

# Small Business Recovery (SBR) Consulting Rebate Application Guide

## Program Overview

In response to the impact the forestry sector downturn and COVID-19 pandemic are having on businesses in central and northern B.C., Northern Development is offering the **Small Business Recovery (SBR) Consulting Rebate** program.

This program is designed to help businesses reduce the barrier to accessing professional expertise and recover the costs of third-party consulting projects. These types of projects must focus on ways to sustain businesses during the current economic downturn.

The **SBR Consulting Rebate** will reimburse small and medium sized businesses (operators) for contracted consulting services. Businesses that are impacted by the economic downturn in Northern Development's service region are eligible to apply. A rebate of up to 85%, to a yearly maximum of \$25,000, can be recovered for the cost of hiring a consultant to assist with business efforts.

### **Objectives**

- To directly support small and medium size businesses impacted by the economic downturn in Northern Development's service region
- To implement strategies to attract customers, market a business and/or improve profitability
- To sustain businesses and employment in central and northern B.C.

## Funding Terms

Northern Development provides a rebate under this program to eligible businesses to a maximum of 85% up to \$25,000 annually toward eligible costs.

- Projects must have a minimum budget of \$1,000
- If an applicant is approved for a project which is less than the annual maximum of \$25,000 and a second consulting project is being proposed, the first project must be completed, and reporting submitted prior to any subsequent project being approved
- Applicants must apply and receive notification of approval prior to beginning 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 Intake Deadlines

Northern Development will accept Competitiveness Consulting Rebate applications on a continuous basis until the annual budget is committed. Northern Development's fiscal year is January to December.

The [Small Business Recovery Consulting Rebate Application Form](#) is available on Northern Development's website.

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

## Eligibility

### Eligible Businesses/Organizations

All applicants must be located/headquartered within the [Northern Development Initiative Trust region](#).

- Small and medium sized businesses impacted by the economic downturn
- Incorporated businesses, or sole proprietorships that have been established for two or more years with more than \$30,000 in annual revenues
- Operating businesses with revenue
- Privately owned
- Less than 500 employees
- Revenues less than \$100 million
- First Nations businesses in eligible industries
- First Nations development corporations
- Community contribution companies

### Eligible Industries

- Accommodation
- Agriculture
- Aquaculture
- Energy
- Forestry
- High tech
- Hospitality
- Industrial supply chain
- Manufacturing
- Mining
- Oil and gas
- Retail
- Retail services
- Tourism operators
- Transportation

### Eligible Consulting Projects

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

- Business planning and strategic planning
- Business continuity planning and emergency response planning
- Market development and e-commerce development
- Business coaching
- Human resource management
- Operations/operational efficiency/process improvement or changes (transition to digital platforms)
- Quality and safety management
- Cash flow and financial management system
- Inventory management
- Marketing strategies, brand development/evolution and web development

### Eligible Costs

- Consulting fees. Consultant(s) must be in Canada\* (*see Ineligible Costs*)
  - Consultant contract must be fixed fee (i.e. not on time and material, hourly or contingency)
- Consultant travel costs directly associated with the project. Only travel costs within Canada are eligible
- Other costs directly associated with the project (to be approved on an individual project basis), such as the purchase of equipment, software or subscription(s)

## Ineligibility

### **Ineligible Businesses/Organizations**

- 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 the [Northern Development Initiative Trust region](#)
- Non-profit organizations
- Municipalities, regional districts, First Nations bands

### **Ineligible Consulting Projects**

- Legal
- Staff training courses (external)
- Engineering
- Consulting contracts that exceed 12 months
- Project scoping (i.e. gap analysis)
- Outsourcing operational duties

### **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.)
- Project cost over-runs
- In-kind volunteer labour or donated services/materials
- GST
- Costs incurred prior to formal notification of funding approval from Northern Development

## Application and Program Requirements

All applicants are required to confirm and/or submit the following information. Only applications that meet these requirements will be processed.

- Submit a complete [Small Business Recovery Consulting Rebate Application Form](#)
- For a project or business to be eligible for funding, the project must outline specific economic benefits to the business. These measurables will be reported on by successful applicants for a three year period after project completion.
  - Direct permanent full-time jobs sustained or created
  - Direct permanent part-time or seasonal jobs sustained or created
  - Annual revenues
  - Operational cost savings
  - Other benefits or outcomes as a result of the project (i.e. improved profitability, reduced WCB rates, staff turnover)
- A detailed quote outlining the proposed scope of work, fees, and timeline from a qualified consultant
- If applicable, identification of other project funding sources in addition to Northern Development's funding, including verification of approval where confirmed
  - Project funding cannot exceed project costs
- If not incorporated, proof of years in business and revenue

## 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 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 an application form and submits the application with the required attachments 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.
7. If approved, a formal letter is mailed to the applicant.
8. An agreement is emailed to the applicant for their signature.
9. Upon completion, applicant submits completed Northern Development reporting form with required attachments for funding.
10. Applicants are required to report annually for a three-year period on the economic benefits specific to the project.

## Reporting

Applicants must submit a completed Northern Development reporting form along with the following required attachments:

- Copies of all 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.

## To Apply

Please review all program documents in detail as incomplete applications will not be reviewed.

Completed application forms with all supplementary materials should be provided electronically to Northern Development by email to [info@northerndevelopment.bc.ca](mailto:info@northerndevelopment.bc.ca).

## Questions?

### **Northern Development Initiative Trust**

301-1268 Fifth Avenue

Prince George, BC V2L 3L2

250-561-2525

[info@northerndevelopment.bc.ca](mailto:info@northerndevelopment.bc.ca)

[www.northerndevelopment.bc.ca](http://www.northerndevelopment.bc.ca)