

ACR Aboriginal Programs Project Program Template

Program Area:	3.0	Business Development
Sub Program:	3.1	Providing Business Opportunities
Template:	3.1.6	Fox Creek Business Alliance
Sponsor(s):	<i>Hinton Wood Products - Hinton Woodlands</i>	

1. Objective

To develop an Aboriginal business model for forestry contracts and support diversification into new areas such as campsite maintenance, firefighting and road monitoring.

2. Description

Hinton Woodlands has traditionally employed many Aboriginal people in its tree-harvesting operations. In the 1970s, logging technology changed from using hand-cutting and horses to a mechanized process. In order to continue to employ Aboriginal people living in the area, Hinton Woodlands helped to establish an Aboriginal business - Fox Creek Development Association Ltd. (FCDA). This business has operated successfully for 25 years, with the continued involvement of Weldwood.

In the early years, FCDA was primarily supported by contracts from Hinton Woodlands. Initially, contracts were for timber harvesting, and the contracts were given to the company on a non-competitive basis.

FCDA is evolving in terms of clients and business experience. While Hinton Woodlands is still a major supporter, about 50% of revenues now comes from contracts with other clients, including the Alberta Department of Sustainable Development and oil and gas companies.

Forestry contracts are still the major business, although contracts are now for silviculture (stand tending) rather than harvesting. FCDA has also expanded into new areas. For example, it has contracts for campsite maintenance and money collection on 16 provincial recreation areas managed by Hinton Woodlands. It also has contracts for firefighting, brush cutting and road monitoring. The company now competes for more contracts on a competitive basis.

FCDA is a company owned by 22 Aboriginal shareholders who are also employees of the company (incorporated under the Societies Act). The company has a general manager, administrator, 25 permanent employees and 10 seasonal employees. A board of directors guides the company and is comprised of prominent community and government leaders. The board is very active in working with the company to identify new opportunities and provide business advice.

FCDA is an example of an Aboriginal business that has evolved with changing technology and is diversifying its clients and types of contracts.

3. Implementation

Some of the key elements for implementation and management of this program are:

- FCDA hires all local Aboriginal people, without distinction based on band or community. There are no reserves within the Forest Management Area, however there are many Aboriginal people living in the local communities.
- Both FCDA and Hinton Woodlands have a long-term commitment to the community. They involve people who live in the community in their organizations.
- The business is flexible in its hiring policies and accommodates the culture and lifestyle of Aboriginal employees. Some contracts also involve training.
- FCDA has shown itself to be adaptable to changing business conditions. For example, it has recently moved into the area of provincial recreation management.
- FCDA has a certificate of recognition through the Occupational Health and Safety - Partners in Injury Reduction program.
- FCDA supports traditional and cultural lifestyles including facilitation of a traditional native dance troupe and post-secondary scholarships.

4. Timeframe for Results

FCDA has been active for 25 years. While most projects are short term, the business alliance between the Aboriginal community and Hinton Woodlands is long term, and is expected to continue.

5. Measurable Criteria

Satisfactory provision of quality services on budget.

6. Budget

FCDA revenues are approximately \$2 million per year with about half from Hinton Wood Products.

7. Partners and Sponsors

Other companies and the Alberta Government also provide contracts. Community leaders serve on FCDA's board of directors and help in finding contracts.

8. Experience with the Program

This Aboriginal-owned company has been successful in maintaining long-term relationships in the community and in responding to changing conditions.

9. General Applicability

This program is applicable to other Aboriginal companies and communities.

10. Additional Information or Support

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