

# Supporting Indigenous Forestry

Increasing Indigenous Participation in the Forestry and the Forest Bioeconomy

October 9<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024

# Supporting Indigenous Forestry Overview

- Ontario policy commitment
  - Forest Sector Strategy
  - Forest Biomass Action Plan
- Capacity and Skills Development Toolkit and Guidance Document
- Ministry of Natural Resources Support for Indigenous Economic Development
- Starting your Project
- Ontario Support Programs

# Increasing Indigenous Participation in Forestry

- MNR acknowledges that Indigenous communities have a strong connection to forests and want a greater involvement in forestry, including direct economic benefits and opportunities to create Indigenous owned businesses in forestry and the growing forest bioeconomy.
- MNR works with Indigenous communities and organizations to find ways to increase their participation in forestry by:
  - Increasing involvement through business development and Indigenous-led projects;
  - Building the capacity of Indigenous businesses and workers to participate in the forest sector and the growing forest bioeconomy;
  - Supporting the growing Indigenous youth population in participating in the future labour force and leadership in forest entrepreneurial businesses; and
  - Promoting use of forest biomass as a renewable heating resource alternative to fossil fuels and can generate jobs and revenues for northern, rural and Indigenous communities.

# Forest Sector Strategy

- Ontario has developed and implemented various initiatives over the years to encourage Indigenous community involvement in the forest industry and benefits from forest resources.
- The Forest Sector Strategy, released in August of 2020, continues to encourage various opportunities to enhance Indigenous involvement.
- The strategy commits to building strong, mutually beneficial relationships and partnerships with Indigenous communities. This includes building the capacity of Indigenous communities and workers by providing training opportunities and supporting Indigenous business development.
- The strategy has four pillars of action that provide the foundation to further economic prosperity, increase wood utilization and generate high-quality jobs, which will help the future prosperity of Indigenous, rural, and northern communities that depend on the forest sector.
- MNR is working closely with ten other ministries to implement actions in support of the Forest Sector Strategy

# Implementation of the Forest Sector Strategy

In implementing the Forest Sector Strategy (to date), Ontario has:

- Released the Forest Biomass Action Plan to explore innovative uses of underutilized forest resources and mill by-products;
- Executed several projects with Indigenous groups and First Nations to increase their participation in the forest sector, promoting forestry career pathways and building capacity of indigenous businesses and workers through training;
  - Convening funder table discussions with 21 communities, bringing together multiple potential funding and support partners to assist communities contemplating a forestry or biomass-related project for their community.
  - Providing funding for nine proposals in collaboration with Indigenous communities to help support their forestry-related projects, leveraging \$958,000 in additional funding.
  - Connecting with 38 Indigenous communities regarding the Forest Biomass Action Plan and exploring their interest in engaging in forest biomass projects or opportunities.
  - Launched the Indigenous Bioeconomy Partnerships Stream through the Forest Biomass Program.

# Forest Biomass Action Plan

- The Forest Biomass Action Plan (FBAP) was released in March 2022 with the aim to secure jobs, encourage sustainability in the forest sector, and support economic development forest biomass.
- FBAP supports opportunities for Indigenous communities looking to implement forest biomass projects and become active partners in forestry supply chains. Community-led projects need different levels and types of support to build the capacity to take advantage of these growing opportunities.
- Objective 4 of the plan, supports holistic, culturally relevant pathways for Indigenous community involvement in forest biomass value chains to support reconciliation between Indigenous communities and the province. In the context of this plan, reconciliation empowers Indigenous communities to take a leadership role in developing a collaborative working model to better participate in community biomass use.
- Actions taken through this plan will be collaborative rather than prescriptive, to reflect the vision, capacities and priorities of individual communities.

# Implementation of FBAP Objective 4

Implementation of the FBAP includes actions that support Indigenous community readiness for forestry and forest biomass projects by:

- Bringing about greater Indigenous involvement and benefit from the use of forest biomass.
- Supporting project development through provincial funding programs and exploring additional opportunities for enabling investments through capacity building, skills training, access to expertise, and knowledge transfer.
- Supporting Indigenous community applications to federal funding programs.
- Developing a capacity-building toolkit and guidance document to support community led projects.
- Facilitating awareness of Ontario's regulatory environment for:
  - Forestry activities, and access to forest biomass, and
  - Required project permitting by other ministries.
- Developing interest in youth to participate in a “green economy”.

# MNR Support for Indigenous Economic Development

- MNR's Forest Industry Division (FID) provides a one-window approach for information and support for forestry-related economic development to internal and external clients and partners.
- FID acts as the main point of contact for forestry-related investments, providing expertise in business development, finance and forest biomass opportunities.
  - Administer programs including Provincial Forest Access Roads Program, Forest Sector Investment and Innovation Program, and Forest Biomass Program.
- Facilitates project support between Ontario Ministries and Federal Departments and coordinates strategic investment planning for an economic development projects or initiatives while considering:
  - Funding programs have different objectives, eligibility requirements, program rules, funding levels, etc.
  - Ontario and federal support programs can and do change regularly.
  - FID staff can assist in determining which programs (federal and provincial) best align with a specific project and can help make connections to the relevant program areas.
  - For more complex projects, MNR can assist in establishing a project working circle consisting of project representatives and appropriate program staff from relevant provincial ministries, federal agencies and non-profits to help source and align different funding opportunities.



# Knowledge Transfer

- FID can provide information and assistance on:
  - Running a business in Ontario, including business planning;
  - Capacity building, including understanding regulatory, permitting and licencing requirements;
  - Facilitating connections with federal departments and provincial ministries;
  - Facilitating partnerships and connections with industry; and
  - How to access wood supply for projects.
- Capacity building supports include connecting Indigenous projects with Non-Profit Organizations, including:
  - **Centre for Research and Innovation in the Bio-Economy (CRIBE)**: Supports and develops a sustainable, profitable provincial forest bio-economy.
    - [Nextfor.ca](http://Nextfor.ca) is an open internet platform with a public information repository, reports, presentation and proceedings.
    - [Nextfor-forestedge.ca](http://Nextfor-forestedge.ca) showcases Ontario's forest and biomass opportunity, including geospatially mapping of the provinces Forest Resource Inventory (cost, species, availability) with industry infrastructure, municipal services, economic development agencies and general information regarding Ontario forest industry.
  - **Project Learning Tree**: committed to advancing environmental education, forest literacy, and career pathways, using trees and forests as windows on the world. [pltcanada.org](http://pltcanada.org)
  - **Forests Ontario**: Management and delivery of high-quality tree planting programs, interactive forest education resources and community initiatives dedicated to making our forests greener. [forestsontario.ca](http://forestsontario.ca)

# Starting Your Project

- Before starting your project get a copy of the Capacity and Skills Development Toolkit and Guidance Document.
  - Outlines a streamlined process for developing a project and provides information on:
    - What are the steps?
    - Why is this step needed and what is the expected outcome?
    - What are the resources needed?
    - Where to find resources if not present in the community.
- Ask for help
  - MNR can support while you develop your project:
    - Communities and organizations are all different and need different types of support.
    - Tells us where you need support:
      - Funding for a feasibility study, information on permitting, wood supply options, or facilitate introduction to potential industry partners?
      - Collaboration with other ministries and federal departments is key – we can help.
    - You can contact us through [forestbiomass@ontario.ca](mailto:forestbiomass@ontario.ca) or directly email us:
      - Gordon King – [gordon.king@ontario.ca](mailto:gordon.king@ontario.ca)
      - Scott Miller – [scott.miller@ontario.ca](mailto:scott.miller@ontario.ca)

# Appendix – Ontario Support Programs

## Cross Government Support for Indigenous Projects

- We have provided information on Ontario support programs across seven ministries that support Indigenous projects. MNR's programs are specific to forestry and the forest bioeconomy, while other ministry's support Indigenous projects that may align with your project objectives.
  - Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR): Information on the Forest Biomass Program and Forest Sector Investment and Innovation Program;
  - Ministry of Northern Development (MND): Provides an overview of Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation programs;
  - Ministry of Indigenous Affairs and First Nations Economic Reconciliation (IAFNER): Provides information on the Indigenous Economic Development Fund and Indigenous Community Capital Grants Program;
  - Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade (MEDJCT): Provides an overview on the Forest Sector Investment and Innovation Program (jointly managed with MNR), Regional Development Program for southern Ontario, Business Advisory and Investment Attraction support;
  - Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD): Provides information on the Better Jobs Ontario and Skills Development Fund initiatives;
  - Ministry of Mines (MINES): Provides an overview of the Aboriginal Participation Fund, Critical Minerals Strategy, Rehabilitation Participation Fund, Resource Revenue Sharing, Ontario Geological Survey
  - Ministry of Transportation (MTO): Provides information on the Indigenous Transportation Initiatives Fund.

# Funding Supports Available (MNR)

## Forest Biomass Program (FBP)

- Consisting of four streams that will position Ontario as a leader in the growing circular and green economy.
  - Indigenous bioeconomy partnerships stream: Increase Indigenous participation in forest biomass opportunities and benefit from bioeconomy development.
  - Exploring biomass pathways stream: Improve public and private sector understanding of the technical, financial, scientific and operational considerations for use of forest biomass.
  - Innovative bioproduct manufacturing stream: Deploy innovative bioproducts and facilitate increased use of forest biomass as a feedstock in manufacturing, infrastructure, energy services and resource extraction sectors.
  - Modernization stream: Support forest sector transformation, competitiveness, and participation in emerging bioeconomy opportunities through use of forest biomass.

# Funding Supports Available Continued (MNR)

## Forest Sector Investment and Innovation Program (FSIIP)

- The Forest Sector Investment and Innovation Program (FSIIP) is a Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade's program, which provides funding for strategic investments in the forest sector that will:
  - improve productivity and innovation
  - enhance competitiveness
  - support new market access
  - provide benefits to Ontario's broader forest sector
  - strengthen regional economies
- Support is available under two project categories – *business projects* and *collaboration projects*.
- Intake for this program is jointly managed by MEDJCT and MNR, more details will be provided later in the presentation.

# Ministry of Northern Development (MND)

## Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC)

### People & Talent

#### **Who is eligible?**

- Businesses, municipalities, Indigenous communities, and not-for-profit organizations located in Northern Ontario that have been in operation for at least one year and have a minimum of one full-time employee

#### **What is eligible?**

- Salaries/wages and employer portion of Mandatory Employment Related Costs for a limited-term internship position of 52 weeks at 35 hours/week

# MND - Work Force Development

Funding Stream	Funding Type	Available Funding
Work force development stream	Conditional contribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipalities, Indigenous communities, non-profits: 90% of intern's salary to a maximum of \$35,000</li> <li>• Businesses: 50% of intern's salary to a maximum of \$35,000</li> </ul>
Indigenous work force development stream (*Internship candidate identifies as an Indigenous person, including First Nations, Metis or Inuit)	Conditional contribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipalities, Indigenous communities, non-profits: 90% of Indigenous intern's salary to a maximum of \$35,000</li> <li>• Businesses: 75% of Indigenous intern's salary to a maximum of \$52,500</li> </ul>

# MND – Community Enhancement Rural

## Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC)

- Community Enhancement - Rural  
Support priorities of rural communities to contribute to healthy and strong communities.

### Who is eligible?

Rural municipalities, Indigenous communities, and not-for-profit organizations and Local Services Boards, having or serving a population of less than 30,000.

### What is eligible?

Incremental improvements, repairs, and/or renovations to improve and extend the useful life of capital assets, including social and recreational facilities, municipal assets and community halls that contribute to a healthy and vibrant community

Funding Stream	Funding Type	Available Funding
Rural enhancement project (for communities with a population under 1500)	Conditional contribution	90% of eligible costs to a maximum of \$200,000
Rural enhancement project for communities with a population over 1500)	Conditional contribution	75% of eligible costs to a maximum of \$500,000



# MND – Enhance Your Community

## Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC)

- Community Enhancement – Enhance your community

Supporting priorities of northern communities and organizations that contribute to a healthy and strong community

### **Who is eligible?**

Municipalities, Indigenous communities, not-for-profit organizations, and Local Services Boards located in Northern Ontario

### **What is eligible?**

Incremental improvements, repairs, and/or renovations to improve and extend the useful life of capital assets, including social and recreational facilities, municipal assets and community halls that contribute to a healthy and vibrant community.

The implementation of priority economic development initiatives that respond to an economic opportunity and / or contribute to improved quality of life for a community and/or region.

<b>Funding Stream</b>	<b>Funding Type</b>	<b>Available Funding</b>
Enhance your community	Conditional contribution	The lessor of 50% of eligible costs or \$2 million

# MND - Invest North

## Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC)

- Invest North - Investment

### **Who is eligible?**

Businesses starting-up, expanding existing operations or locating new business operations in or to Northern Ontario

### **What is eligible?**

Capital construction, leasehold improvements, new or used equipment, including capital leases, land-servicing costs, information & communications technology (ICT) investments, marketing for new products and business initiatives, and training costs incurred with third parties.

# MND - Invest North - Investment

Funding Stream	Funding Type	Available Funding
<b>Launching</b> a new business	Conditional contribution	50% of eligible costs up to \$200,000
<b>Growing</b> an existing business	Conditional contribution and/or loan	20% of eligible costs up to \$400,000 in conditional contribution or 20% of eligible costs up to \$400,000 in conditional contribution plus a term loan of up to 30% of eligible costs up to \$600,000 or 50% of eligible costs to a maximum of \$1 million in term loan
<b>Locating</b> new business operations to Northern Ontario	Conditional contribution or conditional contribution and term loan	50% of eligible costs up to \$5 million

# Ministry of Indigenous Affairs and First Nations Economic Reconciliation (IAFNER)

## Indigenous Economic Development Fund

The Indigenous Economic Development Fund (IEDF) provides up to \$9 million in annual grants and financing to Indigenous entrepreneurs, businesses, communities and organizations. The fund helps promote economic development and improve employment opportunities for Indigenous people.

### **Economic Diversification Grant (EDG):**

- The Economic Diversification Grant (EDG) promotes strategic economic planning to assist Indigenous communities to expand their economic base and explore opportunities for job creation. The EDG aims to enhance Indigenous communities' ability to diversify their economies and explore opportunities in sectors where there is potential for success, and to improve long-term planning at the community-level. The annual funding for the EDG is \$1.7M and projects are approved through a competitive process.

### **Regional Partnership Grant (RPG):**

- The Regional Partnership Grant (RPG) supports the success of projects that contribute to economic growth, job growth and training on a regional or province-wide basis by improving access and participation of Indigenous people in accredited training programs resulting in qualifications recognized in Ontario. The RPG provides up to \$1.5 million in annual funding and projects are approved through a competitive process

# Ministry of Indigenous Affairs and First Nations Economic Reconciliation (IAFNER)

## Indigenous Community Capital Grants Program (ICCGP)

- The Indigenous Community Capital Grants Program (ICCGP) funds the development of community capital projects that contribute to a sustainable social base and support economic participation in Indigenous communities.
- The program has operated since 1989 and was designed to address gaps in capital funding available for Indigenous community capital needs.
- The ICCGP has an annual budget of \$6M and projects are approved through a competitive process.

# Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade (MEDJCT)

## Forest Sector Investment and Innovation Program (FSIIP)

- The program support is available for projects with at least \$3 million in eligible costs undertaken by for-profit manufacturers and processors of wood and forest biomass across Ontario, including sawmills, pulp and paper mills, secondary wood manufacturers and bio-economy projects.
- Funding support of up to 30% of eligible costs in the form of a performance-based loan (of which, up to 50% may be forgivable).
- Grants of up to 15% of eligible costs may be considered in exceptional situations at the discretion of the province.

### **Upcoming Funding Round 21**

- Stage I: December 20, 2024
- Stage II: January 29, 2025

### **Round 22**

- Stage I: March 21, 2025
- Stage II: April 29, 2025

Contact 1-844-573-9017 or  
email [FSIIP@ontario.ca](mailto:FSIIP@ontario.ca)

For a full list of the program details and deadlines,  
please visit:

[Forest Sector Investment and Innovation Program  
| ontario.ca](https://www.ontario.ca/forest-sector-investment-and-innovation-program)

# MEDJCT - Regional Development Program (RDP)

- The program maintains the Eastern Ontario and Southwestern Ontario Development Funds which support businesses, municipalities and economic development organizations located in eastern and southwestern Ontario
- Funding support of up to 15% of eligible costs in the form of a performance-based loan (max \$5M of which, up to 500k may be forgivable).
- Grants are available only for specific circumstances, up to 15% to a maximum:
  - Of \$500,000 if your company has fewer than 100 employees and is based in rural Southern Ontario (population of your community is less than 100,000 or population density is less than 100 people per square kilometre)
  - Of \$1,500,000 for strategic projects that are foreign direct investments or from companies competing against other jurisdictions (in limited circumstances)

## Round 18

Application submission period:

- November 5, 2024 – January 28, 2025

Application deadline:

- January 28, 2025

Notification date:

- April 24, 2025

[Online Self Assessment Tool](#)

## Contact

[easternregionbas@ontario.ca](mailto:easternregionbas@ontario.ca)

[westernregionbas@ontario.ca](mailto:westernregionbas@ontario.ca)

For a full list of the program details and deadlines, please visit:

[Regional Development Program | ontario.ca](https://www.ontario.ca/Regional-Development-Program)

# MEDJCT - Business Advisory and Investment Attraction

**Business Advisory Services** helps businesses located in Southern Ontario grow.

- Senior Business Advisors work with established firms to better understand business needs and growth opportunities to build the capacity of goods producing small and medium-sized businesses to scale and grow by providing tailored options, advice, analysis and practical recommendations for the unique business challenges
- Businesses can get practical advice on accessing capital and government funding, networking and referrals, expanding markets, navigating government regulations and compliance and making connections to other provincial ministries and other levels of government

**Invest Ontario** is the partner for businesses seeking strategic growth in Ontario. With a focus on the advanced manufacturing, life sciences, and technology sectors, Invest Ontario is committed to securing strategic investments that create jobs, generate returns to the province, and drive Ontario's long-term economic growth and global competitiveness.



# Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD)

## Better Jobs Ontario (BJO)

- Better Jobs Ontario (BJO) provides unemployed individuals with skills training, of up to 52 weeks in duration, to help find employment in in-demand occupations in Ontario.
- BJO currently targets low-income household individuals in need of skills training, such as those who have been laid-off, or are experiencing challenges attaching to the labour market, including social assistance recipients, newcomers, youth, gig-workers and persons with disabilities.
- The intention of the BJO program is to help eligible individuals rapidly attach to employment by the most cost-effective path.

# Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD)

## Skills Development Fund Training Stream

The Skills Development Fund Training Stream (SDF) is a project-based program focused on economic growth, addressing skills and workforce development challenges in the labour market.

SDF Round 5 launched on July 29<sup>th</sup> and applications were accepted until October 11, 2024. For more information, please visit: [Skills Development Fund Training Stream | ontario.ca](https://www.ontario.ca/sdf)

SDF projects focus on in-demand and key growth target sectors and occupations that are aligned with core government priorities such as the skilled trades, manufacturing, and technical occupations.

In Round 5, projects such as construction labour to support increasing the housing supply may be prioritized. SDF supports projects that help people with prior involvement in the criminal justice system, racialized persons and Indigenous peoples, those with disabilities, and others facing barriers to employment.

# Ministry of Mines (MINES)

The initiatives below support Indigenous participation with a focus on the mining sector. Indigenous participation in the Forestry may also benefit.

## **Aboriginal Participation Fund**

- The Aboriginal Participation Fund was developed to help support Indigenous communities and organizations participate in: regulatory processes under the Mining Act, economic development activities associated with mineral exploration and development
- There are five streams available: advanced exploration and development support, early exploration support, education and relationship-building, mineral development advisor stream, values mapping and related projects. Indigenous Procurement Program elements are incorporated into many procurement processes.

## **Critical Minerals Strategy**

- Has six areas of action for government, pillar 5 is 'Building economic development opportunities with Indigenous partners and pillar 6 is Growing labour supply and a skilled labour force'.

## **Rehabilitation Participation Fund**

- Abandoned Mines Rehabilitation Program promotes the rehabilitation of Ontario's abandoned mine sites to make these lands available for other uses. Indigenous Procurement Program elements are incorporated into procurement processes.

# MINES - Continued

## **Resource Revenue Sharing (Joint Policy Initiative with Ministry of Natural Resources)**

- Resource Revenue Sharing (RRS) Agreements allow for the sharing and distribution of a portion of Ontario's mining tax and royalty revenues, forestry stumpage revenues, and aggregate royalty revenues to participating First Nations and Métis communities. The agreements enable participating Indigenous communities to share in the economic benefits of these resources, and communities can use funds to address their priorities in the areas of economic development, education, health, community development and cultural development.

## **Ontario Geological Survey (OGS)**

- The Ontario Geological Survey (OGS) is the steward of Ontario's public geoscience data. We collect, share and use geoscience data and information. The Resident Geologist Program engages and builds relationships with Indigenous communities.

# Ministry of Transportation (MTO)

## Indigenous Transportation Initiatives Fund (ITIF)

- ITIF is an annual application-based funding program open to Indigenous communities and organizations to help them advance transportation projects that address their local needs.
- Some objectives of the program include:
  - Economic and regional development for Indigenous communities and organizations
  - Greater capacity among Indigenous communities and organizations to pursue transportation-related activities
  - Enhanced quality of life for Indigenous peoples in Ontario
- The maximum amount of funding that can be requested for a project is \$75,000 and the project must be implemented by the end of the fiscal year.
- Some examples of project proposals received since the launch of the program in 2021 include the operation of public transit services, road and trail upgrades, driver's licence support, technical training initiatives, the installation of safety measures (such as signage and lighting), and transportation feasibility studies.

# Contact Information

Staff from Ontario ministries are available at the Ontario Support Information Booth to answer questions and discuss your potential projects. The booth is located at exhibitor table 9.

## Information on:

Ontario's Forest Biomass Actions Plan

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/forest-biomass-action-plan>

Ontario's Forest Biomass Program

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/forest-biomass-program> or

Email: [forestbiomass@ontario.ca](mailto:forestbiomass@ontario.ca)

Ontario Funding Programs

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/available-funding-opportunities-ontario-government>

Northern Ontario Heritage Fund

<https://nohfc.ca/>