

Request for Proposals: Economic Development Network Support

ETSI-BC is seeking proposals from qualified groups to facilitate a network of Economic Development Practitioners in each of the two regions in its service area, the Columbia-Kootenay and the Thompson-Okanagan regions. This investment supports ETSI-BC's strategic pillar, "Creating Value for the Economic Development Ecosystem". Up to \$15,000 has been allocated per region to support these two networks of practitioners.

1. Background

The Economic Trust of the Southern Interior (ETSI-BC) is focused on supporting the region's economic development practitioners, local governments, non-profit business support organizations, post-secondary institutions, and industry groups, to help develop and diversify the region's economy and its ability to create new jobs. The following strategic pillars guide our funding decisions.

ETSI-BC Strategic Pillars

1. Building Economic Development Capacity	Support smaller, rural and First Nations communities to help build economic development capacity and support regional Economic Development partnerships.
2. Supporting Business Resilience and Growth	Work with the region's non-profit business support organizations and communities, to cultivate business programs and services to address unmet business and community support needs in the region.
3. Developing Human Capital	Enhance the development of local talent by supporting entrepreneurship development, and research partnerships and projects linking post-secondary institutions and businesses.
4. Innovating and Advancing Key Sectors	Encourage initiatives in support of business growth and innovation and the advancement of key sectors, while also encouraging transition to a Net Zero economy in the region.
5. Creating Value for the Economic Development Ecosystem	Add value to the Economic Development ecosystem of the Southern Interior by facilitating meaningful connections, collaboration and sharing of best practices, while stewarding its assets in the best interest of the region.

Creating Value for the Economic Development Ecosystem (Pillar 5), is intended to encourage education, dialogue, coordination and collaboration amongst economic development practitioners in the ETSI-BC service area.

The purpose of this RFP is to find a willing entity that would like to take the lead on providing this coordination on behalf of the communities in one of the regions in our service area, the Columbia-Kootenay or the Thompson-Okanagan. ETSI-BC hopes that each network would invite the individual in each community, First Nation and District who is the prime contact for economic development for that community.

The person who has the prime responsibility for economic development in their community may be an economic development officer employed by the municipality, but it might also include someone employed by a Chamber of Commerce, Community Futures or other organization. The goal is to bring the key players together to work collaboratively to strengthen the economic development ecosystem. Some possible activities that these two networks could take on include:

- Hosting forums for discussion and sharing of best practices
- Organizing economic development education
- Inviting speakers on topics of mutual interest
- Exploring regional economic development collaboration opportunities

A maximum of \$15,000 has been allocated per region to support economic development practitioner network collaboration. This funding is meant to cover the cost of the extra resources needed to administer the network, which is meant to be offered without cost to its members.

These networks are not meant to replace the work of the BCEDA, but rather to complement it. The Kootenay-Boundary EDPN is an example of one successful network which exists in parallel with the BCEDA and complements the important work of that association.

Funding by ETSI-BC is also not meant to replace funding from any other sources, such as the Columbia Basin Trust, but to complement that as well.

2. Proposal Requirements

In 2023, ETSI-BC will:

- 1) Solicit two proposals, one from the Kootenay-Boundary region and another from the Thompson-Okanagan region describing how financial support from ETSI-BC would contribute to supporting economic development collaboration, education and networking.
- 2) Each proposal should include an element of how these two networks can build regional collaboration and sharing of best practices across the entire Southern Interior.

The contents of each proposal will depend on the priorities and needs in each region, and what stage in the process each network is in. In the case of an existing network, the activities that the ETSI-BC funding can address would be very different than the activities a start-up network would need to have funded in its early years. Proposals should include activities which will encourage regional education, networking

and collaboration by the region's economic development organizations and the economic development practitioners.

3. Application Guide

Our goal is to create a simple application process for these funds.

3.1 Who Can Apply

Applicants must be from a public economic development society, commission or corporation that represents a collective group of economic development organizations or is taking the lead for a collective group of economic development organizations.

One contribution will be awarded to each of the Columbia-Kootenay and Thompson-Okanagan regions.

3.2 Eligible and Ineligible Costs

Eligible Costs

- Project-related contractor or professional consulting fees and travel expenses
- Project-related technology: computer, communications and AV equipment rental
- Marketing or promotion costs, collateral, and outreach
- Third party project-related administrative costs, including reports, printing, or data

Ineligible Costs

- Wages for existing staff or staff funded through other government programs
- Supplementary wages/contract fees on an existing contract
- Office equipment (i.e., desk, computer, cell phone)
- Living expenses or car allowance
- Hospitality costs – meals or alcohol
- Purchase of equipment or tools
- Costs incurred prior to the project approval date set out in the contribution agreement
- Costs not specifically approved in the project budget

3.3 Economic Benefits / Key Performance Indicators

Proposals must create economic benefits that add value to the people, businesses and communities across the region. The following are sample measures of economic benefit:

- The project leads to sharing of best practices
- The project leads to training and professional development of ED practitioners
- The project supports entrepreneurial development
- The project will lead to a new economic development initiative
- The project provides broad regional economic impact(s)

- The project leads to new job creation or job retention
- The project involves multiple groups and community collaboration
- The project shows leveraging of ETSI-BC funding from the applicant and/or other funders.
- There are direct economic benefits to the community, local governments and/or First Nations as a result of the project.

3.4 Proposal Outline

Proposals should include the following components:

Project Overview and Rationale:

Provide a concise description and rationale for the proposal. Includes geographic area and types of activities (sharing of best practices, training, forums etc.) and projected economic benefits.

Workplan and Key Performance Indicators:

Provide a proposed work plan that provides key activities, goals, KPIs and timelines – see attached example template.

Project Budget:

Provide a budget that highlights key expense areas and if applicable other funding sources and in-kind contributions.

Diversity

Indicate how this project will ensure it is inclusive of diverse groups including women, Indigenous people and people of colour. Confirm that the project has been reviewed using a Gender-Based Analysis+ (GBA+) Lens.

3.5 Timelines

Funding will be available for the 2023-24 fiscal year. Reporting, based on the above criteria, would be required by May 31, 2024. The projects may be featured in the ETSI-BC Annual Report, so photos and testimonials are welcome.