

Q & As

1. How do I apply to the SITES program?

Working with Indigenous Advisory Committee, a list of “core attractor” tourism projects will be developed from across the country. A targeted call for Expressions of Interest will be issued to potentially 15-20 tourism projects that could benefit from support under the SITES program.

2. Who is eligible to participate in the SITES program?

- Be a Canadian tourism business majority (greater than 50 percent) owned, operated and/or controlled by First Nations, Metis or Inuit peoples that can demonstrate a connection and responsibility to the local Indigenous community and traditional territory where the operation resides. This includes:**
- Wholly owned Businesses (100% owned by an Indigenous entrepreneur including sole proprietors, community or economic development corporation)**
- Joint Ventures/partnerships (joint venture or partnership between a company with 51% ownership by an Indigenous Entrepreneur, Community or Economic Development Corporation); and**
- Entrepreneur-owned business (business owned by [a] person[s] from an Indigenous community – (First Nations, Metis or Inuit).**
- Demonstrate the need for financial assistance to undertake their proposed project.**

3. Who would be considered as ineligible under this program?

- Majority (greater than 50 percent) Canadian Indigenous-owned businesses not directly involved in the tourism industry.**
- Minority (50 percent or less) Canadian Indigenous-owned tourism businesses.**
- Non-tourism businesses, regardless of their level of Indigenous ownership.**

4. What are the priorities of the SITES program?

SITES will fund projects that support the scaling-up of export-ready, market sustainable, and community-supported offerings that can draw high-value tourists. It will invest in a relatively small number of larger-scale Indigenous tourism projects across Canada.

5. What are the levels of funding per project?

Generally, the minimum payable to any recipient under the SITES program, across all eligible cost categories, is \$500,000. The maximum payable to any recipient under the SITES program, across all eligible cost categories, is \$1,250,000.

6. Can the funds be directed for training?

Yes, as long as a capital component is included with this type of cost.

7. How will the projects submitted to SITES be evaluated?

To be considered eligible, projects MUST include a capital component supporting the expansion or modernization of a “core attractor” or essential infrastructure of a tourism cluster. Only one application will be approved per business. The amount of funding will be determined based on review and consideration of the applicant proposal and considering the relevance of the proposal to the program’s objectives and expected results, expected economic benefits accruing to Indigenous individuals, businesses or communities and the demonstrated need for federal funding.

8. What is required to apply for the SITES program?

Applicants will be required to submit a proposal/business plan with sufficient information to determine that they are eligible under the program as well as any information required to assess the project against the program assessment criteria.

Required information may include, as appropriate:

- Full name, address, phone number, and description of the applicant.
- Detailed description of the proposed project and description of activities to be undertaken.
- Timelines for the project.
- Description of the management and organization capacity of the applicant.
- Documentation related to the applicant's legal structure, ownership and control.
- Relevant documentation related to any partnership arrangements and commitments
- Information on the applicant's or business' financial situation. (latest financial statements)
- Cost forecast of the project and details of financing, including all sources of funding for the project.
- Financial projections for the project.
- Documents supporting the need for the contribution.
- Documentation indicating approval of the proposed project by the Indigenous community or by the board of the directors of the business or organization.
- Anticipated economic benefits of the project, including expected outcomes and proposed performance measures.
- Environmental effects and proposed mitigation measures.

9. What is the timeline for the SITES program?

Eligible activities cannot begin before April 1, 2024, and must be completed by March 31, 2025.

10. Can the cost already incurred be eligible for the SITES program?

No, typically cost incurred before the application approval date are deemed ineligible.

11. What are the eligible costs for this program?

Eligible costs are those that are incurred by an eligible recipient and which are reasonable, incremental and required to carry out the eligible activities to which they relate. Eligible costs include, but are not limited to:

- **Studies for feasibility and business planning (including environmental assessments)**
- **Costs related to supporting infrastructure**
- **Costs relating the expansion or modernization of eligible “core attractor” tourism ventures (excluding land acquisition)**
- **Market development including marketing, advertising and promotion**
- **Business support and advisory services**

12. What are the ineligible costs?

The refinancing of an existing debt, the purchase of any assets for more than the fair market value of the said asset, costs of amortization, land acquisition and goodwill are not eligible. Administrative costs are not eligible.

13) How will the projects granted funding be selected?

Applications will be assessed on a continuous first come first served basis according to the date a complete application is received and is determined to meet all eligibility requirements. Funding will be granted and commensurate equally and uniformly to all regions in Canada when possible. Priority will be given to Indigenous tourism projects that:

- **Have the potential to anchor a “tourism asset cluster” with a focus on “core attractors” in Indigenous communities.**
- **Support efforts to attract more high-value over-night visitors.**
- **Lever greater financing from sources other than SITES, preferably non-federal government sources.**
- **Will help differentiate Canada as a tourism destination of choice in the context of growing demand for cultural tourism.**

14. What type of business / organization will be funded?

Examples of the type of tourism businesses include:

- **Artist, Crafter**
- **Campground, RV, Cabins**
- **Casino, Gaming**
- **Golf and/or Spa**
- **Indigenous Culinary (restaurant, café, catering services)**
- **Live cultural performances**
- **Lodging / Accommodations (hotels, motels, resorts)**
- **Museum or Cultural Centre (artifact displays and exhibitions)**
- **Outdoor Adventures (other than wildlife viewing - ex: hiking, fishing, canoeing, etc.)**
- **Retail (gift shop, gallery)**
- **Events (festivals, gatherings etc.)**
- **Wildlife Viewing Workshops and Training in Cultural Knowledge**
- **Workshops and Training in Cultural Knowledge**

15. How is the SITES program being funded?

Support for the SITES program has been made available through the Federal Department of Innovation, Science and Economic Development under its Indigenous Tourism Fund announced in Federal Budget 2022.