



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Kitsaki Group acquires ownership stake in international software testing and services provider PLATO**

January 17, 2023

**SASKATOON, Saskatchewan** – Kitsaki Management Limited Partnership (“Kitsaki”) announced today its investment in Canadian-borne PLATO, a software testing and technology services provider with an international client base. Now majority Indigenous-owned and controlled, PLATO is the only Indigenous software testing and technology services provider in the country.

“Investing in PLATO is in line with Kitsaki’s strategic goals to diversify our portfolio with multi-sector investment in long-term, sustainable businesses that grow us beyond our region,” says Ron Hyggen, CEO of Kitsaki. “We knew right away that PLATO presented a unique opportunity, and that our values aligned. They have a real history of success when it comes to creating opportunities for Indigenous people in a growing market that allows staff to work remotely on projects.”

Since 2016, PLATO has trained more than 270 Indigenous software testers, a number that continues to grow with the company’s train-and-employ model. PLATO Founder and CEO Keith McIntosh is driven by the belief that “a rising tide lifts all boats” – that improving the economy benefits all people. Investing in the Indigenous economy and fostering Indigenous talent are a huge part of that.

“Ron and the Kitsaki team do what they do for all the right reasons,” says Keith McIntosh, PLATO’s CEO and founder. “They are dedicated to growing capacity and opportunity for Indigenous communities, and we’re looking forward to working with them to do so.”

McIntosh met Denis Carignan (Executive Vice President, Indigenous Impact and Innovation, PLATO) at a conference in Ottawa that coincided with the release of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission (TRC) report and its 94 Calls to Action. Recommendation #92 calls on the corporate sector to do its part in the journey of Reconciliation. McIntosh and Carignan took it to heart. With technology workers in high demand and a large, growing and underemployed Indigenous population, they saw a real opportunity to invest in people and community.

“There’s a lot of talent in Indigenous communities we knew we could tap into,” says Carignan, a member of Pasqua First Nation. “Focusing our recruitment and training strategy to support development in this area has allowed PLATO to engage a new labour pool and build skills that can earn a great income in the knowledge economy.”

PLATO’s train-and-employ model includes five months in the classroom, a three-month internship, and a guaranteed full-time job upon completion. The company seeks funding from various sources to ensure training is available at no cost. Training is holistic, a mix of book learning and applied skills, including coaching in professionalism and client relations, skills that are especially important for a company that tests software and reports failures in design.

“When people ask what PLATO does, the short answer is that we tell people what doesn’t work, or what’s missing,” says Carignan. “We test websites, e-learning systems, games, applications,

financial systems, lottery systems and much more. Software needs to do what the user needs it to. There's one way to do it right and a million ways to do it wrong!"

Opportunities for work in technology are everywhere, and multiplying, with many options for remote work. Kitsaki leadership saw PLATO as an investment that would diversify its portfolio while also generating more employment options for people in more remote regions, like northern Saskatchewan. A training school will be created in Prince Albert, training 15-20 students per year that have employment opportunities with PLATO when they've completed their courses.

"PLATO's model is accessible, relevant and has already inspired many Indigenous youth and young adults to pursue tech careers," says Hyggen. "We know these opportunities will have a real impact on our community and neighbours, while also contributing to a more inclusive tech sector overall."

### **About Kitsaki**

Kitsaki Management Limited Partnership has managed the economic development activities of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band (LLRIB) since 1981. Dedicated to investing in long-term sustainable business that meet the appropriate profitability, risk and employment criteria, Kitsaki has built a diverse portfolio of investments in transportation, hospitality, insurance, environmental services, engineering, vegetation management, technology, and mining services.

### **About PLATO**

Canada's only Indigenous software testing and technology services company, PLATO offers a full suite of software testing services including test automation, functional testing, performance testing, test advisory, ERP testing, accessibility testing, content migration, and content quality assurance. Its innovative train-and-employ model has created careers in technology for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people from coast to coast to coast.

### **About LLRIB**

With a population of more than 11,000, Lac La Ronge Indian Band (LLRIB) is the largest First Nation in Saskatchewan, rich in Woodland Cree culture, language, and connection to the land. Located in north-central Saskatchewan in Treaty 6 territory, LLRIB includes six communities: Little Red River, Morin Lake (Hall Lake), La Ronge, Sucker River, Stanley Mission, and Grandmother's Bay. LLRIB is governed by an elected Chief and 12 Councillors. Chief Tammy Cook-Searson has served in her role since 2006.

### **Media Contact**

Shawna Kay  
Office Manager  
Kitsaki Management LP  
306-477-4599 Ext. 221  
[shawna.kay@kitsaki.com](mailto:shawna.kay@kitsaki.com)