This Program Guide provides Applicants and Qualified Business Consultants an overview of eligible activities, minimum deliverables, and other guidelines and requirements for projects funded through the B.C. Indigenous Agriculture Development Program.

Application Intake

The application intake period for the program may vary annually and will be indicated on the Ministry website. Funding for the program is allocated on an annual basis per fiscal year. When the program’s annual funding is fully allocated, the program will be closed for applications until the following fiscal year and the opening of the next application cycle. Applications received in one fiscal year will not be carried over into the following year. The submission of a second application in the same fiscal year does not oblige the Ministry to approve that application, as new applicants will be given priority. All applications are reviewed based on their eligibility and merit.

Each applicant is only eligible to receive a total of up to $15,000 of funding through the Indigenous Agriculture Development Program during the funding cycle of the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (2018-2023). The maximum funding available for an Agriculture Opportunities Assessment Project (Step 1) is $5,000 and the maximum funding available for a Financial and Business Planning Project (Step 2) is $10,000.

Program Eligibility

The B.C. Indigenous Agriculture Development Program is open to any Indigenous community or government, including a band or tribal council, government of a self-governing First Nation or Métis Chartered Community or organization, Indigenous for-profit or not-for-profit corporation, association, cooperative or institution, or other Indigenous business, partnership or joint venture in the Province of British Columbia.

Additionally, for Financial and Business Planning (Step 2) Applicants must:

- Have completed Step 1 or an equivalent process

Eligible Activities and Minimum Deliverables

Eligible activities and minimum deliverables must be used to guide the development of project proposals in the program application and are distinct for Agriculture Opportunities Assessment (Step 1) and Financial and Business Planning (Step 2).

Agriculture Opportunities Assessment (Step 1): Funding up to a maximum of $5,000 for the services of a Qualified Business Consultant to conduct an Agriculture Opportunities Assessment.

- **Eligible activities include:** Situation analysis, including inventories and review of the current agriculture resource base and other resources (land, equipment, labour, capital, etc.); goals and vision for agriculture; providing a suite of agriculture options with economic analysis, including financial analysis, production economics and marketing opportunities; review of regulatory requirements; risk assessment and mitigation; and, identifying enterprises with the highest likelihood to succeed.

- **Project minimum deliverables** are:
  1. Overview of project objectives and summary of past agriculture experience, activities and works

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1 An Indigenous Business is defined as a business where an Indigenous person(s) has/have at least 51% ownership and control of the business.
2) Summary of current and future assets (land, equipment, labour etc.)
3) Capacity, land conditions, market opportunities and risk assessment
4) Ranking and SWOT analysis of viable agricultural opportunity(s)
5) Draft estimates for infrastructure and start-up costs for potential enterprises
6) Commodity Cost/Return Projection Estimates for proposed business venture(s)
7) Action Plan with recommendations, including concise next steps
8) Follow-up meeting with the applicant to confirm project met their needs

Exceptions will be considered when it is justified in the application that the Applicant’s needs will be best met through a modified report format. However, for Step 1 in all cases items 1, 2, 7 and 8 are mandatory project components.

Financial and Business Planning (Step 2): Funding up to a maximum of $10,000 for the services of a Qualified Business Consultant to conduct detailed financial analysis and specialized business planning.

Eligible activities include: Business strategy development; business structure analysis; production economics; financial analysis; marketing strategy; value-added ventures; and risk assessment and mitigation.

Additionally, technical (production related) workshops recommended through an Agriculture Opportunities Assessment (Step 1) can be completed, if required.

Project minimum deliverables are:
1) Status/Summary of Step 1 Action Plan
2) Operational Plan with target dates and person(s) responsible
3) Develop detailed Business Plan or specific components (an in-depth plan for one of the Program’s specialized business planning areas: i.e. business structures, production economics, business strategy, financial analysis, value added ventures, risk assessment and mitigation, human resources, succession/transition planning, marketing), including financial statements and cash flow projections
4) Summary report of any workshops held, if applicable
5) Follow-up meeting with the applicant to confirm the project met their needs

Reporting Requirements and Document Standards

Communication
At any time during the project development and implementation, Applicants and Qualified Business Consultants are encouraged to contact Indigenous Agriculture Development Program Staff (Agribusiness@gov.bc.ca or 1-888-221-7141) to discuss any concerns or questions that may arise.

Program Staff may also contact you during the implementation of your project to check-in and discuss your progress.

Timelines and Review
Final project documents, including the final report, invoice and signed claims form, must be submitted by the Qualified Business Consultant to the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture within 90 days of the approved project start date (and never later than the last day of February of any year).

To provide the Applicant with adequate time to review and request any needed modifications or revisions by the Qualified Business Consultant to meet the agreed upon project objectives, the project report must be submitted by the Qualified Business Consultant to the Applicant for review and feedback a minimum of two weeks prior to the project end date. Should reasonable revisions be requested, it is the responsibility of the Qualified Business Consultant to complete the revisions and get approval from the Applicant prior to submitting the final project report, invoice and signed claims form.
to the Ministry at the end of the project.

Project extensions are sometimes granted under extenuating circumstances. The Qualified Business Consultant should contact the Program Manager a minimum of two weeks before the project end date if concerns arise with respect to completing the project within the 90-day timeframe. Please note, no extensions can be granted past the last day of February of any year.

Reports will be reviewed by Ministry Staff for their thoroughness, accuracy and responsiveness to agreed upon deliverables and project plans set out in the project proposal. (Also see Adherence to Professional Standards below.)

Project Proposal Preparation
 Specific guidelines for preparing your application and project proposal are provided on the application form. However, please remember to submit forms in Word when possible as this facilitates our data entry. If you need a PDF version of the form, please contact AgriBusiness@gov.bc.ca.

Other considerations when preparing your project proposal:
• No work on a project in a proposal started prior to receiving approval from the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture will be eligible for support under this program
• For work in remote locations, travel costs may be included in the project proposal, but must be reasonable, not exceed 20% of the project cost, and will be reviewed by the Ministry. No travel outside of B.C. will be reimbursed.

Final Report Guidelines
A written report prepared by the Qualified Business Consultant must be provided to the Applicant at the end of the project and a copy submitted to the Ministry with other final reporting documents (invoice and signed claims form).

Final reports must meet a high professional standard. They must reflect thorough, accurate research and analysis, be free of grammatical and typographical errors and have consistent formatting. Final Reports must include:
• All minimum deliverables for the project (as approved in the project proposal)
• An executive summary and project overview
• Concise list of recommendations resulting from the project
• References or Works Cited
• Appendices for any calculations used to complete the analysis

Reports under 2,000 words in length are not acceptable, as they cannot adequately meet the Minimum Deliverables and program standards.

Adherence to Professional Standards by Qualified Business Consultants

Guidelines for using a supporting consultant
We are committed to ensuring high quality services are provided to Program Applicants. As such, the Program Manager and Applicant need to understand who is working on the project. Qualified Business Consultants must be transparent about who is responsible for completing which aspects of the project. In some cases, it may be necessary for the Qualified Business Consultant (the ‘Primary Consultant’: i.e. the consultant hired by the Applicant and responsible for the project) to sub-contract to a ‘Supporting Consultant’ with specialized expertise required to complete a project activity. If both consultants are approved by the Ministry as Qualified Business Consultants (i.e. both have applied and been approved through the Ministry’s Request for Standing Offer Bidding process), the Primary Consultant must indicate on the application form that the Supporting Consultant will be hired and for which activities.

If the Supporting Consultant, however, is not a Qualified Business Consultant, the Supporting Consultant must be vetted by the B.C. Indigenous Agriculture Development Program if they are contributing more than 10% of the work needed to
complete the approved project (as defined by a percentage of the budget). If a Primary Consultant would like to hire a Supporting Consultant who is not on the Ministry’s Qualified Business Consultant list to work above the 10% threshold, they must provide a rationale in the application form or, if the need for a supporting consultant arises later, complete and submit a Supporting Consultant Request Form, including the supporting consultant’s credentials and a rationale for their inclusion on the project. If you require the form, please e-mail AgriBusiness@gov.bc.ca. A Supporting Consultant who is not a Qualified Business Consultant will not be approved to complete more than 40% of the work for an Indigenous Agriculture Development Program Project.

Conflict of Interest
Any current or past work of the Qualified Business Consultant for the Program Applicant must be disclosed to the Ministry on the application. Any conflict of interest must also be disclosed by the Qualified Business Consultant to the Ministry on the application. A conflict of interest is defined as a situation where a Qualified Business Consultant’s private affairs or financial interests are in conflict, or could result in the perception of conflict, with their services to Applicant under the program. Where a conflict of interest, or the perception thereof, exists, the Qualified Business Consultant’s actions or conduct could undermine or compromise the Applicant’s confidence in the Qualified Business Consultant’s ability to discharge their services.

Professional Standards
The Ministry reserves the right to remove a Qualified Business Consultant from the Qualified Consultant List if, in the sole opinion of the Ministry, the Qualified Business Consultant does not meet the quality standards of the B.C. Indigenous Agriculture Development Program. Failure to meet program quality standards may include submitting a project that:

1) Fails to include mandatory minimum deliverables or project components described in the project proposal;
2) Significantly deviates from the project proposal with respect to scope, expected outcomes or budget, and for which a project revision was not requested and approved;
3) Contains errors, omissions or misrepresentations, which, in the sole opinion of the Ministry, are of a serious nature;
4) Does not meet an acceptable professional standard of presentation, which includes significant grammatical or typographical errors, failure to include references or works cited, and reports significantly below the minimum length requirement;

A quality concern may also relate to the comportment or professionalism of a Qualified Business Consultant, or other oversight or issue deemed significant by the Applicant or by AGRI Staff during project review.