



Aboriginal Economic
Development Fund

Aboriginal Economic Development Fund (AEDF) Handbook



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1. Purpose and Scope

This handbook provides guidance and information on the Aboriginal Economic Development Fund (AEDF) for applicants and funding recipients. This handbook sets out standard AEDF application, selection and approval processes. It also describes the project management requirements of the AEDF.

This guidance is effective as of October 7, 2014 and shall be valid until March 31, 2017. Updates to this guidance may be released during this period and will be made available on www.ontario.ca/aboriginaleconomy. Any updates will be communicated in writing within three (3) business days to funding recipients.

2. Overview

Part of the 2014 Ontario Budget, the Aboriginal Economic Development Fund (AEDF) is investing \$25 million over three years in Indigenous businesses and communities. The AEDF is a program of the Jobs & Prosperity Fund, a 10-year, \$2.5 billion fund that helps Ontario compete to attract new business and form partnerships to secure investments that focus on job-creating innovation, productivity and going global.

The AEDF is designed to help break down barriers for Indigenous people, including Indigenous populations in remote and reserve communities. Projects contribute to this goal by increasing access to economic development opportunities, and responding to challenges faced by Indigenous people to help enable them to start a business or become employed. The AEDF is designed to help close the socio-economic gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Ontario by improving access to financing, skills training and community economic planning supports. The Fund supports Indigenous communities and businesses with new resources that contribute to economic growth, innovation, jobs and training opportunities.

Funding available through the AEDF helps Indigenous communities in the development of long-term economic strategies, provides grants and financing for Indigenous businesses, and supports province-wide and regional skills training and financing projects. The AEDF aims to promote the growth of start-up and early stage businesses as well as expanding high-potential businesses, leading to increased employment opportunities for Indigenous people. It also supports economic diversification of Indigenous communities.

The AEDF provides support for promising projects that have not been able to secure funding from private and public sources, including financial institutions and other government programs. It also provides funding to promising projects in order to help leverage other funding from other public and private sources. Projects must have a high potential for tangible benefits, specifically business, employment and training opportunities.

The AEDF is used to support the following objectives:

- Increase economic activity by promoting the diversification of Aboriginal economies and long-term planning.
- Increase participation and adaptability of Aboriginal people in the labour market by improving access to employment and training opportunities.
- Increase success and competitiveness of Aboriginal businesses by improving access to financing for start-up and development stage small- and medium-sized enterprises.
- Promote partnerships in business, employment and community development.

2.1 Funding Streams

The AEDF features three funding streams:

1. Business & Community Fund
2. Economic Diversification Grant
3. Regional Partnership Grant

Business & Community Fund ('Stream 1')

- What is it? Up to \$15 million over three years to enhance business financing and support services of Aboriginal Financial Institutions (AFIs).
- Who Can Apply? AFIs in Ontario recognized by the National Aboriginal Capital Corporation Association can apply as a delivery partner.
- How do I access funding? Once AFIs are selected through a call for proposals process in Fall 2014, eligible Indigenous businesses, communities and organizations can apply directly to AFI delivery partners for grants and other financing products for promising, high-potential projects.

The Business & Community Fund aims to enhance community-level economic development through grants for economic capacity-building. It also provides financing to ensure promising projects and businesses are viable when other available funding sources have been reasonably exhausted. This stream also enhances the ability of Indigenous communities and businesses to leverage other funding and financing sources for economic development projects.

Economic Diversification Grant ('Stream 2')

- What is it? Up to \$2 million annually is available from October 2014 for grants of up to \$100,000 per project, per year (\$250,000 per year for joint projects) to help communities broaden their economic base.
- Who can apply? Indigenous communities and organizations, including Tribal Councils and Political Territorial Organizations.
- How do I access funding? Eligible applicants can submit proposals through Grants Ontario for single- and multi-year projects.

Economic Diversification Grants help communities identify new and emerging areas of economic opportunity. Grants also facilitate the implementation of economic development and diversification strategies by supporting forward-looking planning that identifies high-potential economic opportunities within a wide range of sectors. Grants also support feasibility studies and project funding for initiatives that contribute to economic diversification as well as employment, business and/or training opportunities.

Regional Partnership Grant ('Stream 3')

- What is it? Up to \$2 million annually starting in April 2015 to support high-potential, Indigenous-led initiatives that contribute to economic growth and job creation (or retention) on a regional or province-wide scale.

- Who can apply? Indigenous communities and organizations, including Tribal Councils and Political Territorial Organizations, as well as non-Indigenous organizations with an Indigenous partner may apply for funding.
- How do I access funding? Eligible applicants can apply through Grants Ontario for match funding up to 50% of eligible projects costs to a maximum of \$250,000 per year.

Regional Partnership Grants support projects related to the key ‘building blocks’ of successful economic development. Grants provide strategic investments focused on improving access to financing and accredited skills training opportunities (particularly on-reserve). Skills training projects must relate to provincially-recognized qualifications, while financing projects should support private sector and community-led business ventures – from start-ups to expanding businesses – that provide significant economic benefits to Indigenous people and communities, specifically employment, training and business opportunities.

Appendix A outlines the structure of the AEDF. Additional information on each component of the AEDF, including eligibility criteria and application deadlines, is outlined in stream-specific application guides.

2.2 AEDF Review Committee

The AEDF is administered by the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs (the ‘Ministry’), which is also responsible for overseeing the progress and performance of each stream and project. The Ministry is also responsible for establishing selection criteria and each stream’s approach to investment, which are set out in this Handbook and application guides for individual streams.

A review committee with representation from ministries of the Government of Ontario (‘provincial ministries’) is responsible for providing advice to the Ministry as well as evaluating and endorsing applications for funding. The review committee includes representation from the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, the Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure, the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. Membership of the committee is subject to change.

2.3 Contact Information

Questions about the AEDF should be directed to aboriginalbusiness@ontario.ca or by telephone at 416-326-4740 and 1-866-381-5337, Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Information on the AEDF is also found at www.ontario.ca/aboriginaleconomy.

Technical questions regarding Grants Ontario may be directed to the Grants Ontario Customer Service Line at GrantsOntarioCS@Ontario.ca or by telephone at 416-325-6691 or 1-855-216-3090, Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

3. The Application Process

The AEDF uses a standard application process through Grants Ontario. Eligible applicants must submit applications online at www.grants.gov.on.ca. Applications will be reviewed within four (4) to six (6) weeks of a deadline. All applications will be assessed, evaluated and approved using requirements outlined in this handbook and the application guides for individual streams.

Applications for the AEDF must be made to a specific funding stream and projects must comply with the eligible criteria of individual streams. If an activity falls within two or more funding streams, separate applications for funding must be made and all costs and deliverables must be attributed to the relevant funding stream.

3.1 Determining Available Funding

The Ministry is responsible for the day-to-day management of the AEDF and will publish information on available funding for each stream at www.ontario.ca/aboriginaleconomy. Information on available funding will also be available through Grants Ontario at www.grants.gov.on.ca.

3.2 Eligibility Requirements

Eligibility requirements vary depending on individual funding streams of the AEDF. Applicants should review application guides for each stream before submitting an application.

3.3 Joint Proposals

All projects funded under the AEDF may be delivered by joint ventures or consortiums comprising of a lead Indigenous partner and a delivery partner or partners.

When choosing a partner, they must have the necessary resources and expertise to deliver their elements of the project. A lead partner must also ensure that appropriate reporting structures are in place.

The lead partner will be the applicant for AEDF funding and will be legally responsible to the Province of Ontario for the delivery, monitoring and compliance of the entire project whether the project is delivered by themselves or through delivery partners.

The roles and responsibilities of each delivery partner must be clearly defined. Each delivery partner must execute a legally binding agreement with the lead partner setting out their involvement in a project funded by the AEDF. Agreements should be in place before a successful applicant signs a Funding Agreement with the Ministry. The lead partner is responsible for collecting information to demonstrate that the funds provided by the AEDF were applied appropriately by the delivery partner.

The Ministry and review committee may encourage applicants to pursue joint projects when proposals are received for similar geographical areas or involve similar themes (e.g., financing, skills training and community economic planning) or a specific sector. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to submit applications with partners.

3.4 Application Approval Process

Applications for AEDF funding will undergo a two-stage review process:

- A preliminary assessment; and
- A full assessment.

A *preliminary assessment* will be undertaken by the Ministry to ensure that each application provides sufficient information. This assessment will determine compliance and suitability with the AEDF. The Ministry will:

- Confirm eligibility and undertake due diligence checks on applicants and delivery partners to ensure eligibility.
- Confirm that the project meets basic AEDF requirements, including fit with the applicable funding stream.
- Undertake a risk assessment and financial appraisal on applicants and delivery partners to confirm that they have the capacity to manage the size of project proposed.

The Ministry will assess projects during the preliminary assessment using a ‘pass’ or ‘fail’ grade. The Ministry will inform applicants in writing whether the application has passed or not passed the preliminary assessment. The Ministry may also recommend application to a more appropriate funding program delivered by the Province of Ontario.

The Ministry may request additional information if an application is incomplete. The Ministry may also make recommendations on how proposals could be improved to better align with the AEDF and best practice outlined in any applicable provincial directives related to the management of payments to funding recipients. These applications will be assessed as a ‘conditional pass’ and applicants will be permitted to submit a revised application for review in the full assessment phase. Applicants must provide any additional or revised documentation within a timeframe communicated by the Ministry. If requested information is not provided, the application may be assessed a ‘fail’ grade or may be assessed in the full assessment stage based on the original application documents received.

Tip: Any updated application documents submitted to the Ministry should include a version control table on the front page of the application with the version number and date.

A *full assessment* of applications involves a full appraisal to determine if the project is sufficiently defined to enable the Province of Ontario to enter into a legal agreement with the applicant through a formal Funding Agreement (the ‘Transfer Payment Agreement’). The review committee will complete a rigorous and thorough assessment of the application using criteria outlined in Section 4 of this handbook and within the guides for individual streams. The review committee will also consider:

- The project details, including fit with the funding stream and its objectives as well as the project’s fit with the AEDF and its objectives.

- The business plan, including robustness of project management approach and governance structure.
- The business case, including overall need and demand for the project.
- Deliverability of the project including its intended outcomes and anticipated results within the proposed timelines.
- Value for money, including eligibility of costs and the robustness of any applicable match funding that has been or will be sought.
- Previous experience and performance on projects funded by the Government of Ontario.

In the case of an approved project, the Ministry will inform the applicant in writing of the result of the evaluation and provide copies of the Funding Agreement and other supporting documentation.

In the case of a conditional approval, the Ministry will inform the applicant in writing of any changes required to the project prior to finalizing a Funding Agreement.

In the case of an unsuccessful project, the Ministry will inform the applicant in writing and provide a brief rationale as to why the project will not be funded. The applicant may request a meeting with the Ministry to discuss in detail their proposal if it has not been approved.

3.5 Financing and the AEDF

It is permitted to use AEDF funding as capital for financing products such as loans or other investments which are subsequently repaid. Applications for projects involving the provision of financing to eligible beneficiaries may be submitted for the Business & Community Fund (Stream 1) and the Regional Partnership Grant (Stream 3).

Returns on any AEDF-back investments may not be used for any other uses other than those outlined in the Funding Agreement. Any returns must be reported in annual and final reports to the Ministry. Returns may only be reused for further investment for activities related to the originally approved project, as outlined in the Funding Agreement.

Additional information on eligible financing activities is found within the guides for Stream 1 and 3.

3.6 Disclaimer

Applicants should note that:

- Any payment by the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs under the AEDF is subject to there being an appropriation from the Ontario legislature for the fiscal year in which the payment is to be made and there being funds available.
- Consideration of an application by the Ministry does not guarantee funding. Funding is dependent on the availability of funds, the Ministry's review of the application, and on the recipient's entering into a Funding Agreement.
- All projects and funding recipients must abide by Ontario's *Transfer Payment Accountability Directive*.

- Funds received in a given funding year may only be spent on eligible activities carried out during that funding year and specified in the budget and work plan attached to the Funding Agreement.
- The provision of funding under the AEDF is not an acknowledgement by the Government of Ontario of an Indigenous or treaty rights-bearing collectivity or of constitutionally protected Indigenous or treaty rights, nor is it an indication of a duty or commitment to engage or consult a successful applicant in any specific activities.
- All projects must comply with relevant Canadian and Ontario laws, regulations, standards and policies.
- All applications submitted to the Ministry are subject to the access to information provisions of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (the “Act”). The Act provides all persons with a legal right of access to information in the custody and/or control of the Ministry, subject to a limited set of exemptions. One such exemption is information that reveals a trade secret or scientific, technical, commercial, financial or labour relations information supplied in confidence, where disclosure could reasonably be expected to result in certain harms. If an applicant believes that any of the information it submits in connection with its application is confidential and wishes to protect the confidentiality of such information, the applicant should clearly mark the information “confidential.” If the Ministry receives a request for access to the information marked “confidential”, the Ministry will contact the applicant so that it may, if it wishes, make representations concerning the release of the requested information. Marking the information “confidential” does not mean that the information will not be released if and as required under the Act.

4. AEDF Requirements

In order to be eligible for funding under the AEDF, a project must meet the following conditions:

- Contribute to the objectives of the AEDF;
- Contribute to the objectives of the relevant funding stream;
- Meet relevant eligibility criteria;
- Meet relevant criteria of the funding stream;
- Demonstrate clear project-specific need related to the lack of resources to successfully deliver the project;
- Demonstrate clear market need and/or gap related to addressing barriers to Indigenous economic development;
- Demonstrate high potential to provide employment, business and/or training opportunities for Indigenous people;
- Demonstrate high potential to be sustainable;
- Demonstrate acceptable value for money in terms of outputs and results;
- Have a sound budget with eligible funding activities and, where applicable, demonstrate match funding from other public and/or private sources compliant with the province's *Transfer Payment Accountability Directive*; and
- Comply with project management requirements.

Where appropriate and applicable, projects should also:

- Contribute towards diversity;
- Demonstrate a positive environmental impact;
- Contribute to building new partnerships and fostering positive relationships;
- Increase participation of Indigenous people in the workforce; and/or
- Facilitate access for Indigenous suppliers to any procurement opportunities.

Applications will be assessed on the above requirements. Individual streams may have additional requirements, which are outlined in the application guides for each stream. These guides should be reviewed before submitting an application.

AEDF requirements are explained in detail below. Information provided in this section should be considered when applicants prepare their business case, project details and business plan.

4.1 Contribution to Program Objectives

Applicants must demonstrate how a project will contribute to one or more of the objectives of the AEDF and the relevant funding stream. Applicants are encouraged to submit proposals for projects that relate to multiple objectives of the AEDF and the applicable stream. The chart below summarizes the objectives of the AEDF and individual funding streams.

Aboriginal Economic Development Fund (AEDF) Objectives	Business & Community Fund (Stream 1) Objectives	Economic Diversification Grant (Stream 2) Objectives	Regional Partnership Grant (Stream 3) Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase economic activity by promoting the diversification of Indigenous economies and long-term planning. • Increase participation and adaptability of Indigenous people in the labour market by improving access to employment and training opportunities. • Increase success and competitiveness of Indigenous businesses by improving access to financing for start-up and development stage small- and medium-sized enterprises. • Promote partnerships in business, employment and community development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing AFIs' ability to deliver business support services, particularly sharing information and linking businesses to other provincial government supports. • Enhancing community-level economic development. • Providing financing to ensure promising projects are viable and move forward when other funding sources have been exhausted. • Enhancing Indigenous communities' and businesses' ability to leverage other funding and financing sources for economic development projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced Indigenous communities' ability to diversify their economies and explore opportunities in sectors where there is a high potential for success (e.g., employment, training and business opportunities). • Improved long-term planning at a community-level, including supporting evidence-based reviews of identified priorities and projects for economic diversification. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful high-potential Indigenous economic development initiatives that contribute to economic growth, job creation (or retention) and skills training on a regional or province-wide scale. • Improved access and participation of Indigenous people in accredited skills training programs that lead to qualifications recognized by the Province of Ontario, particularly on-reserve. • Improved access to financing for promising Indigenous businesses and community projects.

Performance measures that applicants should use to assess a project's impact and results are provided in application guides for each stream. For more information about performance measurement for economic development projects and to request a copy of the *Measuring Up: Performance Measurement for Economic Development* guidebook, visit www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/rural/edr/pmr/index.html.

In the event that a project does not contribute to objectives of the AEDF and/or the individual stream under which funding was provided, all expenditure will become ineligible and subject to repayment of funding. Funding recipients will be required to recover funds from beneficiaries if those beneficiaries use AEDF-related funding for an ineligible expenditure. Beneficiaries are defined in the application guides for the Business & Community Fund and the Regional Partnership Grant.

Projects that lead to the displacement of jobs or activities (e.g., skills training programs) that contribute to Indigenous economic development from one community or region to another will not be supported under the AEDF. Similarly, funding recipients who provide financing using AEDF funding will not be permitted to make investments to businesses or projects that propose the displacement of jobs or activities that contribute to Indigenous economic development.

4.2 Eligibility Criteria

All projects must comply with eligibility requirements outlined in the application guides for each stream. Any expenditure that is found to be ineligible during contract monitoring, when reviewing any financial or other project reports, or in an audit will need to be repaid under the conditions outlined in the Funding Agreement.

For any AEDF stream, mandatory eligibility requirements include:

- Legal status of organization applying (i.e., established by or under legislation, federally or provincially incorporated, or a First Nation in the Province of Ontario).
- Applicant is not in default of the terms and conditions of any grant or loan agreement with any ministry or agency of the Government of Ontario.
- Information provided in the application is true, correct and complete (as verified by an authorized official).
- All areas of the application form are filled out through Grants Ontario, including completing work plans and ensuring budgets are accurate and coincide with work plan activities.

4.3 Funding Stream Criteria

Projects must demonstrate how they will meet any specific criteria for individual streams. Criteria primarily relates to eligible projects and expenses for each stream. Applicants should review application guides for individual streams, which provide details on specific requirements for each stream.

4.4 Demonstrated Need

Generally, funding provided through the AEDF should not replace public funding available through other provincial or federal sources. AEDF funding should add value to existing provincial, national, local and private sector supports or be a way to leverage funding from other sources. The goal is to ensure the success of promising projects that have the potential to deliver tangible benefits to Indigenous people and/or communities, including employment, training and business opportunities.

Any contribution made through the AEDF to a project must add value to an existing or new activity that contributes to the objectives of the AEDF and the applicable funding stream. Applicants must demonstrate that they require additional funding through the AEDF to ensure success or that AEDF funding will allow applicants to successfully leverage support from other public and/or private sources. Specifically, applicants must show that AEDF funding will allow a project to proceed within a shorter timescale, successfully achieve its objectives and/or provide 'more' of an activity or type of intervention already being supported with funds from other public and private sources. 'More' can mean an overall increase in participation or reach (e.g., in terms of number of participants or communities) or a higher level of intensity or type of specialist support offered to individuals, businesses or communities.

Projects must respond to a gap or barrier to Indigenous economic development, either at a community or regional level. This gap or barrier could include a failure of the market to provide sufficient financing and skills training to Indigenous people and/or a lack of capacity for existing public and private sector

fundors to support high-potential projects that will contribute to employment, training and business opportunities for Indigenous people. Alternatively, projects should respond to the failure of the market and/or a gap in public/private sector supports to assist communities interested in diversifying their economies. Due to these market failures or gaps, projects must demonstrate the need for government funding to address the identified gap and/or market need.

Need and gaps might relate to:

- Barriers that prevent start-up and early stage Indigenous businesses from accessing adequate financing to develop a new and innovative product, service or process.
- Barriers that prevent start-up and early stage businesses from bringing a promising product, service or product to market.
- Barriers that prevent a promising project from being fully capitalized in order to proceed.
- Barriers to accessing on-reserve accredited training leading to provincially-recognized qualifications.
- Lack of business supports to assist Indigenous businesses and entrepreneurs in developing viable business ideas.
- Lack of supports to assist Indigenous communities in developing economic diversification strategies and evaluating the viability of potentially high-risk but high-potential projects that would bring tangible benefits to community members.
- Lack of information to assist Indigenous people, communities and businesses from accessing public and private supports to develop business ideas, access seed funding or project financing, and access markets.

Tip: When determining a market need and/or gap, consider:

- Why the project cannot be funded by the applicant's own resources.
- What other funding sources have been approached and whether any other funding has been secured.
- How and why a larger scale project is justified and if the project could go ahead on a smaller scale with AEDF support.
- Whether the project will be delayed without AEDF support, and why it cannot go ahead at a later time.
- What other initiatives are currently underway targeting the same beneficiaries with similar or complementary services, and how the project will differ and not duplicate similar projects.

Additional information on demonstrating project-specific needs is included in the application guides for specific streams.

4.5 High-Potential Projects

Applicants must demonstrate how projects will contribute to new and/or sustained employment, business and/or training opportunities for Indigenous people. High-potential or promising projects are those where there is a reasonable anticipation of indirect or direct benefits to Indigenous people and/or communities, such as meaningful employment, training and business opportunities.

Applicants should provide information on the prospect of any benefits associated with the project continuing after the period of AEDF funding concludes. For example, if a proposed project relates to a

feasibility study for a capital project, the application should include a plan for securing funding if the project moves forward. However, certain projects such as initiatives that provide skills training or business supports may not continue to offer the service once funding has ceased. This is acceptable provided that the project has demonstrated a clear exit strategy or the need for interim support.

Where possible, projects should be linked to planned or existing economic development strategies or projects. In these cases, applicants should demonstrate how AEDF funding will contribute to the success of applicable strategies and/or projects.

4.6 Value for Money

A project must demonstrate value for money. Specifically, applicants must demonstrate that the project will generate sufficient benefits (e.g., employment, training and/or business opportunities) to justify the costs associated with implementing the project. Applicants must also demonstrate that it is possible to improve delivery of a project using AEDF funding.

Value for money is an important component in assessing whether or not to fund a project. Applicants should consider how value for money will be improved by reducing costs, with the assumption that any cost reductions will not harm the project's prospects of generating desired outcomes and benefits. Any costs should be necessary for achieving desired results of the project, as well as contribute to the objectives of the AEDF and the applicable funding stream. Applicants should also ensure that the delivery mechanism is the most appropriate in terms of cost.

4.7 Sound Budget

A project must have a sound financial plan with a viable budget and eligible funding activities. The project budget must only include expenditures that are eligible under the applicable stream. Eligible expenses are outlined in the application guides for each funding stream.

Eligible costs relate to direct costs of the project. Where resources are shared with other projects and activities (e.g., overhead costs such as office space, equipment and shared staff resources), it is permissible to include these costs in the project budget.

When overhead costs are included they should be allocated in a fair and transparent manner (e.g., using a flat rate or pro rate allocation) and must be based on activities that directly relate to the implementation of the project.

Basic Expenditure Principles

- Planning at the development stage of a project is important as only expenses included in an approved application and the Funding Agreement can be covered by the AEDF, unless written approval is obtained from the Ministry to incur any new costs.
- All eligible expenses must be incurred between the project start and end dates as identified in the Funding Agreement.
- Only eligible expenses identified in a project budget may be funded through the AEDF. To assist with reporting, funding recipients should ensure expenses are supported by a clear and transparent audit trail, including invoices, receipts, bank statements and other documentation.

AEDF funding is designed to fill a gap for a project when other sources of finance are not available or have been reasonably exhausted. Budgets must indicate how any other sources of funding will support a project (i.e., match funding). For the purposes of the AEDF, match funds may include any money from a government program (i.e., federal, provincial or municipal), a First Nation or Métis community or organization, a charitable organization, a private enterprise (e.g., limited company, limited partnership, sole proprietorship, social enterprise), Economic Development Corporations, co-operatives, financial institutions, and individual investors. All match funding for a project must be spent in accordance with the objectives of the AEDF and the applicable stream. Additional information on match funding is found in the application guides for each funding stream.

Contributions in-kind may be considered as match funding. The project budget must identify any in-kind contributions, including the total cash value of donated goods, commodities or services provided to the organization at no cost. Applicants may be asked to verify the value of donated goods and services. The contributions should be valued at the lesser of demonstrated fair market value or actual cost to the donor. All eligible in-kind contributions are identified in the guides for each stream.

A project start date may be prior to the date a Funding Agreement is signed. Expenses incurred during this period may be eligible if the application for funding is approved. There is no guarantee that any expenses incurred for a project will be funded if an application for AEDF funding is not approved. Generally, applicants are discouraged from incurring any costs for activities that will be funded by the AEDF until an application has been approved. Any expenses incurred prior to the agreed start date or after the agreed end date will be ineligible.

4.8 Compliance with Project Management Requirements

Funding recipients and delivery partners must adhere to compliance requirements when using AEDF funding for an approved project. As part of the evaluation process, the Ministry and the review committee will assess whether an applicant has the capacity to deliver a project and fully understands all requirements and obligations. An application must provide details on how a project will be managed and delivered, including how compliance issues outlined in Section 5 will be addressed.

4.9 Promoting Diversity

Applicants should consider how projects contribute towards promoting diversity. All projects should make reasonable efforts to promote equal opportunities to on- and off-reserve Indigenous populations, where appropriate. Although the AEDF restricts certain activities to only eligible Indigenous peoples and organizations, projects must not discriminate on the basis of age, gender, sexual orientation, religion or belief or disability. All projects must also comply with provincial accessibility requirements. See Appendix E for more information about accessibility, diversity and French language considerations.

4.10 Environmental Considerations

Where appropriate, applicants must make reasonable efforts to identify and consider potential environmental impacts their project may have, including identifying positive environmental impacts and

how any negative impacts would be addressed, mitigated or avoided. Examples of projects where environmental considerations should be considered are feasibility studies for proposed infrastructure or capital projects. Applicants must also identify whether their project will impact a protected area, such as a National Park or Provincial Park.

4.11 Promoting Partnerships

Applicants should consider partnerships in the delivery of projects. Projects in similar geographical areas or involving similar themes (e.g., financing, skills training, community economic planning) or a specific sector are encouraged to work collaboratively. Partnerships and collaboration can assist with overcoming common operational challenges as well as pool resources. Incentives are offered under each stream to aggregate available funding. Additional information is found in guides for individual streams.

4.12 Promoting Indigenous Procurement & Employment

Applicants will be assessed on how they encourage Indigenous employment and facilitate access to Indigenous suppliers in procurement opportunities in the delivery of their projects. Where a project involves the employment of staff, applicants should consider developing protocols or policies that encourage the hiring of Indigenous people. Similarly, projects requiring the procurement of services and products should consider protocols and policies that encourage the participation of Indigenous suppliers.

4.13 Conflict of Interest

A successful applicant shall carry out a project and use the funds received through the AEDF without an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest. A conflict of interest includes any circumstances where the applicant or any person who has the capacity to influence the applicant's decisions has outside commitments, relationships or financial interests that could, or could be seen to, interfere with the applicant's objective, unbiased and impartial judgment relating to the program and the use of the funds.

The applicant must disclose to the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, without delay, any situation that a reasonable person would interpret as either an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest. The applicant must also comply with any terms and conditions that the Ministry may prescribe as a result of the disclosure.

5. Managing Projects

Funding recipients and delivery partners must adhere to project management requirements when using AEDF funding for an approved project. The following section provides information on how to manage projects in order to ensure they are compliant. This information will help applicants design management and control systems as part of their business plan when preparing their application, as well as support project delivery.

5.1 Monitoring and Reporting

Funding recipients are legally responsible for ensuring the delivery of the approved project. They are also responsible for any delivery partners (e.g., sub-contractors or consultants). It is the responsibility of funding recipients to provide any financial reports and supporting documentation requested by the Ministry and outlined in the Funding Agreement.

Compliance of any conditions and requirements are checked at various points during the life of the project by the Ministry. Checks may also be undertaken post funding. Checks may include the review of financial information and documentation related to the project, as well as visits and audits. During the life of a project, a funding recipient can expect at minimum a project interview and the submission of an annual report to the Ministry. Additional interviews, visits or reporting requirements may be scheduled or requested during the life of the project.

A *project interview* will take place within a reasonable timeframe after the Funding Agreement is signed and during the initial stages of implementation. The interview, which may take the form of a site visit, is designed to ensure the funding recipient fully understands the requirements of the funding agreement and that systems for monitoring and managing the project are in place.

Funding recipients will be required to submit an *annual report* for each fiscal year funding is provided for a project. The fiscal year runs from April 1 to March 31 of the subsequent year. The annual report must include audited financial information on use of funds and project status for a specific fiscal year in a multi-year project. Reporting requirements for the annual report will be outlined in the Funding Agreement.

A *final report* is required at the end of the project. For projects funded for one fiscal year, only a final report is required. The final report includes audited financial information on the use of funds during the lifetime of the project. It must also include information on outputs and results, as outlined in the Funding Agreement. Reporting requirements for the final report will be outlined in the Funding Agreement.

The Ministry is responsible for scrutinizing reports for accuracy and eligibility of expenditures. During the review of any reports, interviews or visits, the Ministry will verify that expenditures and outputs are eligible and compliant with the AEDF. Funding recipients may be asked to provide copies of invoices or other documentation for any expenditure item as part of the Ministry's due diligence.

5.2 Record Keeping

The Ministry may request documentation as part of reporting and monitoring processes. Funding recipients must keep records to support expenditures and prove compliance with the AEDF. Funding recipients are encouraged to keep orderly and comprehensive records of original documents in order to ensure accurate reporting and monitoring.

For projects delivered by more than one partner, the lead partner and funding recipient is responsible for maintaining an accurate audit trail. The funding recipient is responsible for ensuring that all delivery partners maintain adequate records.

Examples of documentation that should be maintained include:

- All AEDF-related documentation including work documents related to work carried out during project development, the application process, and during and after the project.
- Any invoices and bank statements to show payments were made for any work related to the AEDF-funded project.
- Records of eligible beneficiaries and the steps taken to determine their eligibility, including proof that a beneficiary is eligible.
- Evidence of match funding, such as copies of funding acceptance letters and bank statements showing receipt of match funding.
- Copies of all promotional and publicity materials, including press releases and marketing to demonstrate the correct use of the AEDF identifier logo and any required text.
- The Funding Agreement including any revised versions supported by correspondence between the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and the funding recipient.
- Correspondence between the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and the funding recipient.
- Claim forms for AEDF-related expenditures and financial reports, including annual and final reports.
- Documentation showing how AEDF-related expenditures were calculated, including any flat rate and pro rate methodologies for indirect overhead costs and salaries apportioned to the project.
- Documentation related to any procurement undertaken for the AEDF project, such as proof of invitation to suppliers to bid or advertising of procurement opportunities, procurement submissions received from suppliers and the scoring methodology used for selecting a supplier.
- Documentation and evidence related to any claims made on results of an AEDF-funded project, such as evidence of the number of jobs created as a result of support from the AEDF.

5.3 Acknowledgement

Support through the AEDF must be acknowledged through all stages of a project's life. Any acknowledgement requirements will be outlined in the Funding Agreement.

All printed and electronic documents and publications produced in relation to AEDF-funded projects must acknowledge and reference the AEDF funding received. Documents must also display the AEDF identifier provided by the Ministry in a prominent position. Where applicable, the AEDF identifier and

any related text must be included in promotional material (e.g., brochures, newsletters, banners and notices), media releases, job and procurement advertisements, reports, application forms for beneficiaries and funding agreements with beneficiaries. The identifier must also appear on the homepage for project-specific websites and on project-related pages within the funding recipient's website. If it is not possible to display the AEDF identifier on materials due to space and size restrictions, a text reference indicating the support received should be used.

The Ministry will assist funding recipients in the development of promotional material, announcements or media releases, as needed. Quotes to show the support for the project from the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs may also be available for media releases or other publicity. Funding recipients should contact the Ministry for quotes.

Funding recipients must use the following text for project-related media releases:

The [INSERT NAME] project is funded by the [INSERT NAME OF STREAM] of the Aboriginal Economic Development Fund. An initiative of the Government of Ontario, the Aboriginal Economic Development Fund supports promising projects that lead to employment, training and business opportunities for Aboriginal people. For more information, visit www.ontario.ca/aboriginaleconomy.

Any conference, seminar, exhibition or event related to an AEDF-funded project should promote the support of the AEDF. Materials and documents produced for the event must acknowledge and reference funding and include the AEDF identifier. It is also recommended that funding recipients contact the Ministry to inquire about the attendance of the Minister or a representative from the Ministry for the event.

For media interviews related to an AEDF-funded project for print, radio, television or other media, as well as any advertisement to promote the project, reference should be made to the AEDF and the support provided.

5.4 Procurement

Funding recipients are encouraged to select suppliers of goods and services through an open and transparent competitive procurement process. Value for money should be demonstrated when purchasing any good or service.

Funding recipients and delivery partners are encouraged to consider measures that promote the participation of Indigenous suppliers. The good or service must relate to the AEDF-funded project. Funding recipients may encourage Indigenous procurement through the use of evaluation criteria or competitive processes involving eligible Indigenous suppliers (i.e., a 'set aside'). A 'set aside' competition is a procurement process for only Indigenous suppliers and should only be undertaken when sufficient capacity exists among Indigenous suppliers to successfully deliver procurement requirements, as determined by the funding recipient.

5.5 Project Management

Funding applicants must have project management systems and procedures in place for AEDF-funded projects. Where applicable, project management systems such as a business plan should cover all of the expenditure, funding, beneficiaries, activity and outputs of the project in its entirety, not just those relating to AEDF-funded elements. That is, they should consider project activities supported by other funders. Guides for each stream include information on any requirements related to the development of business plans for projects.

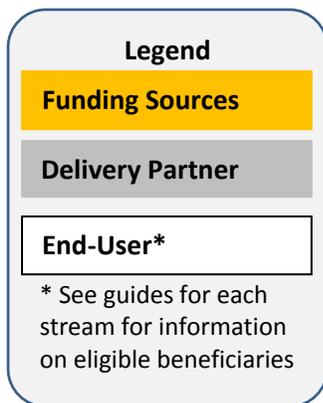
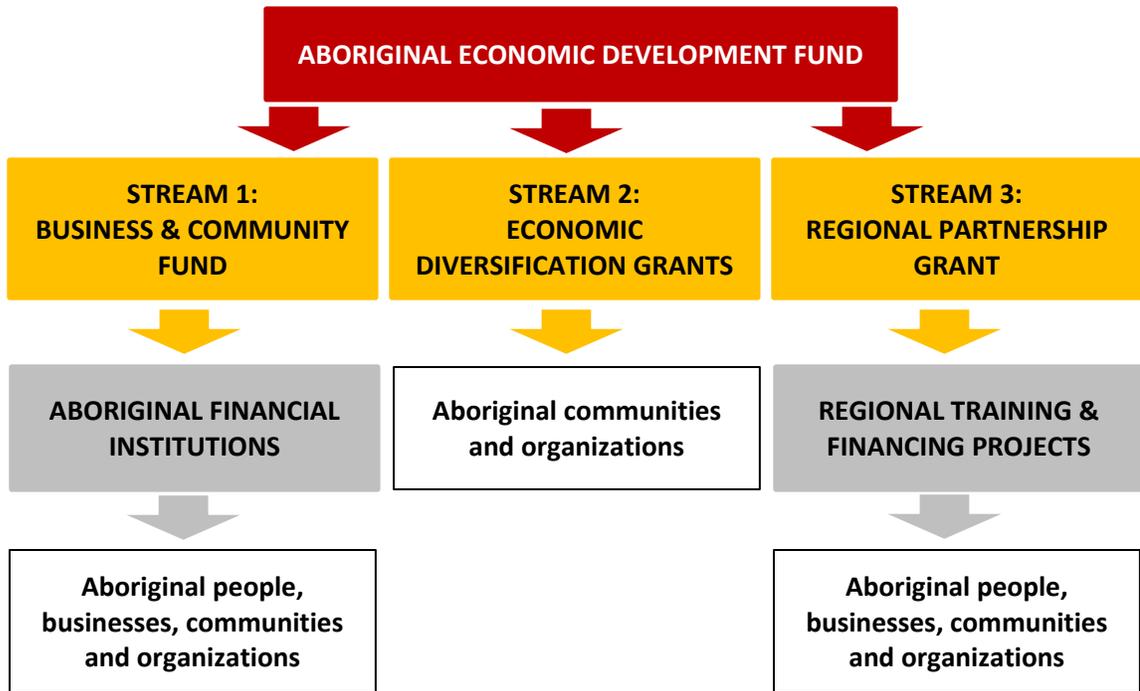
Tip: To help with reporting and project management, consider setting up a separate system to record expenditure and other activities related to your AEDF-funded project.

It is expected that funding recipients will have written policies and procedures that govern project management and governance processes, including monitoring of the project, approval and monitoring of expenditures, recording and monitoring of deliverables, recording and monitoring the collection of evidence related to project deliverables and results, procurement procedures, and records and document management. Policies and procedures should also outline financial management processes, including the compilation and approval of expenditure claims, recording of match funding, recording of any revenue or income, apportionment methodologies where resources and overheads are also used in part for AEDF-related activities, and monitoring of staff time.

5.6 Corrective Action

When a project is found not to be complying with AEDF requirements, funding recipients will be required to take corrective action to resolve a breach in funding conditions, poor management or inadequate control of the project. Non-compliance including any irregularities may constitute a breach in the terms of the Funding Agreement.

Appendix A: Structure of the AEDF



Appendix B: Definitions

Unless otherwise specified in the AEDF Handbook or the guides for individual funding streams of the AEDF, the following are the definitions for key terms:

Indigenous Person (or People): An Indigenous person includes Status and Non-Status Indians, Métis and Inuit.

Indigenous Business: A business incorporated in Ontario that is majority owned (i.e., at least 51%) by an Indigenous person or people. A joint venture or consortium is also considered an Indigenous business if it is majority owned (i.e., at least 51%) by the Indigenous partner(s).

Indigenous Business Organization: An organization that is legally incorporated in Canada as a representative body of business interests for Indigenous entrepreneurs and/or businesses. The organization must currently include representation from or represent Indigenous businesses in Ontario. Examples include (but are not limited to) the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB), Canadian Aboriginal and Minority Supplier Council (CAMSC), Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers (CANDO), an Indigenous tourism board and an Indigenous chamber of commerce.

Indigenous Organization: An organization that is legally incorporated in Canada as a representative body for Indigenous people. The organization must currently include representation from or represent Indigenous people in Ontario. Examples include (but are not limited to) the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO), Aboriginal Apprenticeship Board of Ontario (AABO), Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA), Aboriginal Financial Officers Association of Ontario, Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres (OFIFC), Friendship Centres in Ontario and Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP).

Indigenous Supplier: An Indigenous-owned business that provides a product or service to the AEDF funding recipient and/or delivery partner for an AEDF-funded project.

Delivery Partner: A body or organization that works to achieve project outcomes with the lead applicant. A delivery partner is also a body or organization selected by the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs to provide AEDF supports to eligible beneficiaries under Stream 1 and 3.

Displacement: The relocation of jobs or other economic activity or supports (e.g., training programs, projects, business services, businesses, etc.) from one community or region to another as a result of AEDF funding that results in a negative impact to a community or region.

Economic Development Corporation: A business owned by a First Nation or Métis community in Ontario whose mission is to promote economic development within a specific geographical area (e.g., a First Nation or a Métis community).

High Potential (or Promising): A high-potential project or business is one that is anticipated to contribute tangible benefits to Indigenous people and/or communities, such as meaningful employment, training and business opportunities.

Intermediary Organization (also Financial Intermediary): An Ontario-based organization that acts as a link between parties to facilitate, broker or catalyze interactions. This may include the provision of financial instruments, such as grants and loans. An intermediary may also provide support and capacity building to Indigenous organizations and businesses, including communities.

Not-for-Profit Organization: A legal entity, registered as a provincial (Ontario) or federal (Canada) not-for-profit corporation without share capital.

Regional: A geographic region that is not local in nature that includes a catchment area consisting of multiple communities.

Social Enterprise: An organization such as a co-operative, for-profit or not-for-profit organization which balances its public benefit mission with its revenue generation/profitability with the goal of achieving positive social/environmental outcomes.

Status Indian: A person's legal status as an Indian, as defined by the *Indian Act*.

Appendix C: Provincial Economic Development Funding Supports

The following is a list of provincial programs that provide funding and other supports for economic development. Where applicable, programs that allow funding recipients to 'stack' provincial government funding to support one project have been identified with an asterisk (*).

A number of other supports are also available from the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, including the Aboriginal Business Directory and the Aboriginal Business Development Toolkit. More information about these resources can be found at www.ontario.ca/aboriginaleconomy.

Aboriginal Loan Guarantee Program: Supports Indigenous participation in new renewable green energy infrastructure such as wind, solar and hydroelectric. By participating in renewable energy projects, First Nation and Métis communities can benefit from jobs and training as projects are developed and from dividends once projects come into service. The program includes both energy generation and electricity transmission projects. The Ontario Financing Authority (OFA) administers the program on behalf of the Province. For details, visit www.ofina.on.ca/algp/program/overview.htm

Aboriginal Renewable Energy Fund (AREF): Assists with initial project development costs associated with First Nation and Métis community renewable energy projects, and is available to communities considering developing renewable projects over 10 kilowatts. Funding is available for communities applying to the FIT Program and to assist with development costs for projects with a FIT Contract. These costs include resource assessments, legal services, engineering designs and regulatory approvals. Indigenous Communities can receive up to a maximum of \$100,000 per small project. For more information, visit www.aboriginalenergy.ca/aboriginal-renewable-energy-fund.

Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E): A community-based economic development program with a focus on supporting existing businesses. It provides a systematic approach to help communities in developing strategies that supports businesses retain and create new jobs and opportunities. The long-term objectives of this initiative include increasing the competitiveness of local businesses, creating jobs and new business development, establishing and implementing strategic actions for local economic development, and building stronger viable local economy. For details, visit omafra.gov.on.ca/english/rural/edr/bre/index.html.

Canada Ontario Resource Development Agreement (CORDA)*: An agreement between Canada, Ontario and First Nations in Ontario. The Agreement promotes resource and economic development initiatives of First Nations by providing financial assistance to develop and utilize renewable natural resources. As stated in the Agreement, First Nations, their members and organizations, and Treaty organizations in Ontario are eligible to apply for CORDA funding. For more information, visit www.gct3.ca/?s=CORDA, www.anishinabek.ca/lands-and-resources-other.asp, www.nan.on.ca, or www.aiai.on.ca.

Celebrate Ontario*: An annual program that helps new and existing Ontario festivals and events enhance their programs, activities and services to grow Ontario's tourism market. The program also supports bid and event hosting costs of major one-time events, and organizations that deliver major

sport events.

To apply, visit www.grants.gov.on.ca.

Canada-Ontario Job Grant (COJG): The Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities launched the COJG Program in Fall 2014. This program will provide direct financial support to individual employers who wish to purchase training for their employees. The COJG will be available to small, medium, and large businesses with a plan to deliver short-term training to existing or new employees.

Communities in Transition: Provides funds and assistance to Ontario communities and industry associations (not-for-profits) facing economic development challenges, significant job losses and industry-wide restructuring. Communities in Transition projects help recipients set strategies, build capacity, and embark on new economic development initiatives that are not covered under existing provincial programs. For more information, visit www.ontario.ca/business-and-economy/economic-development-funding-non-profits-local-governments-community.

Eastern Ontario Development Fund: Funds businesses, municipalities and not-for-profit organizations for economic development in eastern Ontario, supporting projects that create jobs, encourage innovation, collaboration and cluster development and attract private sector investment. The 15 geographic areas that make up Eastern Ontario, and are thus eligible to apply for this funding are listed on the website. There are two streams of funding available through the fund: business and regional. Projects in these sectors are eligible for funding: advanced manufacturing (automotive, aerospace, plastics, clean technologies), life sciences, processing (primary and secondary), information and communication technology, tourism, and cultural industries. For details, visit www.ontario.ca/business-and-economy/eastern-ontario-development-fund.

First Impression Community Exchange: A structured and cost-effective process that reveals the first impression a community conveys to potential visitors, investors and new residents. It is a good place to start your first economic development planning endeavour. This exchange is available in four versions: *Full Picture* (designed as a comprehensive guide to help the visiting team evaluate the overall community aspects), *Tourism* (focused on tourism attractions, services, amenities, environment and welcoming to tourists), *Downtown* (focused on downtown revitalization, downtown appearance, downtown businesses and infrastructure, entertainment and recreation), and *Agricultural Societies* (identifies a fair/exhibition's appealing features and opportunities for areas of improvement). For more information, visit www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/rural/edr/fice/.

High School Entrepreneurship Outreach: The High School Entrepreneurship Outreach program, announced in 2013, is meant to bring exposure and awareness of entrepreneurship to 250,000 high school students over two years. It will proactively promote entrepreneurship as a career option and increase participation of Ontario youth in entrepreneurship programming offered by the government and others. Successful applicants to this program may be eligible for funding in the form of a grant. It is anticipated that the Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure will fund up to \$200,000 per project. For details, visit www.ontario.ca/jobs-and-employment/entrepreneurship-high-school-students.

Jobs and Prosperity Fund: This fund will aim to improve the Province’s ability to attract significant new business investments, as well as strengthen its strategic sectors and stimulate economic growth. Funding is expected to flow primarily to key industry sectors, such as advanced manufacturing, agri-food and agri-products, and information and communications technology (ICT). Specific fund objectives will be supporting business investment in job creation, innovation, productivity, and going global.

Northern Ontario Heritage Fund*: The Fund is working to build strong, prosperous northern communities with unique programs that help foster hope and opportunity across Northern Ontario. Funding helps with the development of innovative technologies, invests in infrastructure, bolsters collaboration and builds economic development capacity. The NOHFC offers five programs: the Strategic Economic Infrastructure Program, the Northern Community Capacity Building Program, the Northern Innovation Program, the Northern Business Opportunity Program and the Northern Ontario Internship Program. The Fund’s Northern Community Capacity Building Program - Community Capacity Building Initiatives aligns with Streams 1, 2 and 3 of the AEDF, while the Northern Business Opportunity Program – Business Expansion Projects and Small Business Start-up streams align with Stream 1. For more information, visit www.nohfc.ca.

Ontario Arts Council*: The Ontario Arts Council (an agency of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport) offers grants to individual artists and arts organizations. They offer grants to individual artists through their *Project Grants*, which are one-time grants for specific projects. They also offer *Operating Grants*, which cover operating expenses of established arts organizations that meet the criteria for long-term support. For more information, visit www.arts.on.ca.

Ontario Feed-in Tariff (FIT) program: Allows homeowners, business owners and private developers to generate renewable energy and sell it to the province at a guaranteed price for a fixed contract term. You can apply to the FIT program if you use one or more forms of renewable energy, including wind, waterpower, biomass and biogas, solar photovoltaic (PV) power and landfill gas. The FIT program, administered by the Ontario Power Authority, is the first comprehensive feed-in tariff program in North America. For details, visit fit.powerauthority.on.ca.

Ontario Global Edge (OGE): The Ontario Global Edge program gives students a chance to work in small- or medium-sized businesses around the world. For more information, visit www.ontario.ca/business-and-economy/get-international-business-experience-students.

Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF)*: An agency of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, the OTF is one of the leading grant-making foundations in Canada. The foundation's grants are provided to help build capacity and celebrate the work of eligible, Ontario-based not-for-profit organizations with mandates in the arts and culture, the environment, human and social services, sports and recreation. The Community Program is overseen by local volunteers who work in regional Grant Review Teams, reviewing applications and recommending projects for funding. The OTF’s Board of Directors oversees the approval of applications. For more information, visit www.otf.ca.

Rural Economic Development (RED) Program: The RED Program helps rural communities remove barriers to community development and promote economic growth to support sustainable rural

economies and regions, while developing the capacity, tools and flexibility they need to become stronger, more prosperous communities. The *Planning Stream* involves stimulating rural, regional and community projects that help rural communities and regions build a foundation for economic growth and investment. The *Implementation Stream* focuses on strengthening rural and regional economic competitiveness to support the implementation of projects that have been identified through some form of evidence-based planning processes and to contribute to economic competitiveness. For details, visit www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/rural/red.

Social Enterprise Demonstration Fund*: The fund supports innovative social finance pilot projects across the province. The program promotes partnerships with private sector impact investors to unlock much-needed capital for early-stage, high-potential social enterprises. For more information, visit www.ontario.ca/business-and-economy/social-enterprise-demonstration-fund.

Southwestern Ontario Development Fund: Funding for businesses, municipalities and not-for-profit organizations for economic development in Southwestern Ontario supports projects that create jobs, encourage innovation, collaboration and cluster development, and attract private sector investment. For details, visit www.ontario.ca/business-and-economy/southwestern-ontario-development-fund.

Starter Company: Allows successful applicants to receive: one-on-one guidance from a Small Business Enterprise Centre advisor, mentoring with a local successful entrepreneur, access to business workshops on topics from writing a business plan and budgeting, to executing a marketing campaign, funding of up to \$5,000, and experience running a business that will better position them to obtain more traditional financing, such as a bank loan. Applicants must be between 18 and 29, and must not be attending school full-time. For details, visit www.ontario.ca/business-and-economy/start-company-young-adults.

Strategic Community Entrepreneurship Projects: Applicants can receive entrepreneurship training that may include seminars, workshops, learning modules and resource guides, delivered by a participating organization, mentoring, business coaching and other activities that can help Ontarians on their journey to self-employment, funding of up to \$3,000 to help cover your business start-up costs. Applicants must be aged 15 to 29, and must not be eligible for other self-employment programs, such as the Ontario Self-Employment Benefit. For details, visit www.ontario.ca/business-and-economy/start-business-young-adults.

Summer Company: Grants (maximum \$3000) for students between 15 and 29 (if under 18 applicants require the permission of a parent or guardian to take part) that aim to provide youth with start-up money to kick-off a new summer business, as well as mentorship from local business leaders to help get a business up and running. Students who take part will gain valuable sales, marketing and management skills. For more information, visit www.ontario.ca/Start%20a%20summer%20company%3A%20students.

Tourism Development Fund*: Supports projects that encourage three key streams: tourism investment, tourism product development and industry capacity building. The fund grants non-capital, project-based funding to: develop research-based innovative and emerging tourism sectors, support tourism organizations' capacity building, encourage new private sector tourism investment attraction, and enhance Ontario's overall economic competitiveness and opportunities for the Ontario tourism industry.

Tourism associations (excluding Regional Tourism Organizations), economic development corporations, municipalities, not-for-profit organizations and businesses interested in undertaking tourism-related initiatives which support tourism product development, industry development and increased visitation are eligible to apply. For details, visit www.grants.gov.on.ca.

Youth Skills Connections (Industry Stream and Community Stream): The program funds collaborative projects that: identify a skills-gap or labour shortage faced by industry, provide training that addresses skills-gaps and improves the employability of youth, including youth facing multiple barriers to employment, and result in long-term employment opportunities for youth enrolled in the program. Its focus areas are partnerships and collaboration, targeting the needs of youth, and increasing industry participation. Grant amounts could be up to \$1 million per project (depending on the project). For details, visit www.ontario.ca/jobs-and-employment/youth-skills-connections-program-industry-stream.

Youth Employment Fund: Part of the Ontario government's Youth Jobs Strategy, the Fund provides incentives to employers to help cover the cost of wages and training for new hires and helps youth cover costs like transportation or tools required for the job. Unemployed youth not in school full-time and between 15 and 29 are eligible. Employers in Ontario can also receive incentive funding for job placements of four to six months. For more information, visit <http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/employmentontario/youthfund/>

Youth Entrepreneurship Partnerships (YEP): The Youth Entrepreneurship Partnerships program gives money to non-profit organizations for projects that: give young people hands-on experience with small business and educate youth about being an entrepreneur. Maximum funding is \$75,000 per project per year. For more information, visit www.ontario.ca/business-and-economy/student-entrepreneurs-and-non-profits-grants.

Appendix D: Guidelines for Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses

Applicants are required to apply the following guidelines to any travel, meal and hospitality expenses. For more information about the province's Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses Directive, visit www.ontario.ca/government/travel-meal-and-hospitality-expenses-directive-2010.

Transportation: Projects are expected to use the most practical and economical way to travel and explore alternatives such as teleconferencing where possible. Whenever practical, local public transportation/hotel shuttles must be used. Rail or air transportation are permitted if either is the most practical and economical way to travel. The standard is coach/economy class.

Reimbursement Rates for Personal Vehicle Use: Southern Ontario = \$0.40 per km, Northern Ontario = \$0.41 per km.

Accommodation: When a member requires overnight accommodation, single accommodation in a standard room is allowed. No reimbursement should be made for suites, executive floors, or concierge levels. A maximum of \$30.00 per night is allowed for private stays with family or friends (and no receipt is required).

Meal Rates (including taxes and gratuities): Cannot include reimbursement for alcoholic beverages. Maximum meal rates: Breakfast \$8.75; Lunch \$11.25; Dinner \$20.00. For a full day of meal claims (i.e., breakfast, lunch and dinner), there is discretion to allocate the daily total three-meal rate of \$40, with a cap of \$20 on the amount for any single meal. Meal rates do not apply to training or other group events offered as part of the project.

Non-Eligible Expenses: Items of a personal nature.

Original receipts (not photocopies) must be collected and kept on file by the applicant. When the applicant decides to exercise discretion in making an exception to these guidelines and in order to ensure a proper record for audit purposes the rationale for the exception must be documented and be attached to the expense claim.

Appendix E: Accessibility and Diversity Considerations for Project/Proposal Development

This appendix provides information and considerations for project development.

Accessibility

The Province of Ontario is committed to working with every sector of society to support Ontarians with disabilities by ensuring that no new barriers are created for them and that existing ones are removed. This responsibility rests with every social economic sector, every region, every government, every organization, institution and association, and every person in Ontario.

To support this commitment, the Province of Ontario has enacted legislation including the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA)* and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* and its regulations. The purpose of this legislation is to improve opportunities for persons with disabilities and provide for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation in the life of the province. For more information on the government's commitment to accessibility, please visit www.ontario.ca/accesson.

Projects funded should:

- demonstrate capacity to develop programming and materials that accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities;
- ensure accessibility is reflected in the proposed project's deliverables (e.g., consider providing materials in a range of accessible formats which may include, but are not limited to: html, accessible word and PDF files, open captioning, ASL/LSQ, described video, Braille, audio and large print); and
- ensure that the proposed programming and/or services take place in accessible facilities.

Diversity

Using Ontario's *Human Rights Code* as a basis, Ontario works to address the unique needs of diverse populations in Ontario.

The *Human Rights Code* prohibits discrimination on the basis of [15 grounds](#). Other "dimensions" to consider include:

- regional location;
- socio-economic status;
- language;
- employment status;
- education level.

Applications should discuss which dimensions may affect your project's target group(s). Identify any issues revealed when the dimensions intersect, and address how the project may mitigate them.

Building diversity into project development ensures that the services your project provide address not only a primary need but also mitigate secondary effects of discrimination.

French Language Services

Programs, services and resources must be in accordance with the *French Language Services Act*. Where appropriate, proposals should include planning for service delivery to meet the needs of Francophone populations in areas across the province designated under the *French Language Services Act*.

Where appropriate, French Language Services planning should include:

- a budget for the French-language component of the proposal
- a description of the organization's expertise, capacity and/or partnerships to deliver the Francophone component
- an advisory group that includes representatives from both official languages or one that will specifically oversee the French component
- details concerning quality control for translation and adaptation of materials/training to ensure that they are culturally and linguistically suitable to the French-speaking population