



WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP FUND APPLICATION GUIDE



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SECTION A – GENERAL INFORMATION

1. INTRODUCTION

This application guide has been developed to assist in the completion of a project proposal for the Women Entrepreneurship Fund (Entrepreneurship Fund). It provides information on how to submit an application for funding. It also describes the criteria that will be used to assess your application.

It is important to read this guide **before** you begin filling out the application form so you clearly understand the objectives of the Entrepreneurship Fund and determine if you are eligible to receive funding.

Your application must be **complete** and have all of the required information as outlined in this guide to be considered for funding.

If you have any additional questions, please visit the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) page or contact us at ic.wes-sfe.ic@canada.ca or at 1-800-328-6189.

2. ABOUT THE WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP FUND

Overview:

The Government of Canada is committed to advancing gender equality, women's economic empowerment, and supporting women entrepreneurs through the new [Women Entrepreneurship Strategy](#) (the Strategy), announced in [Budget 2018](#). As part of the Strategy, the Government has made funding available to [women-owned](#) and/or [women-led](#) businesses to support them in their growth and to pursue market opportunities abroad.

The full and equal participation of women in the economy is essential to Canada's competitiveness. Current female entrepreneurs face unique barriers as they move along the business cycle. As a result, women own fewer than 16% of businesses and are underrepresented in the economy.

By addressing women's economic empowerment through initiatives such as the Women Entrepreneurship Strategy, Canada will have the potential to add \$150 billion in incremental GDP by 2026 and reach its goal of doubling the number of majority women-owned businesses by 2025.

Entrepreneurship Fund Objectives:

The Entrepreneurship Fund is a \$20 million investment which aims to assist women entrepreneurs to grow their existing businesses and enable them to pursue opportunities in

domestic and global markets. It will provide successful applicants with up to \$100,000 in [non-repayable contribution funding](#) for a 12 month project.

3. SUBMISSION DETAILS AND DEADLINE

A complete application package for the Entrepreneurship Fund must be submitted by November 15, 2018, 23:59 PST and must include:

- 1- The Women Entrepreneurship Strategy Application Form; and
- 2- Required supporting documents (see [Attachments](#) section below).

Application Intake

Applications should be submitted through the **Women Entrepreneurship Strategy portal** by the November 15, 2018, 23:59 PST deadline. Receipt of your application package will be acknowledged within two business days. All applications will be reviewed after the deadline. If your application package is incomplete, your application will be rejected.

It is highly recommended that your application be submitted before the deadline to ensure there are no unforeseen issues at the time of submission. Late submissions will not be considered for funding.

Applicants living in rural or remote areas with limited internet access may send their application package (postmarked no later than the deadline date) by registered mail to:

Women Entrepreneurship Strategy - Small Business Branch
Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada
C.D. Howe Building
235 Queen Street, 5th Floor, West Tower, Mail Box 13
Ottawa, ON K1A 0H5
Canada

Application Process

Applications will be assessed on a competitive basis and funding will be awarded to proposals that best align with the [objectives](#) of the Entrepreneurship Fund and the assessment criteria.

Priority will be given to any of the following three applicant groups:

- [Diverse women](#) entrepreneurs (such as women with disabilities, Indigenous women, women in rural or remote regions, recent immigrants, visible minority women, women from Official Language Minority Communities);
- Businesses with products and/or services related to one of the [Economic Strategy Table sectors](#); and
- Projects seeking to pursue market opportunities abroad.

These applications will be assessed and funded first. If funding remains, other applicants will be considered.

4. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

4.1 Eligible applicants:

Eligible applicants must be:

- A for-profit organization such as:
 - An individual operating a business;
 - Partnerships;
 - Social enterprises;
 - Incorporated companies, corporations or co-operatives; and
 - An Indigenous organization.
- A women-owned and/or women-led business;
- A small to medium enterprise (SME) – (less than 500 employees); and
- A business in operation for a minimum of 2 years.

Ineligible applicants:

- Not-for-profit organizations; and
- Government or municipal entities.

4.2 Eligible projects:

The project **must** focus on activities for business scale-up and/or pursuit of new market opportunities. Projects must be up to 12 months in length.

In addition, each of the following requirements **must** also be met in order for projects to be considered for funding:

- Have a reasonable expectation of economic viability;
- Demonstrate economic benefits (e.g. number of jobs created or maintained by the project, impact on productivity, project-related revenue growth);
- Apply a portion of funding to access [advisory services](#) to ensure long-term success or demonstrate existing capacity;
- Submit a 12-month work plan and budget; and
- Meet the [minimum cost sharing/leveraging](#) requirement.

4.3 Eligible activities:

Eligible activities are those that support the execution of a growth strategy including, but not limited to:

- Supporting pursuit of market opportunities abroad
 - E.g. international marketing strategy, supply chain integration, promotions, business advisory services, online presence/website development.
- Supporting scale-up, expansion and growth
 - E.g. product development and/or product or service improvement, process improvements, inventory management, value stream mapping, improvements to facility equipment, technology improvements.
- Other activities
 - E.g. additional activities that support the objectives of the Entrepreneurship Fund.

If your application is approved, you will sign an agreement with the Government of Canada that outlines the conditions of funding. Your project will be publicly disclosed when successful recipients are announced. Any project costs incurred before the signing of the agreement will not be eligible for reimbursement.

4.4 Eligible costs:

Eligible costs include all costs necessary to carry out the project and are deemed reasonable under the Entrepreneurship Fund.

Eligible costs include, but are not limited to:

- Cost of labour;
- Capital costs: purchase of machinery, equipment and infrastructure;
- Operating costs: management fees or working capital;
- Consultancy fees;
- Costs related to intellectual property;
- Preproduction;
- Commercialization costs;
- Subcontracting costs;
- Production and distribution of promotional materials and management tools;
- Anticipated cost of maintaining the useful life of an asset for a reasonable period;
- Production of management tools; and
- Other costs necessary to support the purpose of the funding, as approved by the Minister.

Advisory expenses are also encouraged and could include:

- Fees for business advisory services from a financial institution;
- Coaching, mentoring or networking events, workshops or conference fees;
- Legal/accounting/technical supports; and
- Fees associated with participation in business training through an accelerator, incubator or other business service organization.

4.5 Ineligible costs:

Ineligible costs include, but are not limited to:

- The refinancing of an existing debt;
- The purchase of any assets for more than the fair market value;
- Land acquisition; and
- Costs of amortization and goodwill.

4.6 Expected results and outcomes

Applicants will be expected to identify and report on project outcomes. Project outcomes should support applicants to pursue growth strategies through business scale-up or pursuit of market opportunities abroad.

The following are expected outcomes and performance indicators:

Outcome(s)	Performance Indicator(s)
Pursuit of new market opportunities abroad	Increase in revenue Increase in market share
Expansion of existing market opportunities abroad	Increase in revenue Increase in market share
Growth of existing business	Increase in revenue Increase in market share Increase or improvements in production, process, technology or service
Increased job creation	Number of jobs created

Successful applicants will also be required to provide progress and performance reports.

5. ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Applications will be reviewed in a three-step process as follows:

STEP 1: Initial Screening: All application packages will be screened to make sure that they are complete and meet the eligibility criteria. If an application package is incomplete or fails to meet the eligibility criteria, applicants will be notified in writing that their application will not be considered further.

STEP 2: Review: Eligible application packages will be assessed. The criteria in the evaluation grid below will be used during this process.

STEP 3: Decision: Funding will be based on application packages' evaluation results, government priorities and available funding.

Criteria for assessing proposals will include:

Capacity	
Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies a clear and relevant company profile • Demonstrates effective management structure and team • Has capacity to effectively manage proposed project size and scope • Proposal demonstrates organization is well-placed for growth and/or market opportunities abroad
Implementation	
Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project aligns with objectives of the Initiative • Proposal outlines clear and feasible timelines • Activities are relevant and support the overall project objectives • Activities are well defined detailing how the work will be done and who will do this work
Viability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstration of applicable market research, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Current and projected market share ○ Market advantage of product/service offerings (Competition analysis) • Demonstrates competitive product • Proposal demonstrates activities will positively impact future revenues • Proposed activities will provide economic benefits (e.g. number of jobs created or maintained by the project, impact on productivity, project-related revenue growth)
Performance Measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies outcomes that align with Entrepreneurship Fund objectives • Clearly indicates how organization will achieve project outcomes
Risk Mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risks are identified • Reasonable mitigation measures are outlined
Budget	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides adequate details and description of eligible costs in budget • Identifies a reasonable portion of funding to access advisory services OR demonstrates existing capacity • Demonstrates value for money • Provides detailed justification of the eligible costs required to carry out the project activities

The Government of Canada reserves the right to accept a proposal, in whole or in part, and give consideration to factors such as government priorities, geographic coverage and diversity.

Input may be sought from other federal government partners to benefit from their expertise in project assessment and selection.

6. APPROVAL AND CONTRIBUTION AGREEMENT

Once the competitive assessment process has been completed, applicants will be informed of the status of their submission.

Following project approval, the Government of Canada may enter into a [Contribution Agreement](#) with the successful applicant (who then becomes the recipient). This Government of Canada prepared document will include the legally binding responsibilities and obligations of both parties.

7. STACKING PROVISIONS AND OTHER GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

Applicants must be able to provide part of the eligible project expenses.

[Priority applicants](#) (diverse women entrepreneurs, businesses with products and/or services related to the Economic Strategy Table sectors, and projects pursuing market opportunities abroad) must cost-share a minimum amount of 10% of the total eligible project costs. Other applicants must cost-share a minimum of 20%. All applications that put more money towards the project than the minimum cost-sharing amount may be reviewed more favourably.

Total Canadian government assistance for all eligible costs under the Entrepreneurship Fund, including federal, provincial/territorial and municipal governments, cannot exceed 100% of total eligible costs funded. The [stacking limit](#) applies to all activities captured in the Contribution Agreement.

Funding recipients under the Entrepreneurship Fund are obligated, as set out in the Contribution Agreement, to disclose all Canadian government (federal, provincial, territorial, municipal) financial assistance they have requested and/or received toward eligible Entrepreneurship Fund [activities](#) under the Contribution Agreement. In the event that the recipient exceeds the stacking limit, the Government of Canada will adjust the Contribution Agreement accordingly to respect the above mentioned limit.

SECTION B - APPLICATION FORM INSTRUCTIONS

APPLICANT INFORMATION

This section should be completed by the applicant. You must make sure that all the information you provide is accurate.

Organization Demographic:

Women-owned*: is defined as an enterprise where women own the majority of the company (more than 50%).

- Ownership for two or more years

Women led*: is defined as an enterprise with a woman/women, with long-term control and management of the business, who demonstrate an equity stake and an active role in both strategic and day to day decision making.

Further definitions:

- Long-term control and management of the business – have been engaged in the operation, management and ownership of the business for at least two years
- Active role in strategic decision making – involved in elements related to the establishment of priorities, objective and goals for the business; overall operations of the business
- Day to day decision making – involved in elements related to the financial management, human resources, supply management, logistics or customer services (for example)
- Equity stake – demonstrates an ownership in the company

*You will be required to sign a statement (called a [solemn declaration](#)) on the last page of the application form to attest that your business is women-owned and/or women-led.

Less Than 500 Employees: Please identify if your business has less than 500 employees and is therefore considered a small to medium enterprise (SME).

Diverse Groups of Women: Select whether the women owners or women leaders of the organization self-identify as a member of a [diverse group](#) and check any applicable fields. If you prefer not to disclose this information, please select “Prefer not to answer”. Diverse women are a priority focus of this Initiative; information provided will be used to give priority for funding, for statistical purposes and to ensure funding representation.

Business Number: A nine-digit number that Canada Revenue Agency will assign to a business for tax matters related to business in Canada.

Quebec Enterprise Number (NEQ): A ten-digit number assigned to an enterprise when it is enrolled in the enterprise registry with the Quebec government.

Economic Strategy Table: Organizations with products and/or services which relate to an Economic Strategy Tables are a priority focus of the Entrepreneurship Fund.

Please refer to [Appendix B](#) for definitions of the sectors which fall under the six Economic Strategy Tables and links for more information.

Applicant Sector: For applicant sector definitions, please visit the [North American Industry Classification System \(NAICS\)](#) page of the Statistics Canada website.

Brief Overview of the Organization (maximum 1750 characters):

Provide a short description of:

- Your organization;
- History;
- Number of years in operation;
- Scope; and
- Brief description of product and/or service.

Activity Types (select all that apply):

Select the types of activities that are included in the project. Select “Other” if any of the proposed activities do not fall under the selections provided.

Brief Description of Activities (maximum 1750 characters):

Briefly describe the main activities you will do to complete the project.

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Name (maximum 200 characters): Provide a title for your project

Estimated start and end dates: The start and end dates refer to when project costs are estimated to start and stop being incurred. Applicants should submit a 12-month proposal with a target start date within the first quarter of 2019. Eligible costs can only begin after the signing of a contribution agreement.

Address of physical location where the largest portion of the project will occur: Indicate where the majority of project activities will be undertaken, if different than the applicant location.

Activities on federal land: From the [Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012](#) section 2 (1), **federal lands** means:

- (a) lands that belong to Her Majesty in right of Canada, or that Her Majesty in right of Canada has the power to dispose of, and all waters on and airspace above those lands,

other than lands under the administration and control of the Commissioner of Yukon, the Northwest Territories or Nunavut;

(b) the following lands and areas:

- (i)** the internal waters of Canada, in any area of the sea not within a province,
- (ii)** the territorial sea of Canada, in any area of the sea not within a province,
- (iii)** the exclusive economic zone of Canada, and
- (iv)** the continental shelf of Canada; and

(c) reserves, surrendered lands and any other lands that are set apart for the use and benefit of a band and that are subject to the [Indian Act](#), and all waters on and airspace above those reserves or lands. (*territoire domaniale*)

Organizational Capacity (maximum 3500 characters):

- Describe the company's management structure, including whether a board of directors exists;
- Provide a brief summary or biography of key staff who will lead the project;
 - o Information may include relevant prior experience, education, professional designation(s), and other achievements.
- Highlight relevant expertise that will facilitate project success; and
- Explain why the organization is well-placed for growth.

Product and Market Overview (maximum 3500 characters):

Give a description of your company's product or service including:

- How this product or service is innovative;
- The advantage of this product versus others on the market (competition analysis);
- An overview of the market, including market viability and current market share; and
- Indicate what markets your company is currently selling this product to.

Project Objectives (maximum 3500 characters):

- Indicate how this funding will support growth and/or pursuing market opportunities abroad for your organization.
- Outline projected increase or growth of your company; and
- Discuss how your project will have positive economic benefits (e.g. number of jobs created or maintained by the project, impact on productivity, project-related revenue growth).

Key Activities and Description of Activities:

- List each major activity that will be undertaken in this project;
- Provide a detailed explanation of each activity and include who will be responsible for the work; and
- Include feasible timelines, listing projected completion dates.

Risks and Mitigations (maximum 3500 characters):

- Describe risks that could impact your organization's ability to carry out the proposed activities or achieve the desired objectives; and

- Please indicate the probability (low, medium or high) and mitigation strategies for each risk.

Expected Outcomes Chart (maximum 1750 characters for each outcome):

- Describe how your activities will contribute to the planned outcomes of the Entrepreneurship Fund (for more information please refer to [Section A 4.6](#)).

FUNDING FROM GOVERNMENT SOURCES

Funding from Government Sources: List all government funding (municipal, provincial or federal) your business has received **in the last two years**.

PROJECT FUNDING SOURCES

Give a breakdown of funding by fiscal year for the project. Enter the amounts by fiscal year that you are requesting from the Entrepreneurship Fund on the first line. On the second line, enter the amount by fiscal year that you will be putting towards the project (your cost-share amount for the project). If there is money coming from any other source, please enter it on the remaining lines. Please enter “0” in all cells that have no amounts.

[In-kind contributions](#) are not recognized under the Entrepreneurship Fund.

TOTAL PROJECT COSTS BY COST CATEGORY

Project costs can only start after a Contribution Agreement has been signed between the recipient and the Government of Canada. All project costs must be directly related to approved project activities.

Populate line items under each eligible cost category with a description of what these costs are and demonstrate how this amount was calculated (ex: 1 computer software licence @ \$400).

Eligible costs are described in [Section A 4.4](#) of the guide.

* Please note, the Government of Canada’s fiscal year begins April 1 and ends March 31.

ATTACHMENTS

Your application package **must** include the following:

1. A scanned copy of the application package signed by an authorized official. Included in this attachment is:
 - A declaration that your organization meets the eligibility requirements of a women-owned and/or women-led business; and

- A declaration that your organization has the available funding to meet the stated leveraging amount committed to under the total project costs section.
2. Annual financial statements for the past two years. Acceptable financial statement standards include:
 - audited;
 - review engagement; or
 - notice to reader.
 3. A one-year financial forecast.
 4. Incorporation document (if applicable).

AUTHORIZING OFFICIAL CONTACT INFORMATION

Authorized Official is an individual who is authorized to legally sign on behalf of the organization.

Under the “Signed at” box, please include the geographical location (city) where the application form was signed.

SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION

Please follow the instructions when prompted to submit your application.

APPENDIX A - GLOSSARY

Activities:

Activities are undertakings that are eligible for funding under the Entrepreneurship Fund (see [eligible activities](#)) and required to complete a project.

Applicant:

An individual or entity that has applied for funding.

Application:

A set of documents submitted to the Government of Canada in order to participate in an application for funding process. For the Entrepreneurship Fund, this includes the application form and all additional documents included in the “attachments” section of the form.

Business Support:

Organizations that provide business services (i.e. financing, mentoring, networking, business planning, financial literacy, etc.) to meet the needs of the wider business community.

Cash Contribution:

Refers to the money an applicant or other funding sources contribute towards the project.

Contribution Agreement:

A written agreement between the successful applicant (who then becomes the recipient) and the Government of Canada. It includes the legally binding responsibilities and obligations of both parties.

Diverse Groups of Women (or Women from Underrepresented Groups):

Includes, but is not limited to, women with disabilities, Indigenous women, women in rural or remote regions, recent immigrants, visible minority women, and women from Official Language Minority Communities (OLMCs).

Eligible Costs:

The costs to which Initiative funding may be applied and which are established in the Contribution Agreement.

Ineligible Applicant:

Applicants that do not meet the eligibility criteria to receive funding from the Entrepreneurship Fund.

Ineligible Application:

Applications that do not meet the Entrepreneurship Fund eligibility criteria.

Ineligible Costs:

Costs that are not eligible for reimbursement through the Initiative.

In-Kind Contribution:

Donated goods and services such as: training or technical services, supervision, workspace and equipment, secretarial support and other resources provided without charge by partners. These contributions must be estimated at fair market value.

In-kind contributions are **not** recognized under the Entrepreneurship Fund.

Intersectional Groups:

Intersectional groups are those with overlapping or intersecting social identities (for example LGBTQ groups in rural and northern areas or women in remote areas with disabilities).

Non-Repayable Contribution Funding:

This Initiative is a non-repayable contribution. In order to be reimbursed, the costs must be incurred, eligible, related to work that is outlined in the approved budget and work plan, and fall within the start and end dates of the project.

Project:

The combined activities needed to accomplish your objectives and outcomes under this Initiative. A project is undertaken within specific time, cost and performance parameters.

Recent Immigrant:

A person who has settled in Canada within the last ten years.

Recipient:

An applicant that signs a Contribution Agreement with the Government of Canada and receives funding. Once an applicant signs the agreement, they become a Recipient.

Scale up programs:

Programs that support women entrepreneurs' business growth and/or expansion.

Solemn Declaration:

When a person solemnly declares that the contents of an official document are true and correct.

Stacking Limit:

The maximum level of total Canadian government (municipal, provincial/territorial, federal) funding authorized for any one activity, initiative or project of a recipient.

Supplier Diversity Programming for Women Entrepreneurs:

Programs which encourage governments or corporations to actively seek women-owned businesses as suppliers.

Value for Money:

Refers to applications that achieve economy, efficiency, and effectiveness, with the funds requested for project delivery.

Women from Underrepresented Groups (or Diverse Women):

Includes but is not limited to women with disabilities, Indigenous women, women in rural or remote regions, recent immigrants, visible minority women, and women from Official Language Minority Communities (OLMCs).

Women led:

An enterprise with a woman/women, with long-term control and management of the business, equity stake and an active role in both strategic and day to day decision making.

Women-owned:

An enterprise where women own the majority of the company (more than 50%).

APPENDIX B – PRODUCTIVE INDUSTRIES UNDER THE SIX ECONOMIC STRATEGY TABLES

In [Budget 2017](#), the Government of Canada announced a new vision for Canada's economy as a global leader in innovation, anchored by the *Innovation and Skills Plan*. In this plan, the creation of the six Economic Strategy tables will support innovation in advanced manufacturing, agri-food, clean technology, digital industries, health/bio-sciences and resources of the future.

[The Economic Strategy Tables](#) are a new model for industry-government collaboration, focused on turning Canadian economic strengths into global advantages. The Tables are chaired by industry leaders and will set ambitious growth targets, identify sector-specific challenges and "bottlenecks", and lay out an actionable roadmap to achieve their goals.

[Advanced manufacturing](#) is defined by the development and adoption of innovative technologies to create new products, enhance processes and establish more efficient and cost-effective ways of working.

[Agri-Food](#), a complex and interdependent sector, includes agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture, and food and beverage processing.

[Health/Bio-sciences](#) encompasses a wide range of companies, from the developers and manufacturers of pharmaceuticals, medical devices and biomedical innovations, to producers of digital health solutions and disruptive technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), big data analytics, 3D printing, robotics and nanotechnologies.

[Clean Technology](#) refers to any process, product or service that reduces environmental impacts in order to better control costs, meet new regulatory requirements, improve global competitiveness and reduce impacts on climate, water, land and air.

[Digital Industries](#) includes a combination of information and communication technology (ICT), digital and interactive media, and content industries as well as manufacturers and service companies that use creativity, talent and digital skills to capture, transmit and display data and information electronically in ever evolving innovative ways. While it does not capture the full breadth of the digital industries including parts of the creative industries, the best framework currently available to benchmark growth is the ICT sector.

[Resources of the Future](#) refers to transitioning from the old resource economy into a new resource economy. It's where innovation drives economic and environmental competitiveness in the energy, mining and forest sectors, and which leverages Canada's natural resources advantage to transition to a low-carbon economy.