

Strategic Initiatives Fund Application Guide



Program Overview and Objectives

The Strategic Initiatives Fund (SIF) is a proposal-based program that provides grant funding for strategic projects that are large in scale, regional in impact, enhance a community or multiple communities' ability to overcome economic challenges and will result in incremental capacity or strategic economic infrastructure within a local government or First Nation. The goal of the program is to support community-based projects that focus on long-term economic transformation and sustainability.

The purpose of Strategic Initiatives Fund is to diversify and enhance the economies of central and northern B.C. communities, particularly those communities impacted by Mountain Pine Beetle. The Strategic Initiatives Fund is a flexible program that aims to capitalize on the unique opportunities and strengths that exist in these communities to invest in projects that strengthen innovation, partnerships, and diversification of economic activities.

Funding Terms

It is anticipated that there will be approximately \$900,000 available through the Strategic Initiatives Fund in 2018. While there is no limitation on the maximum grant size available, applications where Northern Development's investment exceeds 80% of the eligible project budget, or where the amount requested exceeds the program allocation, will not be processed.

The assessment of the required level of funding will take into consideration all other sources of funding available to the applicant. Preference will be given to projects that leverage incremental funding from local government, First Nations, the provincial government, federal government, the private sector and other non-government sources.

Eligible Applicants

- Local governments
- Registered First Nation bands
- Partnerships with not-for-profit corporations or private sector businesses where a local government or registered First Nation band is the lead applicant

Project Examples

The Strategic Initiatives Fund is designed to put communities in the driver's seat and propose projects that are strategic in nature and support economic transformation.

The Strategic Initiatives Fund is designed to be broad in nature, allowing flexibility for communities to submit proposals for projects that support economic development and transformation. Although there is a variety of project types that would be eligible for funding under the program, some examples include but are not limited to:

- Incentive programs that encourage downtown redevelopment, market housing, brownfield site redevelopment or infill development.
- Major engineering plans related to redeveloping or repurposing a defined area.
- Launching a business incubation program to support business start-ups.
- Market expansion assessments for existing businesses and industry sectors.
- Capacity to support sector development.

Applicants are encouraged to consider the Trust's 2018 – 2020 Strategic Plan goals when articulating their proposal for consideration. The primary goals of the plan are:

- Supporting the development of resilient and profitable businesses.
- Stimulating welcoming, thriving communities.
- Enhancing regional capacity, investment and opportunities for growth.

Intake Process

The Strategic Initiatives Fund will be delivered through a single call for proposals. Submit your [proposal cover form](#) (with proposal and all required attachments) to info@northerndevlopment.bc.ca **prior to the deadline of 4pm (PST) on March 15th, 2018.**

The Strategic Initiatives Fund call for proposals process allows for a comparative analysis of projects against the criteria outlined in this guide and strengthens Northern Development's responsiveness to economic trends and the unique opportunities that exist in central and northern B.C.

Eligible and qualified projects will be reviewed by the Northern Development board for a decision at their April meeting. Applicants will receive notification from Northern Development regarding the status of their request shortly thereafter.

Program Criteria

Eligible projects must meet the following criteria:

- At least 20% of the total project funding must come the applicant or sources other than Northern Development.
- Project meets the objectives of the Strategic Initiatives Fund program.
- Applicant and project location must be within Northern Development's service area.

- Funding is project-based, meaning it supports single, short-term projects that can be completed within 18 months. The Strategic Initiatives Fund is not intended for multi-year commitments to support multiphase or long-term projects.
- Project is incremental to the applicant's core responsibilities, obligations and day to day operations.
- Projects that have a direct or transferable benefit to communities impacted by the Mountain Pine Beetle.
- Infrastructure projects must be community-oriented and open for use to the public and not limited to private membership.
- Strategic response to a specific economic development objective, opportunity or challenge and has clear economic development implications.
- Fits within the funding parameters of the program.
- Costs associated with projects that would be eligible and qualify for funding under other Northern Development programs
- Projects may not begin incurring any eligible costs prior to receiving approval.
- The program is not intended to replace other government programs. Where a project is considered the direct responsibility of a federal or provincial department, ministry or agency, funding is not provided.

Other assessment considerations:

- Partnerships or collaborative efforts that advance regional priorities that benefit multiple communities and/or sectors.
- Projects are identified and aligned with a planning exercise (community vision, economic development plan etc.).
- Has a high level of financial leverage that provides opportunities for investment from other partners.
- The capacity of the community to undertake, evaluate and document the project and to operate and maintain it.
- The size or scale of the project and its benefits in relation to the size of the community.

Proposal Requirements

The Strategic Initiatives Fund program is a competitive proposal based process. All applicants are required to provide Northern Development with a proposal that includes the following information no later than March 15th. Only proposals that are received before March 15th and that meet these minimum requirements will be processed. Proposals that do not meet these requirements will not be eligible to receive funding.

- Complete [Northern Development's proposal cover form](#).
- A detailed description scope of work and timeline for the project.
- Outline the rationale for the project including how the project is a strategic response to a specific economic development objective, opportunity or challenge.
- Identify how the project meets the objectives of the Strategic Initiatives Fund program.
- Ability of the applicant to complete the project and sustainably operate the completed project
- Include details on how the project will have a positive impact on the community.

- Include details on how the project has direct or transferable benefits that will mitigate the impacts of the Mountain Pine Beetle on the economy.
- The proposal must identify the desired outcomes of the project and examples of how economic results will be measured in order to qualify for funding.
- Successful applicants will be required to report on the key deliverables for a duration of time agreed to between the applicant and Northern Development.
- A detailed budget for the project, including supporting quote(s).
 - Quotes must outline the proposed scope of work, the vendor and all pre-tax costs.
- Identification of other project funding sources in addition to Northern Development's funding, including verification of approval where confirmed.
- Attached other relevant supplemental documentation.

Following the closing date, Northern Development staff will undertake a comprehensive review and analysis of each of the proposals received. This due diligence process may include contacting relevant agencies and organizations as part of the review process. Applicants should expect to receive requests for additional information from Northern Development staff during this process.

Reporting

All contribution agreements jointly signed between Northern Development and a successful applicant include a requirement for periodic reports, in order to demonstrate progress in implementing the project and achieving the economic results. The reporting requirements will be determined on a project by project basis by Northern Development staff.

Resources

- [Important Dates](#)
Intake deadlines, Regional Advisory Committee Meeting and Board Meeting schedules.
- [Funding Program Matrix](#)
Available funding programs and eligibility criteria.

Questions?

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