

Competitiveness Consulting Rebate Application Guide



Program Overview

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 customized 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.

Objectives

- 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

Funding applications are continuously accepted to this program.

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

Eligibility

Eligible Businesses

- Small and medium sized business in eligible industries
- Incorporated
- Operating with revenue
- Privately owned
- 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

Eligible Industries

- Manufacturing
- Transportation
- Distribution
- Resource processing (forestry, mining, agriculture, energy)
- Innovation/technology
- Industrial supply chain (services and suppliers)

Ineligible Business/Organizations

- Unincorporated
- Start-ups without revenue
- Publicly traded
- 500 employees or more
- Annual revenues of \$100 million 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
- Businesses outside of the industrial and commercial supply chain (*see Eligible Industries section above)

Eligible Consulting Projects

* Businesses may use a preferred consultant or obtain assistance to identify and select a qualified consultant(s).

- 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
- Website upgrades
- Staff training courses (external)
- Engineering
- Consulting contracts that exceed 12 months
- Project scoping i.e. Gap Analysis

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
- 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
- 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 approved, applicants must sign an agreement with Northern Development.
- 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.
- Projects must be completed as approved to receive funding and any change in the project scope must be communicated to Northern Development.
- Incomplete or partially completed projects may not be eligible for funding.

Application and Program Requirements

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 at completion and for a three year period after project completion 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)

Reporting

Applicants must submit a project report using Northern Development's reporting form, and supply the following required attachments:

- copies of invoices and proof of payment
- evidence of work completed (i.e. COR health and safety certificate, marketing plan, etc.)

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.

Application Process

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.

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. An agreement is sent to the applicant for their signature.
9. Upon completion, applicant submits completed Northern Development reporting form with attachments for funding.
10. Applicants are required to report annually for a three year period on economic benefits specific to the project.

Questions?

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