Rural and Remote Employment Initiatives Fund – Business Diversification and Sustainability Application Guide

Program Overview

The objective of the Rural and Remote Employment Initiatives Fund (RREIF) is to fund initiatives that support people, businesses, communities and the workforce navigate potential and realized impacts of tariffs and other economic impacts. Programming has been designed with the goal of addressing current economic gaps and potential economic impacts created by tariffs (e.g. increased raw materials costs, lost export contracts, delays in the supply chain etc.), intending to help support people, businesses, communities and the workforce in rural and remote communities of Northern British Columbia.

The Business Diversification and Sustainability program is designed to enable businesses to make the necessary capital investments that allow them to diversify, expand their markets, offer new products/services, or be able to increase productivity due to new efficiencies created. The intent of the program is to support businesses undertaking a project that addresses specific tariff related impacts and which will result in the sustainment and/or creation of employment opportunities. Applicants will be required to demonstrate how the proposed diversification is necessary as a result of labour market challenges or opportunities they are facing as a result of tariff related impacts.

The Rural and Remote Employment Initiatives Fund is funded by the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia.

Funding Terms

Northern Development provides a rebate under this program to eligible applicants up to **$200,000** to a maximum of **75%** of the eligible project budget.

- 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

The application intake for the project will open on September 1, 2026 and closes October 15, 2026 at 4:00 PM PST. It is not anticipated that there will be a second intake of this program.

In fairness to all grant applicants, applications that are received after the deadline will not be processed.

Northern Development will assess all applications received prior to the deadline and aim to notify applicants of a decision by early January 2027.

Eligibility

Northern Development retains discretion over which projects and costs will be considered eligible and ineligible.

Eligible Applicants

This program is funded by the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia.

All applicants must be located/headquartered within the Northern Development Initiative Trust region.

- Small and medium sized businesses that are
  - Privately owned
  - Incorporated businesses, or sole proprietorships that have been established for two or more years with more than $30,000 in annual revenues
  - Less than 500 employees
  - Revenues less than $100 million
- First Nation businesses in eligible industries
- First Nation development corporations
- *Not for profit organizations whose sole purpose is to create jobs and economic benefit in their industry, i.e. community forests
- Community contribution companies

Eligible Industries

Applicants must be operating within one of the following industries

- Agriculture
- Aquaculture
- Distribution
- Energy
- Forestry
- Industrial supply chain (services and suppliers)
- Innovation/technology
- Manufacturing
- Mining
- Oil and gas
- Transportation

Eligible Costs

- Equipment, machinery and other capital expenditures
- Technology development
- Direct third-party project labour
- Incremental third-party project management
- Contractor fees
- PST
- Other costs directly associated with the project (to be approved on an individual project basis)

Ineligibility

Northern Development retains discretion over which projects and costs will be considered eligible and ineligible.

Ineligible Businesses/Organizations

- Businesses that do not have a major facility and key decision makers in the Northern Development Initiative Trust region
- Small and medium sized businesses that are
  - Start-ups without revenue
  - Publicly traded
  - 500 employees or more
  - Annual revenues of $100 million or more

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- Non-profit organizations* *(see Eligible Businesses/Organizations)*
- Municipalities, regional districts, First Nation bands

Ineligible Costs

- Operational costs and staff wages
- Administration costs related to the project
- Consultant administration/management fees
- Regular or routine repair and maintenance
- Real estate and other fees related to purchasing or leasing land, buildings, or facilities
- Purchases of construction equipment or tools
- Project cost over-runs
- In-kind volunteer labour, internal equipment use, or donated services/materials
- GST
- Costs incurred prior to formal notification of funding approval from Northern Development

Application and Program Requirements

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

Attachments

All applicants are required to submit the following information/documents.

- Complete application (to be submitted through the Online Application System)
    - Detailed project budget
- Detailed quotes and/or breakdowns to support the entire project budget
- Detailed business and/or project planning document(s) (ie. Feasibility studies, business case studies or plans, market development plans, etc.)
- The business's most recent financial statements
- If applicable: Verification of approval from funding sources other than the applicant *(e.g. approval letter or contract; required prior to approval)*

Application Assessment

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

All projects are assessed on the strength of the application, key deliverables, requested funding percentage, applicant contribution, and additional questions identified in the funding application package.

Each application will be assessed on the following:

- The extent of Northern Development's financial contribution to the eligible project budget.
- The extent of the applicant's financial contribution to the eligible project budget.
- Is the business leveraging other funding partners for this project?
- Has the business provided quotes to support the budget?
- Is the business within one of the eligible industry sectors outlined in the Application Guide.
- Has the applicant clearly outlined the tariff related impact being faced by the business and how the project will address this impact?

- Has the applicant clearly outlined how this project addresses current labour market challenges and opportunities that necessitates the diversification?
- Has the applicant demonstrated the key deliverable(s) that will result from the project?
- Has the applicant outlined any training or certifications that employees will be required to undertake as a result of this project?
- Has the applicant outlined the current, new and sustained employment opportunities as a result of the proposed project?
- Has the applicant outlined the anticipated revenue generation and operational cost savings as a result of the proposed project?
- Has the applicant outlined how this project will result in efficiencies within its operations?
- Has the applicant outlined how this project will result in an increase in its availability to offer services/products or expand into new markets?
- Has the applicant provided a detailed proposal and business plan document (ie. Feasibility study, business plan etc.)?

Reporting

Applicants should be aware that there are reporting requirements for this program and should be prepared to meet them.

Projects must be evaluated and verified following the completion of the project prior to disbursing funding. A project is considered complete when photos of the completed project have been taken and all related expenses have been invoiced and entered in the applicant's accounting software. The Reporting Form and Actual Project Expenses Template must be completed and submitted to Northern Development.

If approved, upon signing an agreement with Northern Development applicants may request an advance to cover any front-loaded costs related to the project (ie. deposit required by a vendor). Advances will be assessed on a per-project basis. To request and advance, please email finance@northerndevelopment.bc.ca and include a copy of the invoice and the Advance Request Form. If an advance is provided, and actual project expenses come in under budget, the applicant may have to repay a portion of the advance.

To Apply

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

Completed application forms with all supplementary materials are to be provided electronically through the Online Application System.

Questions?

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Application Requirements – Step by Step

Applicant and Project Information

- Information about you and the organization you are applying for will populate automatically. You will input the name of the project, the project's proposed start and end date, a concise description of the project and its rationale.
    - Please be sure to clearly outline the specific tariff related impact being faced by the business, and how the project addresses this impact in the project description and rationale.
- You also have the option to include additional milestones/dates related to your project.

Project Funding Information

- Enter the detailed project budget, including all relevant expense items, into the budget section. You will have the ability to upload any quotes in this section that support the budget.
- Enter the grant amount you are requesting from Northern Development. Please refer to the Funding Terms section on page 1 of this application guide for information about program funding parameters.
- Enter all other funding sources. For funding sources that are confirmed, you will need to provide the date the funding was confirmed and upload a confirmation document. For funding sources that are NOT confirmed, you will provide the expected date of the funding decision. This information is required to proceed further with the application.
- *Please note that the application will not proceed further if the project budget and funding are not balanced.*

Attachments

- Upload the detailed business and/or project planning document(s) (ie. Feasibility studies, business case studies or plans, market development plans, etc.)
- Upload any additional supporting documents such as letters of support or other relevant information

Program Specific Information

- Explain the tariff related impact(s) the business is facing and how this project addresses the impact(s)
- Describe if the successful completion of the project will result in the requirement of up-skilling and/or specialized training of employees (and if so what training)
- Describe how the successful completion of the project will result in sustained employment and/or the creation of new jobs
- Explain how the proposed capital investment aligns with a current business or market development plan (and indicate where this is stated in the attached document)

Economic Benefits - Employment

- Provide the current employment numbers for the business (full-time, part-time, and seasonal)

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- Provide the projected job numbers anticipated to be created, or sustained, as a result of the project (full-time, part-time, and seasonal)

Economic Benefits – Revenue Generation and Operational Cost Savings

- Provide the organization’s current revenue
- Provide the projected revenue anticipated to be generated after project completion
- Provide details on how the completion of the project is anticipated to influence revenue
- Provide the organization’s current operating costs
- Provide the projected operating costs after project completion
- Provide details on how the completion of the project is anticipated to influence operational costs

Economic Benefits – Other

- Outline any other economic benefits or potential outcomes as a result of the project

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