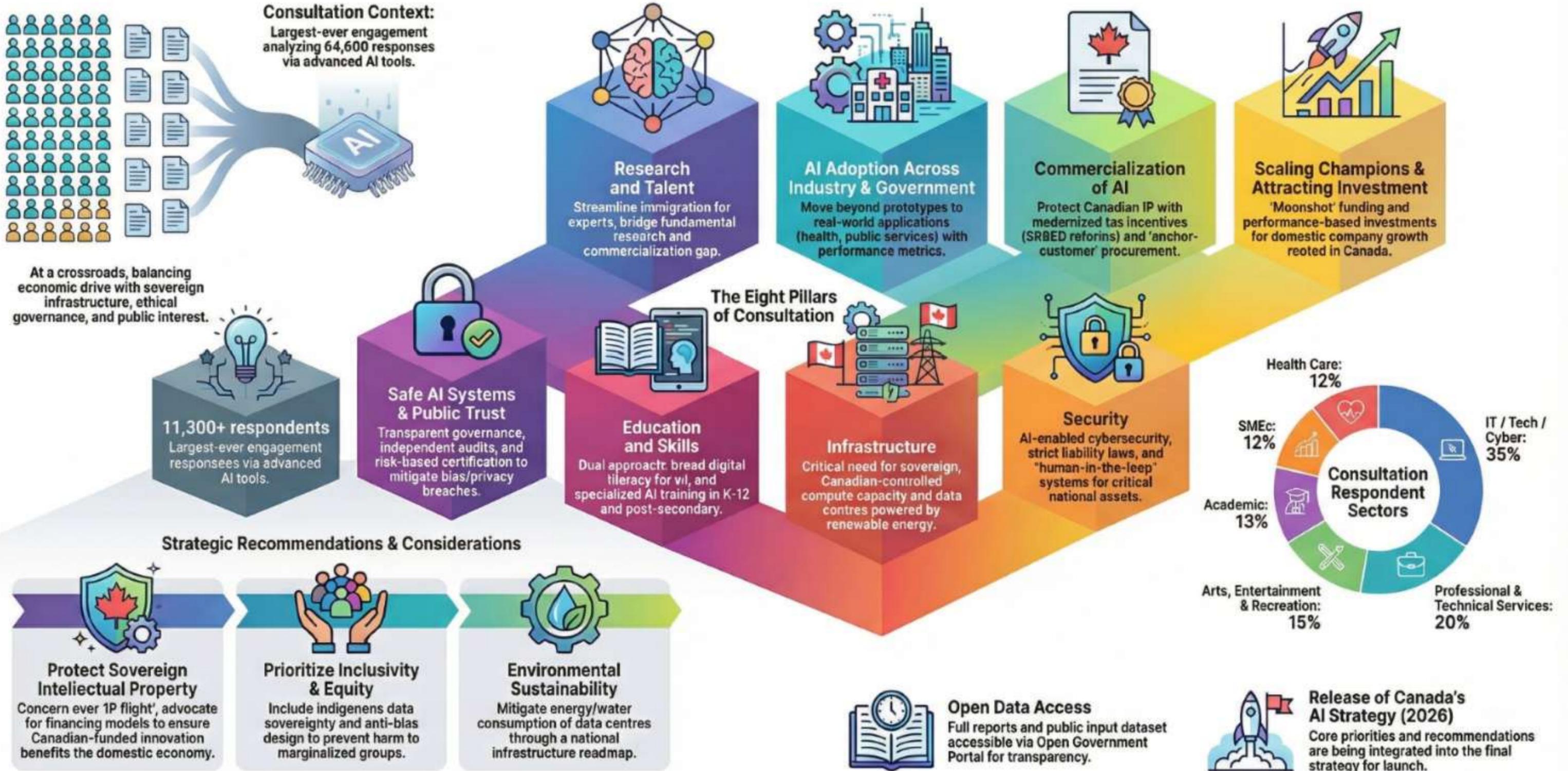


WELCOME



Diane Gutiw
Vice President CGI Global AI Research

Shaping Canada's AI Future: Pillars of the National Strategy Consultation





Data and AI Vancouver Island (DAVI)

VISION

Drive a dynamic data services cluster, centered on south Vancouver Island and built on strong data and technology fundamentals, providing critical support to BC's (and Canada's) rapidly growing AI ecosystem

Local Challenges (and Opportunities)

The **SIPP Rising Economy Taskforce Report** identifies the following 7 systemic risk areas for South Vancouver island economy:

- 1) Persistent affordability pressures
- 2) Stagnant productivity and an over-reliance on the public sector
- 3) Essential workers gaps and a widening skills mismatch
- 4) Commercial districts under pressure
- 5) Disjointed efforts in a shared regional economy
- 6) An obstructive entrepreneurial climate
- 7) External uncertainty threatens local stability and investment

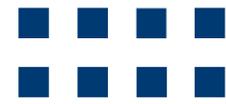
AI and Data – Top of Mind

CURRENT AI ISSUES

- New Canadian AI Strategy 2026
- Defence & dual use technologies
- Trust / guardrails – legislation, policy, responsible AI
- Data and AI Sovereignty
- AI Bubble - financial, return on investment
- AI Adoption / Digital transformation
- AI Literacy
- Talent drain

DATA IMPLICATIONS

- AI is the driver for more data – sharing, IP, copyright
- Foundation for AI is trustworthy data
- Data has applications beyond AI – buffered in AI bubble burst
- Growing attention on better data management
- Sovereignty is based on the full stack
- Cultural transformation – data driven decision making



Data and AI Vancouver Island (DAVI)

GOALS

- Regional economic growth, increased vitality
- Attract federal, provincial support to region
- Talent retention, attraction
- Provide foundation to BC's tech ecosystem
- Local ecosystem resilience, amplification

Working Assumptions

Developed during DAVI roundtables Nov'25-Jan'26

- ✓ Public sector represents several key opportunities, priorities
 - ✓ Unique, proprietary, relevant, sector-specific, enabling data are economically salient
 - ✓ AI-enabled products are not the only deliverables – social benefit, service delivery, outcomes
 - ✓ Platforms, components focus for standardization, stack support needed
 - ✓ Data sovereignty represents an opportunity and major challenges
 - ✓ “Data-ready/AI-forward” SMEs offer the largest near-term impact, other key stakeholders next
 - ✓ Vancouver Island has the critical density in data to deliver to BC with strategy needed
- 
- A stylized map of British Columbia is positioned on the right side of the slide, partially overlapping the list of assumptions. The map is rendered in a light, textured style against the dark teal background. The background of the slide features a pattern of concentric, overlapping circles in various shades of teal and blue, creating a sense of depth and movement.

Defining DAVI

- How do we structure ourselves as a collective?
- How do we make decisions?
- What governance approach do we take?
- What sort of activities do we pursue?

Governance Options

	MoU Consortium	BC Nonprofit Society	Multi-Stakeholder Co-op	Collective Impact Backbone	Supercluster Model	Constellation Model
Time to establish	Weeks	2–4 months	3–6 months	1–3 months	6–12 months	Weeks (operating model)
Legal standing	Low (non-binding)	Full entity	Full entity	Depends on host	Full entity	None (needs host)
Federal funding eligibility	Limited	Strong	Strong	Via fiscal host	Purpose-built	Via fiscal host
Multi-stakeholder voice	Informal	Via bylaws	Legally embedded	Via leadership table	Industry-dominant	Via stewardship group
Overhead	Minimal	Moderate	Moderate–High	Low–Moderate	High	Low
Decision speed	Fast	Moderate	Slow	Moderate	Moderate	Fast (action teams)
Suited to DAVI's cultural context	Good (low barrier)	Good	Mixed	Strong	Mixed	Strong
Scalability	Low	High	Moderate	High	High	High

Constellation Model



How It Works

- **Action Teams:** Self-organizing groups focused on specific deliverables (e.g., ocean data pilot, AI literacy curriculum, Indigenous data governance standards). Each action team has a lead, defined scope, and reporting obligations → Project teams, task force groups,
- **Stewardship Group:** A light governance body that provides coordination and oversight when needed—when power is unevenly distributed among action team participants or when teams need resources, conflict resolution.
- **Secretariat:** Provides backbone support functions (communications, logistics, knowledge management, evaluation, access to resources) without exerting control over action teams

Strengths

- **Designed for complex, multi-sector collaboration**
- **Action-biased:** Prioritizes "getting things done" over governance perfection
- **Respects autonomy:** Participating organizations maintain independence while contributing to shared goals
- **Scalable and adaptable:** Can grow from a few action teams to a province-wide network

Weaknesses

- **Not a legal entity:** Requires incorporated fiscal host for contracting, fund management, legal purposes.
- **Coordination overhead:** Coordination relies heavily on relationship quality and shared commitment
- **Risk of fragmentation:** Action teams may diverge from strategic direction without strong stewardship.

start small, do something, show people, grow

Organizational Considerations

Membership: How membership is defined and decided

Scope of contribution: What the organization commits (cash, in-kind, staff time, data, infrastructure).

Intellectual property: Who owns IP generated through DAVI-supported projects. A default framework might provide that: (a) background IP remains with the contributing party; (b) foreground IP generated through co-funded projects is jointly owned, licensed under terms per project (e.g. perpetual non-exclusive license).

Data governance: How data shared within DAVI projects will be handled, protected, and (where applicable) returned or destroyed—particularly important given the initiative's emphasis on data sovereignty.

Confidentiality: Consistent with Chatham House rules already observed in the roundtables.

Term and withdrawal: Duration of commitment and process for orderly withdrawal.

Participation Considerations

- Indigenous engagement
- Government and public sector
- Individuals – consultants, skilled persons, students



Strategic Priorities



1. Data Services Foundation – Platforms, standards, and services for data management, governance, and sharing. Creates network effects and addresses systemic underutilization.

2. Prospective Focus Areas:

- **Ocean/Marine Technology** – 12+ companies, BC Ferries anchor, defense alignment, natural cluster momentum – support for COAST
- **Health Informatics** – Largest North American deployment, clear ROI, substantial data assets, Island Health and Ministry of Health
- **Data Sovereignty, Governance** – First Nations leadership in digital identity, federal taskforce recommendations, governance best practices, alignment with infrastructure
- **Manufacturing/Housing/Agriculture** – 33% of BC GDP in construction, productivity wins, critical social benefits and stimulus
- **Public Sector** – 29% of regional employment relies on public administration and healthcare alone

3. Literacy and Adoption Programs – Education for 40-50% "AI-curious" SMEs through sector-specific literacy, implementation facilitation, proof-of-concept support, case studies.

4. Barrier Reduction – "Possibility Charter" streamlining permitting (currently 7+ years for data centers), procurement, pilot approvals. Cultural change addressing risk aversion and building collaboration.

5. Infrastructure and Capital – Strategic infrastructure decisions (400+ MW data center capacity available), federal funding alignment, sustainable coordination models.

Prospective Near-Term Projects

Uvic MBA Capstone project – AI Adoption Challenges for SMEs (SIPP as sponsor)

- January-June 2026
- Summary: AI Adoption – Risks and Challenges for non-tech South Island SMEs
- Resources: \$1-2K, access to public sector data
- Participants: UVic team, Min. Citizen Services, ViaTEC, VDS
- Deliverables: Survey data and report on south island SMEs (non-tech)

DAVI Operations project – Develop DAVI processes, oversight group, first call (Circle as sponsor)

- March-August 2026
- Summary: TBD to implement and operate DAVI interim operations, calls for EOI
- Resources: \$10K, physical space for meetings, virtual meeting services
- Participants: VDS, Circle, DAVI leaders
- Deliverables: Basic administration including documentation, process, scheduled events, oversight

Mandated action team(s) (TBD as sponsor)

- April-June 2026, May-July 2026
- Summary: Investigation of key topics
- Resources: operating expenses
- Participants: TBD
- Deliverables: Report on mandated topic

Data Services Stage 1 event (Circle as sponsor)

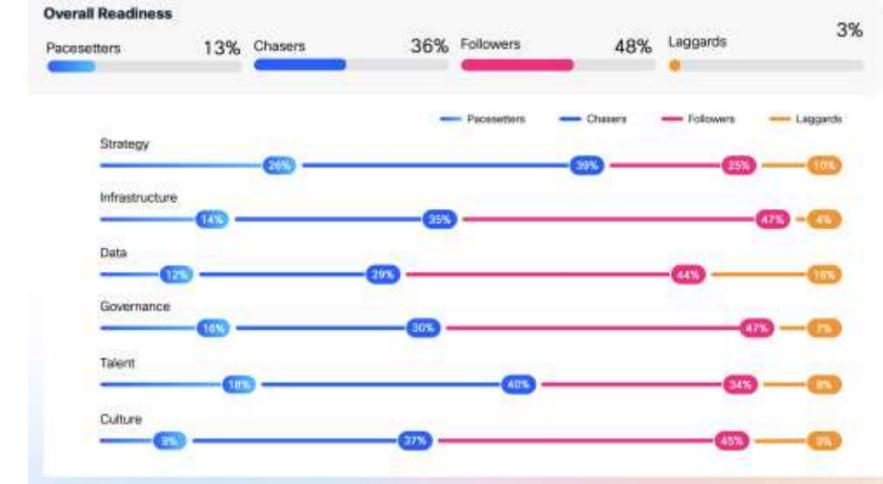
- April 15, 2026
- Summary: Engagement of local investors
- Resources: event costs, space, panel time
- Participants: TBD
- Deliverables: Readiness synthesis report

Example Projects - AI Readiness Modelling

AI Readiness Index — One-Page Calculator

Based on the Cisco AI Readiness Index 2025 framework — adapted for SMEs (5–500 employees)

Score each pillar from 0–100. The weighted score is calculated automatically. Total score determines your readiness tier.



Pillar	Weight	What to Assess	Score (0–100)	Weighted Score
Strategy	15%	Clarity of AI vision & alignment to business goals. Is there a documented AI strategy tied to revenue, cost, or product objectives? Are use cases prioritised with expected ROI? Is there executive sponsorship and a funded roadmap?	<input type="text"/>	—
Infrastructure	25%	Compute, networking, and platform readiness for AI workloads. Can current systems support model training/inference, GPU or cloud-AI access, and secure APIs? Is architecture scalable? For non-tech firms: extent of cloud migration and vendor AI-service integration.	<input type="text"/>	—
Data	20%	Quality, accessibility, and governance of data assets. Is data structured, labelled, and catalogued? Are pipelines automated and interoperable? Is there a single source of truth? Are data-sharing agreements and privacy controls (e.g., PIPEDA) in place?	<input type="text"/>	—
Governance	15%	Policies, risk management, ethics, and compliance frameworks for AI. Are there documented AI-use policies, bias-testing procedures, model audit trails, and incident-response plans? Is there board/leadership oversight of AI risk? Regulatory alignment (privacy, IP, sector rules)?	<input type="text"/>	—
Talent	15%	AI skills depth and acquisition capacity. Are there staff with ML/data-science skills (or access via partners)? Is there a training/upskilling plan? Can the org recruit or contract AI talent competitively? For non-tech: vendor-management and AI-literacy breadth across roles.	<input type="text"/>	—
Culture	10%	Organizational openness to AI-driven change. Is there a culture of experimentation and data-driven decision-making? Do teams embrace automation? Is change management resourced? Is there psychological safety to test and fail with new AI tools?	<input type="text"/>	—
TOTAL WEIGHTED SCORE				—

Pacesetter 75–100 Fully prepared; scaling AI with measurable ROI	Chaser 50–74 Meaningful progress; gaps limit scaling	Follower 25–49 Experimenting; foundations incomplete	Laggard 0–24 Minimal AI capability or awareness
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Adapted from the Cisco AI Readiness Index 2025 model (6 pillars, 49 indicators). Weights reflect Cisco's published framework. Intended for internal self-assessment by SMEs (5–500 employees). Not an official Cisco product.

Call for EOI for DAVI Projects

Call to south island ecosystem for short-spin projects aligned with key objectives – ecosystem capacity building, critical analysis, training, and promotion – AN EXAMPLE CALL



Framework for call – intentions, priorities, goals



Market research, task forces, training, other



\$5-25K projects co-funded at 50% (requires matching)



Deliverables jointly owned or non-exclusive rights for DAVI



Led by a DAVI sponsor joint with Circle, other sources



Contracted agreement with Circle for co-funding

Engaging Public Sector

DAVI PRIORITY / OPPORTUNITY	CITZ	IRR	HLTH	JEG	PSEFS	HOUS	AF	FOR	TRAN	EDUC
P1: Data Services Foundation	High	Med	High	Med	Low	Med	Low	Med	Med	Low
P2: Sector-Focused Pilots	Med	High	High	High	Med	Low	High	High	Med	Low
P3: Literacy & Adoption Bridging	Low	Low	Med	High	High	Low	Med	Low	Low	Med
P4: Regulatory Barrier Reduction	Med	Low	Med	High	Low	Med	Med	High	Low	Low
P5: Infrastructure & Capital	High	Low	Med	Med	Low	Med	Low	Low	High	Low
Data Sovereignty	Med	High	Med	Med	High	Low	High	High	Low	High
Workforce & Talent Retention	Low	Low	High	Med	High	Med	Med	Med	Low	High

Ministry Citizen Services - Example

Connected Services BC (CSBC) — the new cross-government digital organization within CITZ — is doing from inside government what DAVI wants to catalyze from outside: unifying data, building shared platforms, and modernizing the technology ecosystem. CSBC's mandate to deliver "trusted, inclusive and connected services" by breaking down ministry data silos.

- **Data Services Foundation:** CSBC's cross-ministry data mandate creates authority to establish governance frameworks, metadata standards, and data exchange protocols — precisely DAVI's Priority 1.
- **Digital Marketplace:** Code with Us, Team with Us, Sprint with Us procurement programs (targeting 75–125 IM/IT opportunities annually) provide a ready-made channel for DAVI ecosystem companies.
- **BC Services Card expansion:** Growth from 107 to 235 accessible digital services generates data infrastructure needs DAVI companies could serve.
- **Anti-Racism Data Act:** BC Stats' mandate for equitable data collection and monthly public statistical releases creates demand for governance expertise.

CITZ Operation: \$741M CSBC operating budget plus \$142M capital expenditure; procurement authority; cross-government digital mandate; BC Stats analytical capacity. CITZ also controls the \$75M Immunization BC Digital Platform — a concrete example of large-scale health data infrastructure.

3-5 Year Goals/KPIs - TBD

Economic:

- 500-1,000 high-value jobs
- 15-25 new startups
- \$50M+ funding
- \$100M+ productivity impact

Workforce:

- 40-50% of SMEs achieve "AI-competent"
- 500-1,000 trained annually
- 20-30% youth retention improvement
- retention and growth

Infrastructure:

- 3-5 mission-critical data platforms
- governance standards adopted by 50+ organizations

Social Value:

- Healthcare delivery improvements
- Public sector cost savings
- Environmental monitoring enhancement
- Indigenous language and governance initiatives

Ecosystem:

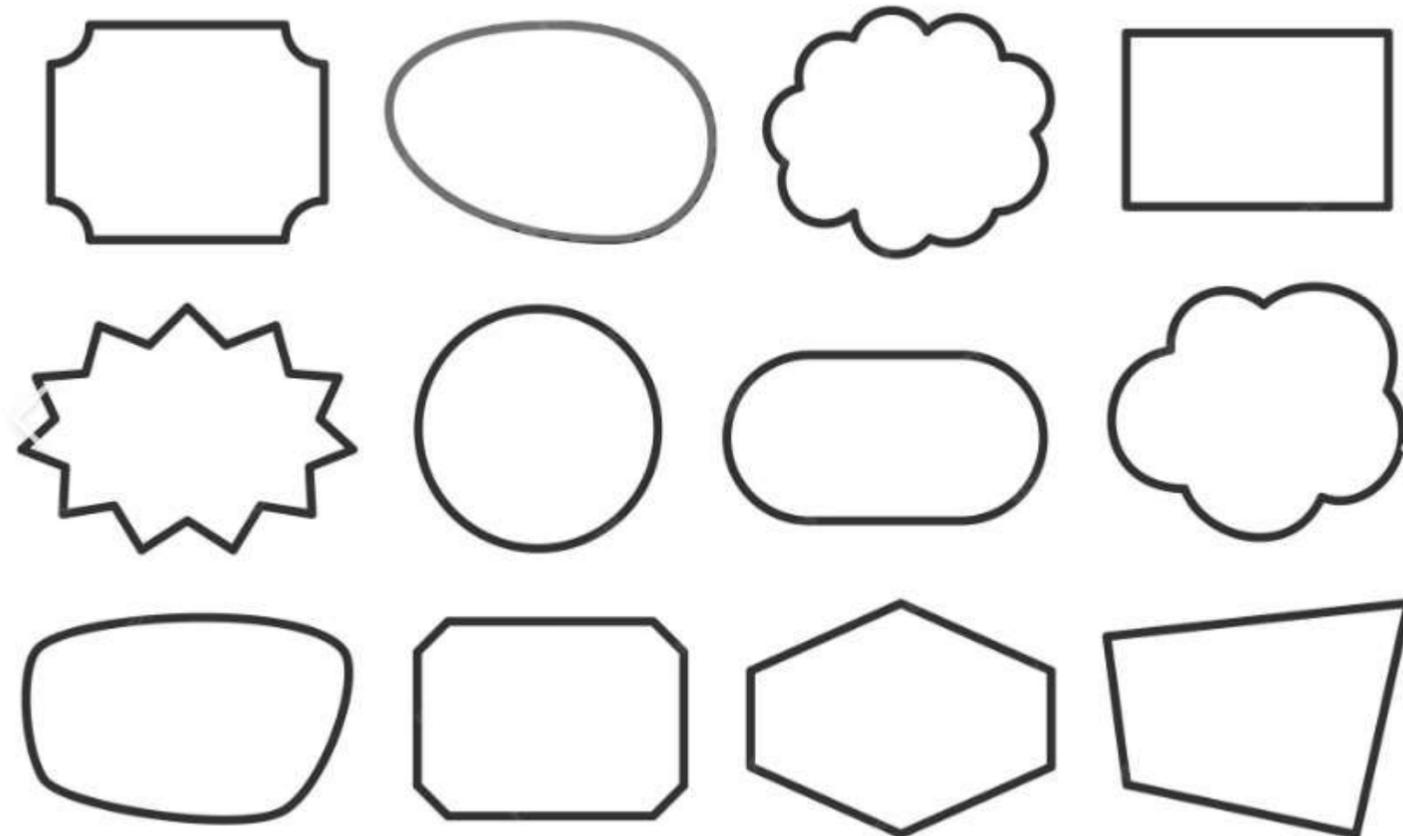
- Increased partnerships
- reduced silos
- compelling regional AI leadership identity
- cultural shift toward collaboration and innovation

** Draft - subject to further development

DEFINING DAVI LEADERSHIP



TBD



 **DIGITAL**

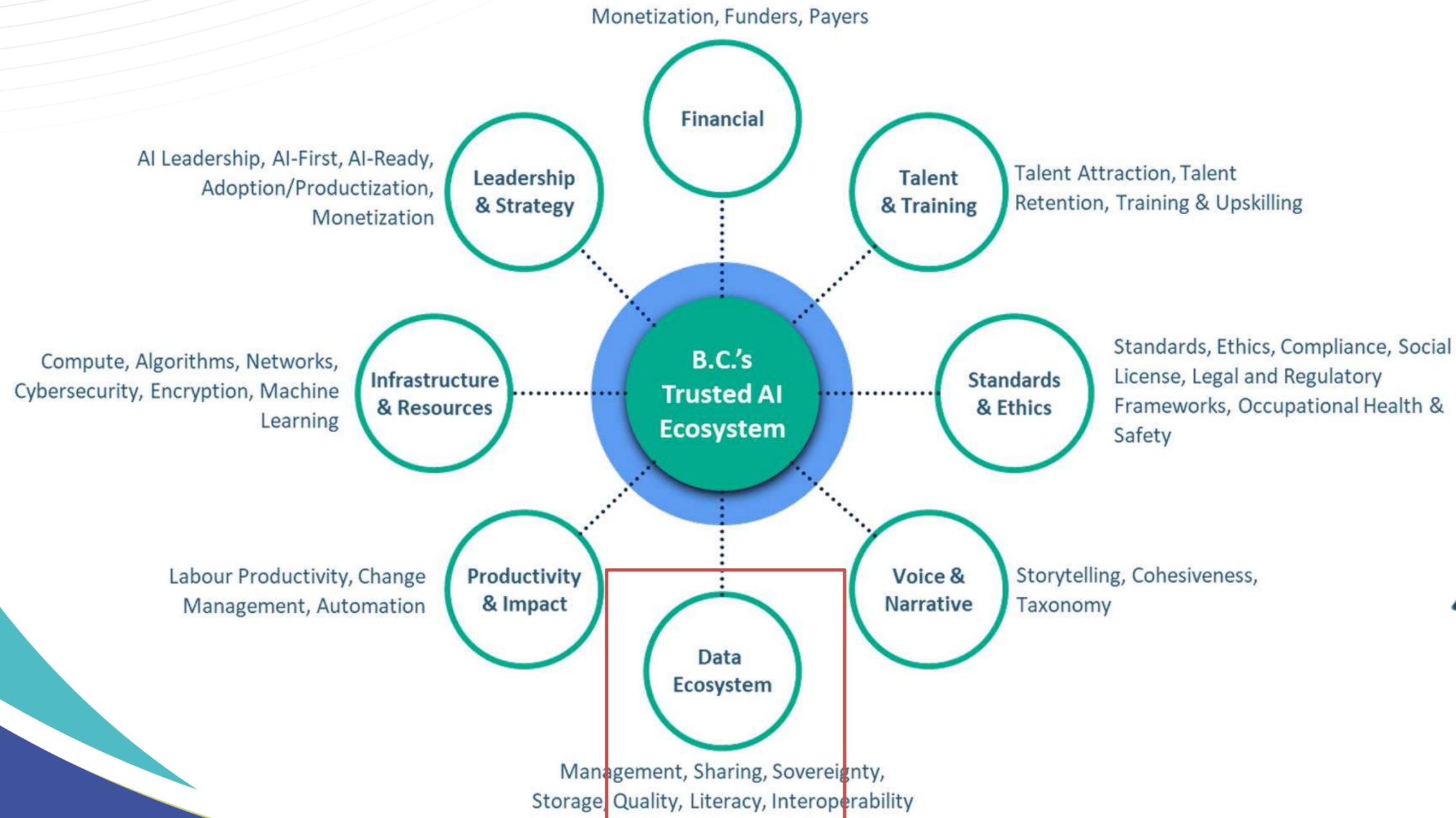
**Data Use and Share
General Principles**

 **DIGITAL**

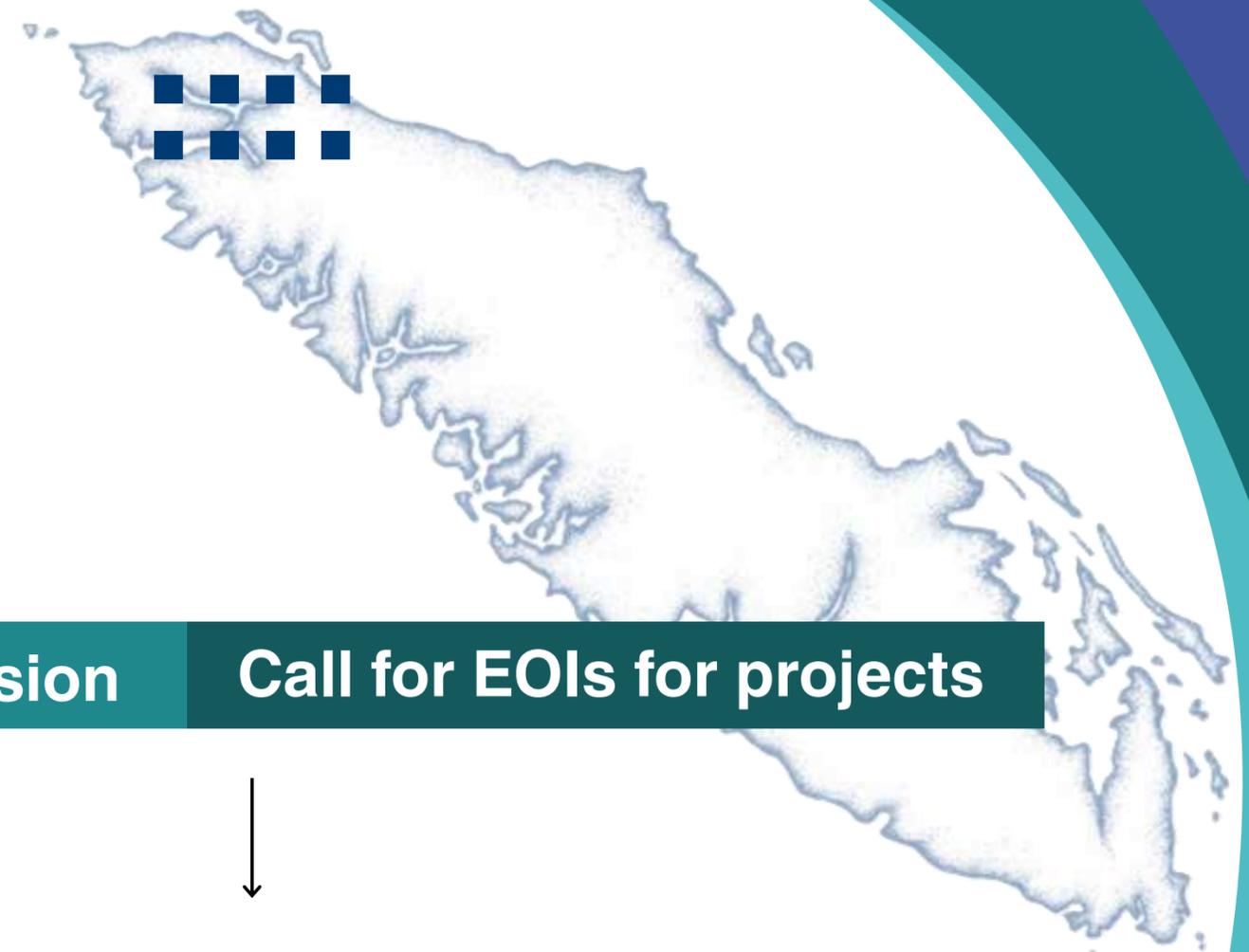
**Intellectual Property and
Data Strategy**

BC Centre for Applied AI

A coordinated response to the federal (and provincial) technology and innovation strategy for AI, focused on responsible AI commercialization



LAUNCHING DAVI



Selecting Priorities, Goals



Leaders Forum

Build the vehicle, pick a destination, pack the car:

- Review priorities
- Select opportunities
- Define a direction
- Launch

Defining the Team, Mission



Capacity, Skills, Resources

Hands on tiller needs paddles in the water – to get things done:

- Money
- Time
- Resources
- Influence

Call for EOIs for projects



Start Capacity Building

Call for Expressions of Interest for capacity building projects that align with DAVI priorities

- \$5-30K projects co-funded
- Clear goals, deliverables
- Training, action teams, work



TIMEFRAME

- Organize DAVI structure, process March 2026
- Initial/pilot activities March 2026
 - Call for capacity building projects
- Launch April 2026





Thank You

