
First Nation Veterinary Infrastructure

Grand Council of Treaty #3 National Assembly

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First Nation Veterinary Infrastructure
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Christian **A**boriginal **I**nfrasturcture **D**evelopments

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Table of Contents

Title	Page
Veterinary Infrastructure Introduction	2
Treaty #3 Hunting Avocation	2
Economic Benefits	2
Veterinary Facility	3
Submitted Funding Proposals	3
Current Status of Infrastructure Development	4
INAC Road Blocks and Treaty #3 Support	4
Diagram 1: Veterinary Infrastructure Services	6
Diagram 2: Deer Dollar Benefits	7
Diagram 3: Veterinary Facility Monthly Usage	8
Diagram 4: Veterinary Infrastructure Development	9

Veterinary Infrastructure Introduction:

In the Province of Ontario there are approximately 1,500 veterinarians at the local, Provincial, and Federal levels. Services provided by this veterinarian infrastructure network creates foundations upon which humane societies and dog pounds control dog populations. They provide protocols through which legislation and regulation become national or international meat industries. They develop animal care and disease management strategies to ensure animals, people, animal food products, and animal by-products are kept safe from abuse and disease. In essence, veterinarians are involved with every species of animal for the development and implementation of their care, inspection, regulation, use, transport, slaughter, and consumption (**See Diagram 1**). The veterinary infrastructure network is world-wide and enormous. However, it does not exist in First Nations. The absence of veterinary infrastructure services in First Nations has left community members at risk from eating uninspected wild meat and fish, exposed to preventable diseases from domestic and wild animals, in danger of dog attacks, and without the wildlife management tools to sustain and excel in traditional lifestyles; including the development of an international trade and commerce with wildlife harvest.

Treaty #3 Hunting Avocation:

First Nations have never relinquished their right to hunt or trap as a means to support their families. Treaty #3 ensures that Treaty #3 First Nations, "...shall have right to pursue their avocations of hunting and fishing throughout the tract surrendered...". The word avocations simply means for all vocational pursuits, including; regular, hobby, or pastime vocations¹. The Indian Act, section 81.1.o, preserves the right of First Nations to, "... regulate fur-bearing animals, fish and other game on the reserve" for their, "... preservation, protection and management ... ". This right to hunt and regulate wildlife extends to the entire Treaty through section 88 of the Indian Act where the Act is, " Subject to the terms of any treaty ...". Similar justifications exist for First Nation hunting rights throughout Ontario and Canada. However, no one has developed the First Nation veterinary infrastructure necessary to hunt and internationally market wild game as a vocation. The right to hunt and the retail market have been kept separate. In this regard, First Nations have not exercised their avocation rights of hunting in Treaty #3. Every level of government in Ontario and Canada, is keenly aware that First Nations have "yet" to exercise their hunting rights.

Economic Benefits:

Currently, there are crisis levels of deer and bear within the Treaty #3 area. If the numbers are not reduced soon, disease will enter the deer and bear attacks will become common

¹ The Random House College Dictionary Revised Edition.(1975) Random House, Inc., New York, New York.

place. A sustainable, controlled, culturally-defined harvest of these animals by First Nations can be implemented to keep these populations “managed” within healthy limits. Each harvested deer is worth about \$1,750 and each bear approximately \$10,000. At least 10,000 additional deer need to be removed from the region each year (\$17,500,000). At least 200 bear also need to be removed each year as they become a nuisance (\$2,000,000). Simply harvesting to help control overpopulation in Treaty #3 as a pilot program is an annual \$19,500,000 industry for First Nations. This commerce and trade industry would employ band members, have community(s) ownership, use a marketing structure developed at the Treaty #3 governance level, and create close to 400 jobs. The entire industry would be owned and operated by and for the benefit of First Nations (**See Diagram 2**). To put the dollar value impact in perspective, Treaty #3 has some 5,000 people on reserves and Canada some 1,000,000. This would represent 3.9 billion dollars worth of pilot wildlife harvest programs in First Nations across Canada. If we add in other wildlife, fish, alternate forest products, and lumber resources that could be developed and marketed through the same infrastructure in a similar, sustainable way, we have \$30-60 million in Treaty #3 and \$6-12 billion at the national First Nation level. To put this to scale with the nation of Canada and its 28,000,000 people, it represents \$168-336 billion. This level of revenue is what nations are built on. It is all based on First Nations taking their traditional place in natural resource management and trade. It all starts with a First Nation veterinary infrastructure pilot program.

Veterinary Facility:

Lac des Milles Lac First Nation has partnered with Dr. Richard Herbert and Mr. Percy Bird to develop a basic veterinary infrastructure for First Nations. First Nations do not have the population base to hire a number of veterinarians, each for a specific task. First Nations need to multifunction a veterinarian so as to miniaturize veterinarian infrastructures into a single First Nation-owned veterinary facility that would meet all First Nation veterinary infrastructure needs. In this manner, small First Nation regional facilities could be reproduced elsewhere in Ontario and Canada. Veterinarians in these facilities would be involved in development and implementation of provincial, national, and international wild meat and fish protocols, but yet still provide rabies prevention, spay/neuter, euthanasia, and other services in First Nation defined, culturally appropriate, programs. During a harvest, the veterinarian would be a meat inspector and at other times a surgeon involved in spay/neuter, veterinary policy analyst, rabies vaccination program coordinator, dog pound coordinator, and etc. (**See Diagram 3**). Discussion within Treaty #3 defined three primary areas of interest for veterinary infrastructure pilot project development. They are; wild deer harvest, nuisance wildlife harvest, and dog services required to both control dog populations and to make reserve environments safer. However, communities did not want to wait to develop solutions for public health issues related to dogs. They wanted an interim solution.

Submitted Funding Proposals:

Three funding proposals were submitted to INAC; Resource Access Negotiation (RAN), Regional Partnership Program (RPP), and Equity funding. The RAN was for pre-negotiation; concept introduction, identification of concerned parties, identification of concerned party needs, discussion and definition of First Nation needs, partnership and funding development, and initial management and legal consultations. The RPP was for negotiation; elder consultations, community consultations, environmental impact consultations, access negotiation, regulation development, program protocol development, contract development, training development, marketing development, and legislation augmentation. The Equity was a partnership for the development of an interim veterinary facility that could house the developing First Nation veterinary infrastructure and begin to address crisis level dog control issues; Bill 132 compliance (dangerous dog legislation), pro-active for Bill S-24 (animal cruelty legislation), pound services, animal control officer services, nuisance wildlife services, rabies prevention services, spay/neuter (population control) services, euthanasia services, and public education services.

Current Status of Infrastructure Development:

The First Nation veterinary infrastructure development has progressed to the following degrees: The work is completed for the Equity funding and program development is starting. The veterinary facility is built, equipped, stocked, and licensed. It is open and acting as a base hospital to provide central service and mobile reserve services. The facility has already begun to develop in-community rabies, euthanasia, and wellness programs. The facility is ready to begin work on pound and animal control services. The RAN-funded pre-negotiations are 3/4 finished (**See Diagram 4**). RPP-funded work has not begun. Currently, the program development does not need additional staff or buildings. It just needs time and support to continue.

INAC Road Blocks and Treaty #3 Support:

INAC has embarked on a series of delay, disinformation, and slight-of-hand tactics to delay and deny all funding for the project and to demoralize and starve-out the applicants. All this after funding was declared available for the infrastructure development. Dr. Herbert has carried the project but can not do so indefinitely. Currently, the project sits in Minister Scott's office.

While Lac des Milles Lacs First Nation has been spearheading early aspects of the infrastructure development, the project has quickly evolved to where it could be the centerpiece of a First Nation resource-driven revenue stream that would permanently support First Nation self-government. In this regard, the development of a First Nation veterinary infrastructure has become a Treaty #3 issue. We respectfully ask Treaty #3 governance for political support at INAC to "unblock" funding and for interim financial support until funding flows. In this manner, development can continue and what has been built will not be lost. We also feel that Treaty #3 should have a more defined role in the infrastructure development; an issue that should be addressed.

We perceive that both Provincial and Federal governments are frightened by the potential of this project. We believe that when this infrastructure project is developed and expanded, First

First Nation Veterinary Infrastructure

4

Dr. Richard G. Herbert

Nations will thrive with an international economy, land use that could affect wildlife resources will be subject to First Nation consultation, and Canada will be changed forever.

We further ask different portfolios within Treaty #3 to explore and consider sources of funding for incoming developed programs. For example: Funds have been channelled from Health Canada, First Nation and Inuit Health Branch, to on-reserve dog rabies vaccination and workshop programs through Community Health Representatives (CHRs). In this manner we have been able to bring rabies vaccination, euthanasia, and dog wellness services to reserves. However, this is only one of the dog-related programs that will need operational funding. The current program being developed is a centralized treaty-wide service for pound, rabies quarantine, and animal control services. In this manner, CHR's will have a place for rabies-suspect dogs to be quarantined, Treaty #3 police have a place to bring seized animals, and communities with developed dog bylaws will have the necessary infrastructure services to enforce their bylaws.

Veterinary Infrastructure Services

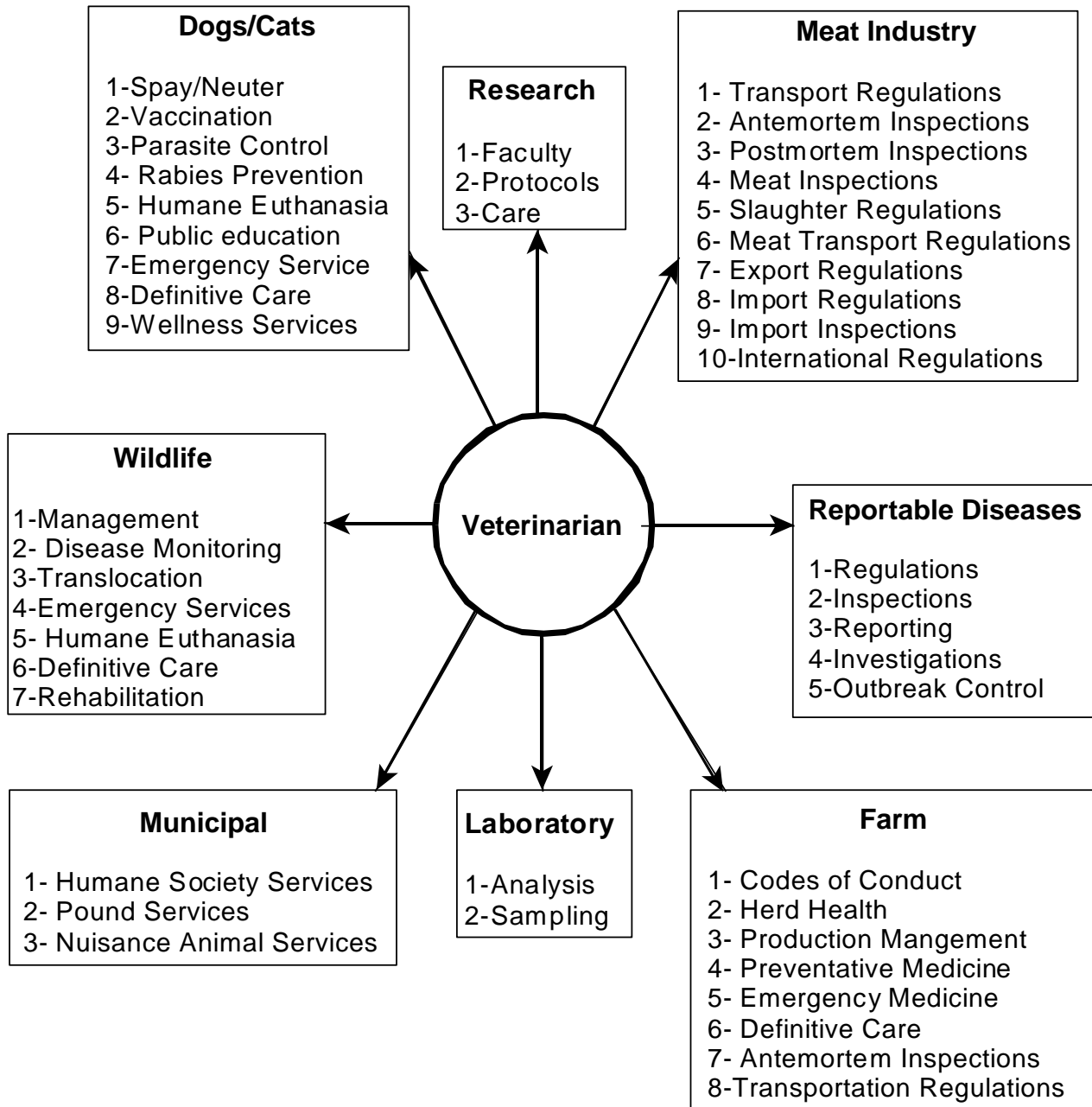


Diagram 1: Services provided by a veterinarian within a Local, Provincial, National, or International veterinary Infrastructure.

Deer Dollar Benefits

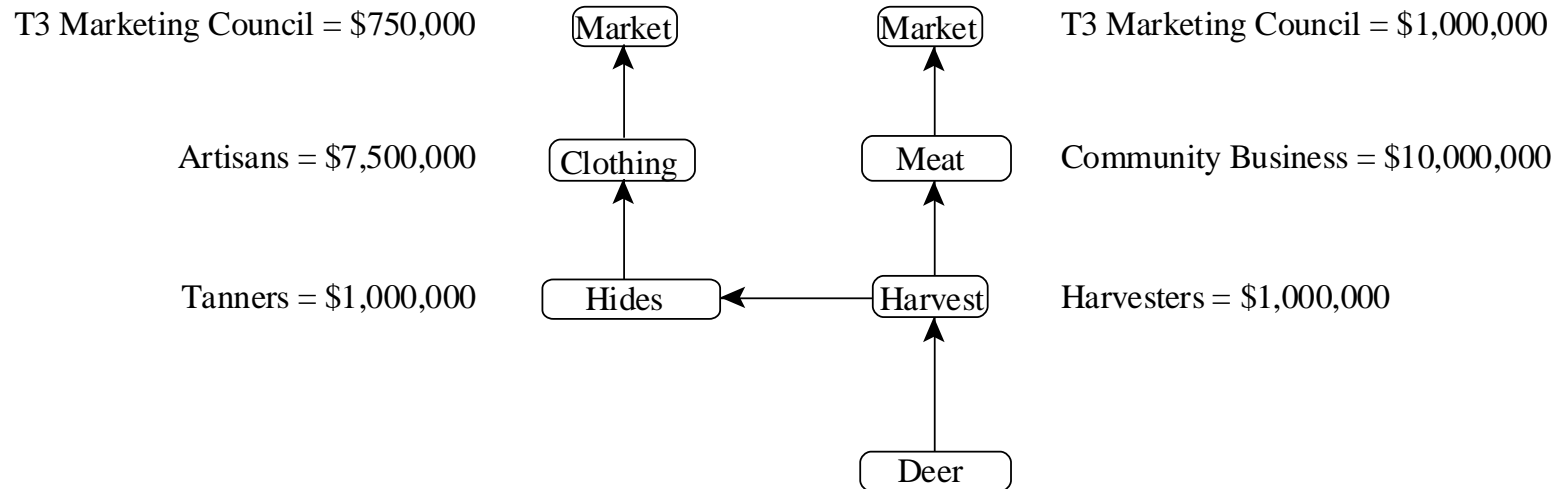


Diagram 2: Guestimated economic benefits of a 10,000 deer population -control harvest at various levels.

Veterinary Facility Monthly Usage

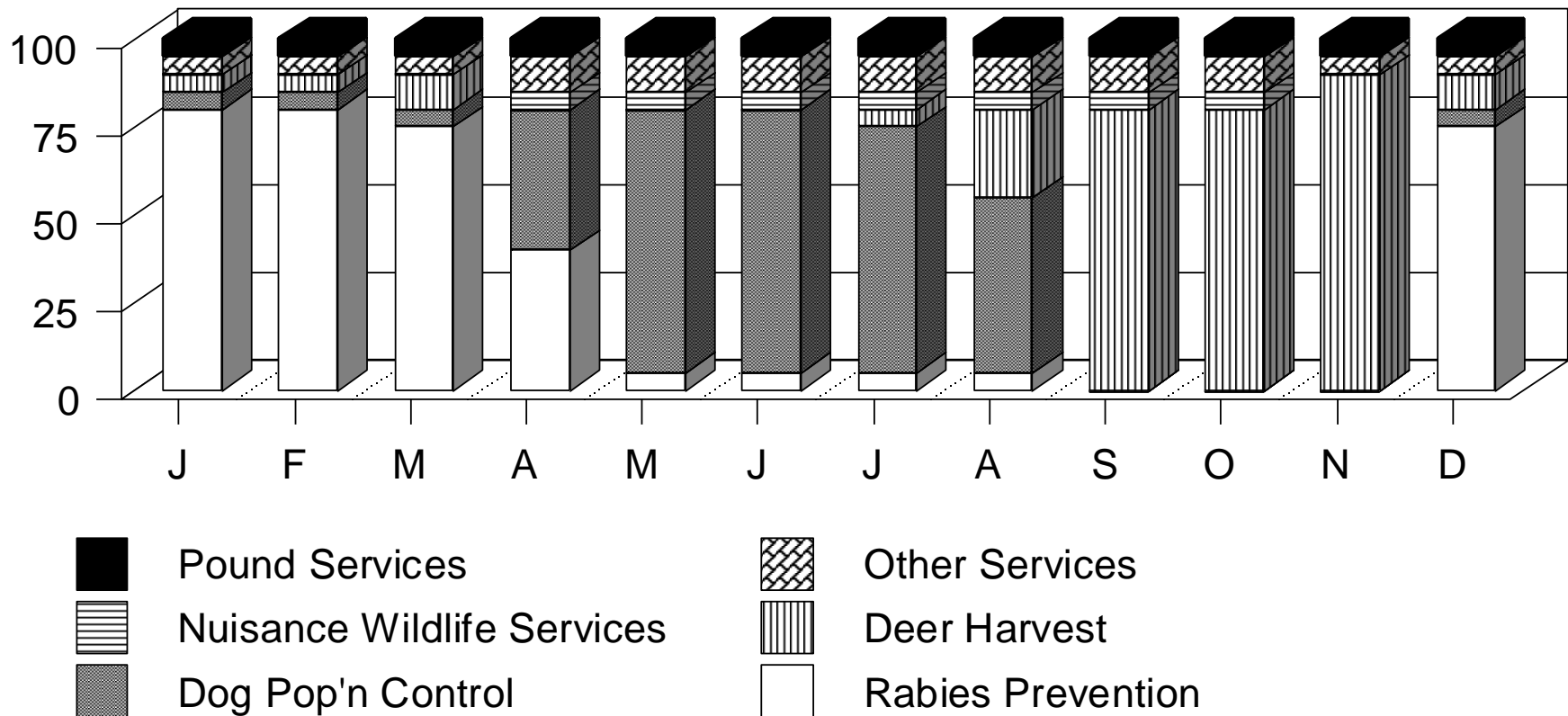


Diagram 3: Guestimated monthly time usage of the proposed First Nation veterinary facility for various First Nation veterinary infrastructure services.

Veterinary Infrastructure Development

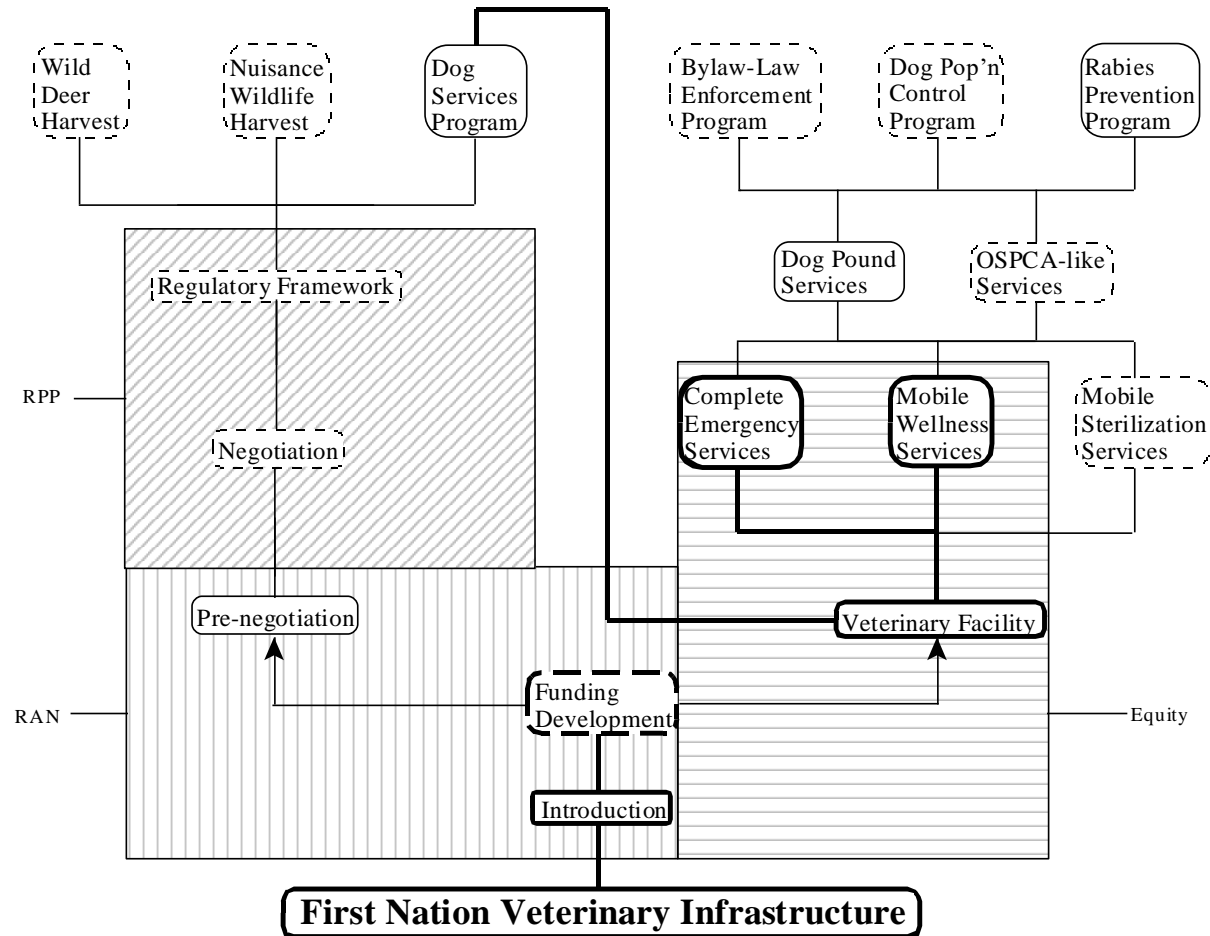


Diagram 4: Hatched boxes are infrastructure development aspects named within each of the 3 funding proposals. Thick lines are parts of the infrastructure already developed. Thin solid lines are parts of the infrastructure currently under development. Dashed lines are part of the infrastructure yet to be developed. Thick dashed lines are part if the infrastructure that appeared to be developed but INAC has blocked.