

Canada-Alberta Western Economic Partnership Agreement (WEPA)

PROJECT PROPOSAL APPLICATION GUIDELINES

This document is to be read in conjunction with the Initial Application Form

The Government of Canada and the Government of Alberta have entered into a new four-year Western Economic Partnership Agreement (WEPA). This joint agreement will contribute to sustainable and diversified growth of the Alberta economy through federal/provincial cooperation. Four priority areas have been identified: **Technology Commercialization, Business Productivity and Competitiveness, Trade and Investment** and **Value Added Processing** (refer to Appendix A). The governments of Canada and Alberta will each commit \$25 million towards cost-shared initiatives that promote these priorities.

Eligible Applicants

Applicants must be a legal entity and include:

- a) Non-profit organizations;
- b) Post-secondary institutions;
- c) Hospitals and/or regional health care centres, for purpose of undertaking research, and for development of new technology;
- d) First Nations, Métis Settlements and other Aboriginal organizations.
- e) Federal Crown Corporations
- f) Provincial Government Departments, agencies and Crown Corporations, and
- g) Municipal Governments and organizations created by them.

Note: For-profit entities are **not** eligible applicants.

Eligible Projects

Project proposals must clearly outline how desired outcomes will be achieved in one or more of the priority areas identified for this Agreement (refer Appendix A). Eligible projects must demonstrate:

- (a) Potential significant measurable impact on economic development in a particular community (i.e. geographic or area of interest);
- (b) Environmental and economic sustainability;
- (c) Start-up and long-term self-sufficiency;
- (d) Consistency with obligations and policies related to international and domestic trade agreements;
- (e) Objectives, expected results, and outcomes that incorporate clear performance measurements.

Project Focus

The WEPA will build on current federal and provincial investments in science and technology, technology commercialization, business productivity, trade and investment, and value-added processing. The aim is to ensure maximum continuity in investment outcomes, maximum benefit from the investment of new funds, and adherence to a coherent strategic approach to Alberta's economic development challenges.

Both parties agree that:

- Consideration will be given to projects that represent a new initiative or approach or that are incremental to, complement or enhance existing programs and services. Projects that duplicate existing programs and services will not be considered.
- Projects must contribute to one or more of the four priority areas.
- All project partners (government departments, industry, economic development agencies, academia, etc.) must demonstrate that there is participation by each project partner in projects; and
- Projects must demonstrate industry participation, address a proven industry need, or identify increased industry access and/or participation as a central outcome. Preference will be given to projects that include industry investment.

Possible project ideas, based around the four priority areas, could include, but are not limited to:

1. Technology Commercialization

- Technology commercialization centres, to initiate technology commercialization, technology adoption and applied research in knowledge-based and advanced technology sectors.
- Prototype development and technology demonstration projects leading to commercialization of new technologies and increased sales in domestic and international markets.
- Projects that support rural and remote innovation, rural economic diversification, and/or enhanced rural capacity to generate wealth. Projects could be specific to technology adoption, technology commercialization, and/or strengthening alliances between research organizations, regional colleges and technical schools, economic development offices and organizations, and industry to maximize the potential for entrepreneurship and rural innovation that exists in Alberta.

2. Business Productivity

- New programs and tools to improve productivity throughout the province and to enhance the competitiveness of Alberta industry. Support will be aligned with Alberta's *Productivity Policy Framework and Action Plan*, connecting business, academic institutions, cities and government agencies to all available productivity enhancement programs and services.
- Business Development Centres that will bring together key support agencies and services to assist and encourage company start-up and growth in all regions of the province.
- Access to capital initiatives focusing on the stimulation of venture capital for advanced technologies and knowledge based industries.

3. Trade and Investment

- Development of international partnerships and initiatives to enhance technology commercialization;
- Projects which advance Alberta technology commercialization through participation in international markets;
- Supporting projects directly engaged in maximizing the trade and investment potential of Alberta-based technology capabilities;
- Supporting initiatives/projects, which build international relationships and alliances for the Alberta science and technology community;

4. Value Added Processing

- Productivity and value-added processing initiatives in traditional sectors such as agriculture, forestry and mining. Potential initiatives could include agri-food, value-added food processing, bio-materials development, greenhouse gas emissions etc.

Multiple Projects

WEPA partners are dedicated to ensuring that project funding reach a broad cross-section of eligible organizations. An organization that submits multiple applications should prioritize projects and understand that the WEPA partners reserve the right to set limits on funding to any one organization.

Eligible Project Costs

Eligible costs are direct costs incurred to carry out the project such as:

- Capital infrastructure including equipment and buildings
- Operational costs including project management, supplies and materials; direct salaries and benefits; administration; rental space; and other operational expenses related to the project
- Fees for consultant expertise
- Applied research and development

Costs to acquire or divest of land are not eligible.

Project Application

Applicants must submit a completed Initial Application to Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) and Alberta Advanced Education and Technology (AET) in printed and electronic format.

An optional two or three page summary may also be included with your Initial Application.

Please use the following contact information to submit your printed and electronic application:

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Applicants will be contacted once an initial review is completed and applicants whose initial applications meet the pre-screening criteria will be invited to submit a Detailed Application Form along with a detailed proposal/ business plan.

Project Review

Management Committee – A Management Committee has been established to approve all projects funded under WEPA. The Management Committee is headed by a Federal Co-Chair and a Provincial Co-Chair. The Management Committee is also responsible for the management and administration of projects and in doing so, shall be guided by the strategic priorities in the Agreement (Appendix A).

Project applications received will be subject to the following review process:

1. The applicant will be asked to submit a completed Initial Application plus a two or three page summary (optional) to both WD and AET.
2. Within 30 days, those Applicants whose projects meet pre-screening criteria will be invited to complete a Detailed Application Form together with a detailed proposal/business plan.
3. Within 90 days, the WEPA Management Committee will meet to review and select projects for funding.
4. Successful applicants will be notified prior to public announcement of WEPA funding.

Appendix B provides a diagram of the project review process.

Funding Support

Federal funds for the program will be coordinated through WD. Provincially, WEPA funding will be coordinated through AET.

Dates and Deadlines

Project applications will be accepted on a continuous intake basis. Management Committee will meet regularly to review and select projects for funding.

Inquiries

If you require further information, please contact:

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APPENDIX A: WEPA STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- (a) **Technology Commercialization** – Create and/or grow the knowledge-based economy in Alberta by commercializing new products, technologies and services into domestic and international markets. Initiatives will contribute to:
- increased rate of technology development, commercialization and adoption
 - increased rural innovation and rural capacity to commercialize technologies, products and services
 - increased growth and creation of jobs in knowledge-based sectors
- (b) **Business Productivity and Competitiveness** - Strengthen small business development, growth and competitiveness in the global economy through initiatives that will contribute to:
- increased productivity and efficiency of Alberta-based Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs)
 - creating, expanding and retaining of Alberta SMEs
 - increased investment and business opportunities for Alberta SMEs
 - enhanced access to capital for Alberta SMEs
- (c) **Trade and Investment** - Expand access to international markets and investments through initiatives that contribute to:
- increased export readiness of Alberta SMEs
 - increased export sales of Alberta technologies, products and services
 - access to new markets for Alberta products and services
 - development of international partnerships, alliances and initiatives to facilitate commercialization and adoption of Alberta technologies, products and services
- (d) **Value Added Processing** - Increased revenues of traditional industries by adopting new technologies and processes that transform low value outputs into high value products. Systemic or industry-wide initiatives will contribute to:
- increased value-added processing and manufacturing
 - increased productivity and efficiency

APPENDIX B: WEPA PROJECT REVIEW PROCESS

