ACR Aboriginal Programs Project
Program Template

Program Area:	3.0	Business Development
Sub Program:	3.3	Programs Sponsored by Government and Non-Profit Agencies
Template:	**3.3.1**	**Aboriginal Business Canada (ABC)**
Sponsor(s):	*Industry Canada*	

1. Objective

To promote the establishment and growth of Aboriginal businesses on a national basis. For eligible applicants, the program provides financial assistance, information, resource materials and referrals to other possible sources of financing or business support.

2. Description

- Clients must be individuals of Canadian Indian, Métis, or Inuit heritage, or majority-owned Aboriginal organizations or development corporations.
- ABC also supports measures to strengthen Aboriginal business and financial institutions and their capacity to provide services and deliver programming that benefits Aboriginal entrepreneurs.
- Priority areas include: innovation, trade and market expansion, tourism, youth entrepreneurship development, and strengthening Aboriginal financial and business development organizations.
- For clients planning to establish or acquire a business, ABC can consider financial assistance when the business falls under one of the following categories: tourism, manufacturing, business, professional, scientific or technical services, and businesses linked to specific major developments. For other new businesses, ABC can consider support for marketing and information technology needs.
- ABC also considers financial support for clients already operating a business that involves innovation or expansion into new markets.
- The vast majority of ABC contributions are made to small and medium-sized businesses and are in the form of nonrepayable equity contributions. Contributions may be repayable in some circumstances. In the case of larger, community-based projects, other conditions will be taken into account in order to determine the contribution level and repayability.
- ABC has offices across the country. In Alberta/NWT, offices are located in Edmonton and Calgary. External delivery organizations operate in Yellowknife and Edmonton.

3. Implementation

Types of assistance to Aboriginal clients include:

- Helping to determine whether a proposed project is eligible for ABC assistance before submitting an application
- Helping to develop a business plan by providing business planning guides, terms of reference, advice and referrals to business consultants, financial support
- Providing sector information relevant to a business
- Helping to access lenders for the commercial financing requirements of a business, which may include referring to an Aboriginal financial institution
- Providing financial assistance, most often in the form of equity contributions
- Providing advice and financial assistance to facilitate business partnerships
- Providing financing towards the costs of management training and for business advisors once a business is operating
- Providing financial assistance for conferences, workshops and studies, on a limited basis

Assistance for starting a business. ABC can assist Aboriginal clients (first-time entrepreneurs or existing entrepreneurs/businesses that are proposing to carry out a particular commercial activity for the first time) to establish or acquire:

- A tourism business
- A manufacturing business
- A professional services business
- A scientific/technical services business
- A business that exports a product or service with a confirmed market; or in limited situations, a business linked to a specified major development

Assistance for existing businesses. ABC can assist Aboriginal clients who are already operating a business with business planning, capital cost, marketing and business support financing related to activities that include:

- Expanding sales into other regional, national or international markets
- Improving business processes, productivity or sales, through technology or other improvements, including use of information and communications technologies in commercial applications
- Developing, enhancing and commercializing new or existing products, technologies, systems and processes

Assistance for Aboriginal organizations. Financial support may be available for Aboriginal organizations requiring support towards eligible activities designed to improve the business climate for Aboriginal firms in Canada, including:

- Organization or coordination of business-specific conferences, trade shows or other events or initiatives related to innovation, trade and market expansion, tourism, youth

entrepreneurship development, business financing or entrepreneurial and institutional capacity building

- Private sector-led development of research, sector information and analysis, or other educational material, which increases the shareable data available on the progress of Aboriginal enterprise in Canada

4. Timeframe for Results

Individual projects range from short- to long-term.

5. Measurable Criteria

Conditions for support are defined in each Letter of Offer (contract) between Industry Canada and the client.

6. Budget

Aboriginal Business Canada manages a budget of approx $50 million (grants and contributions, salary and non-salary).

7. Partners and Sponsors

After almost two decades of delivering programs and services, Aboriginal Business Canada continues to work in partnership with many sectoral and other business organizations.

- A network of more than 30 Aboriginal capital corporations provides loan and business services to small and medium-sized Aboriginal firms across Canada. Along with Aboriginal Community Futures Development Corporations, these organizations are referred to collectively as Aboriginal financial institutions (AFIs). AFIs benefit from the Access to Capital programming created under the federal government's Aboriginal Business Development Initiative, in which Aboriginal Business Canada is a partner.
- Innovative arrangements with external delivery organizations have extended the reach of Aboriginal Business Canada programming, and improved service delivery. Alternate service delivery organizations have also been established, allowing for local delivery and investment decisions.
- ABC also works in collaboration with the private-sector National Aboriginal Economic Development Board, which considers proposals involving large program investments, and advises the Minister of Industry and the Government of Canada more broadly on matters related to Aboriginal economic and business development.

8. Experience with the Program

ABC and its predecessor, Aboriginal Economic Programs, have been in existence since 1989.

9. General Applicability

The program is available to individuals of Canadian Indian, Métis, or Inuit heritage, or majority-owned Aboriginal organizations or development corporations.

10. Additional Information or Support

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Date Entered or Updated: October 18, 2005