

## Program Overview

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The **Competitiveness Consulting Rebate** program provides a rebate to small and medium sized businesses engaged in manufacturing, innovative technologies, resource processing, transportation, distribution and their first line suppliers for outsourced consulting services. A rebate of up to 50% to a yearly maximum of \$30,000 can be recovered for the cost of external business consulting projects. Projects must focus on increased productivity, new or incremental revenues, profitability and/or job creation. Eligible businesses must be privately owned, have less than 500 employees, revenues less than \$100 million and be headquartered within the [Northern Development Initiative Trust](#) region.

### Features and benefits for business:

- Program provides a rebate to businesses to offset the cost of consulting and consultant travel for qualifying projects
- Businesses may access customized consulting services to suit their unique business requirements
- Businesses may use a preferred consultant or obtain assistance to identify and select a qualified consultant(s) with a verified track record of competitiveness consulting expertise
- Time sensitive approvals for fully completed applications
- Applications are received and approved on a continuous basis throughout the year – no intake deadlines
- Direct payments to reimburse the business within weeks of receiving verified completion and payment of the consulting services contract

## Objectives

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- To directly support central and northern B.C. manufacturers, innovators, processors, and their first line suppliers to grow their businesses, implement world-class business practices and become more competitive in the global market.
- To create measurable economic benefit for the region.

## Application Intake Deadlines

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Funding applications are continuously accepted to this program and are reviewed as received.

Applications are reviewed as received for eligibility and completeness and a decision is made within one week of receipt of a complete application.

## Program Eligibility

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### Eligible industries

- Manufacturing
- Transportation
- Distribution
- Resource processing
- Innovation/technology
- Industrial supply chain (services and suppliers)

**Eligible Businesses**

- Small and medium sized business in eligible industries
- Incorporated businesses
- Operating businesses with revenue
- Privately owned businesses
- Businesses with less than 500 employees
- Annual revenues of less than \$100 million
- Headquartered in central or northern B.C. within Northern Development Initiative Trust's region
- First Nations businesses in eligible industries
- First Nations development corporations
- \*Not for profit organizations whose sole purpose is to create jobs and economic benefit in their industry, i.e. community forests

**Ineligible Business/Organizations**

- Unincorporated businesses
- Start-up businesses without revenue
- Publicly traded businesses
- Businesses with 500 employees or more
- Businesses with \$100 million in revenues or more
- Businesses that do not have a major facility and key decision makers in central or northern B.C.
- Non-profit organizations (\*see specific exclusion above)
- Municipalities, regional districts, First Nations bands

**Eligible Consulting Projects**

- Business planning, strategic planning and management
- Business development feasibility studies (eligible for a 25% contribution to a maximum of \$20,000)
- Market development
- Human resource management
- Operations/operational efficiency
- Quality and safety management
- Innovation

**Ineligible Consulting Projects**

- Accounting
- Legal
- Software design or development
- Website design
- Staff training courses (external)
- Engineering
- Consulting contracts that exceed 12 months
- Project scoping i.e. Gap Analysis

**Required Project and Funding Application Features**

- The project is aligned with the requirements and objectives of the rebate program
- The project proponent is the business decision maker
- The applying business has the resources to finance/fund the entire project
- The applying business is financially contributing to the project
- A detailed quote outlining the proposed scope of work from a qualified consultant is provided as an attachment to the funding application. The consultant proposal must indicate: fixed fee, fixed deliverables, and fixed timeline

**Eligible Costs**

- Consulting fees. Consultant(s) must be located in Canada\* (see exception below in Ineligible Costs)
- Consultant travel costs directly associated with the project. Only travel costs within Canada are eligible
- Consultant contract must be fixed fee (i.e. not on time and material, hourly or contingency)
- Printing costs directly associated with producing a final report
- Cost of obtaining research material (industry reports, peer-reviewed journals) directly relevant to the project
- Other costs directly associated with the project (to be approved on an individual project basis)

**Ineligible Costs**

- Operational costs and staff wages
- Management or staff travel costs
- Consultant administration/management fees
- \*Fees for consultants outside of Canada unless it is demonstrated that the service is not available in Canada
- Legal and accounting services
- Engineering costs
- Meeting costs (equipment rental, refreshments etc.)
- Purchases of equipment or tools
- Project cost over-runs
- In-kind labour or donated services/materials
- GST and PST
- Costs incurred prior to formal notification of funding approval from Northern Development

**Funding Terms**

- Northern Development provides a rebate under this program up to a maximum of 50% up to \$30,000 per year to any one business (or affiliated businesses) for outsourced consulting services.
- Projects must have a minimum budget of \$2,000
- Consultant travel expenses are included within the maximum allowable rebate of \$30,000
- If an applicant is submitting an application for a total project cost exceeding \$50,000 (before rebate), the applicant must demonstrate evidence of a competitive process in selection of the consultant and/or validate the decision process used to select the consultant
- Applicants must apply and receive notification of approval prior to commencement of the project.
- If applicants are receiving funding from other organizations, the total funding contribution (including the Northern Development rebate) cannot exceed 75% of the total project cost
- Applicants must pay the consulting fees in full at the completion of the project
- Applicants must submit a project report using Northern Development's reporting form, copies of invoices, proof of payment for the consulting services, and evidence of work completed (i.e. COR health and safety certificate, marketing plan, etc.) in order to receive the rebate
- Applicants must make project deliverables (i.e. business plans, studies, reports, documented procedures) available to Northern Development in order to undertake quality assurance. All documents will remain confidential. If an applicant is approved for a project which is less than the maximum \$30,000 rebate from Northern Development and a second consulting project is being proposed, the first project must be completed and reporting submitted prior to any subsequent project being approved

## Qualifying for Funding

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While a project or business may be eligible for funding, projects must propose to deliver specific economic benefits to the business in order to qualify for funding approval.

### Economic Benefits

*The following measurables will be reported on by successful applicants for a three year period to demonstrate the direct economic benefits of the project.*

Projects funded under this program must report on the following economic outcomes:

- Direct permanent full-time jobs created
- Direct permanent part-time or seasonal jobs created
- Annual operational revenues
- Annual operational costs
- Other benefits or outcomes as a result of the project (i.e. improved profitability, reduced WCB rates, staff turnover)

Multiple projects for the same business and for the same strategic focus (i.e. human resources) must demonstrate unique and separate measurable economic outcomes.

## Application Assessment

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Northern Development staff undertake comprehensive due diligence of each funding application received, which may include contacting relevant agencies, organizations and the consultant(s) as part of the review process.

## Application Process

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1. Applicant contacts the Director, Business Development at Northern Development to discuss the proposed project scope and potential alignment with the funding program.
2. Applicant obtains a detailed quote outlining the proposed scope of work, fees, and timeline from a qualified consultant.
3. The applicant completes a funding application and submits the application with the detailed consulting quote to Northern Development.
4. Northern Development will review the application in consultation with the business owner or key decision maker.
5. Northern Development staff complete the due diligence process.
6. Northern Development staff will notify the applicant of the funding decision by phone or email, within one week of receipt of completed application.
7. If approved, a formal letter is mailed to the applicant.
8. At project completion, the applicant agrees to provide a project testimonial and a public announcement of their project on the Northern Development website and newsletter.
9. Applicants are required to report annually for a three year period on economic benefits specific to the project.

For program enquiries  
contact:

**Northern Development Initiative Trust**

301-1268 Fifth Avenue, Prince George BC V2L 3L2 Canada

tel 250-561-2525

email [info@northerndevlopment.bc.ca](mailto:info@northerndevlopment.bc.ca)

<http://www.northerndevlopment.bc.ca/>