

**Department of Education and Economic Development
Economic Development Division**

**Ministerial Statement, Tom Evans
September 2025**

As a reminder, our annual plan for the Division focuses on business development, community development, policy, data collection and offering supports.

Business Development

As of mid-September, our Inuit Business Registry has 267 certified businesses. Three new businesses we added since mid-May in the industrial, commercial and medical service sectors.

Regarding procurement, four (4) packages were received from Vale with our Division nominating twelve (12) Inuit businesses and zero (0) QBE nominations.

There are a total of 23 business clients: 19 in startup, 4 in growth.

The Business Development Committee (or BDC) has identified business concerns and policy issues related to Voisey's Bay IBA implementation. We are collaborating with the Innu Nation to address this issues with leadership and Vale.

The Mealy Mountain Entrepreneurship Support Program has surveyed the Inuit Business Registry in August to confirm training needs. We are researching possible training program options and suppliers for program delivery in late Fall/early winter.

Community Development

We have two funding programs: the Community Economic Development Fund (CEDP) and FFA. These encourage community improvement initiatives, sustainable employment and local economic development projects.

The new Community Capacity Program, to improve the sustainability of the ICG Community Development Officer positions, has been reviewed by Legal/Finance. We are completing required updates and will submit for final review on September 24. It will be presented to NEC once approved.

The federal Northern Isolated Communities Fund (NICI) supports food related initiatives that strengthen economic activity. We are working with DHSD and Nunatsiavut Affairs to apply to the \$1.73 million funding program. The proposed application will focus on community freezer upgrades and replacements, the purchase of cod to supply the community freezers and upgrades to greenhouse infrastructure.

Policy & Data Collection

The community economic profile project, in partnership with the MUN Harris Centre, was updated in early September. We will release the profiles through a social media and website campaign in October.

Research for possible contractors for the development and operation of the labor database has begun.

Regarding Arctic Security, Sovereignty and Defense, we have met with NGC and the Inuit Development Corporation Association (which represents Inuit development corporations across Inuit Nunangat) on June 24 to enhance cooperation and support between NG and our crown corporation lobbying and advocacy efforts.

Under NG's Recruitment and Retention initiative, Economic Development is completing a Labour Market Assessment. The draft Statement of Work has been provided to all departments. The RFP is expected to be released before end of October.

Within the NG Climate Change Strategy, the Economic Development Divisional Implementation Plan has been finalized on September 4. To date, 90% of short-term activities are in-progress.

Self-Employment Benefits Program

This program provides EI-type benefits for 6-months to new business startups. We currently have one client, in the construction sector, accessing benefits. The program is open for applications.

Business Industry Sessions

Virtual information sessions provided since June include:

1. On July 3, NL Hydro and Quebec Hydro provided a virtual session on 'Subcontracting opportunities during technical and environmental studies' on the Gull Island and Churchill Falls expansion projects. Twenty-seven (27) Inuit businesses attended.
2. On August 6, Vale Base Metals provided an in-person and virtual session on Procurement in Goose Bay. Twenty-five (25) Inuit businesses attended.

Additional virtual sessions are planned for 2025-26. The topics and presenters will be confirmed and promoted on an ongoing basis.

Business Financial Support

Economic Development has provided \$25,000, similar to last year, for the SmartICE Northern Production Centre in Nain. This invests in local production, youth employment and community ice services.

The new Business Grant Program has been reviewed by Finance and Legal. Program revisions have been completed and resubmitted for review as of September 3. Once complete, this program requires consultation with the Government of NL under LILCA provision 7.8.7. Once provincial feedback received and incorporated, the program will be sent to NEC for approval.