



Western Economic  
Diversification Canada

Diversification de l'économie  
de l'Ouest Canada

# Fact Sheet

## WESTERN ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS CREATING OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH COOPERATION

Western Economic Partnership Agreements (WEPAs) are joint federal/provincial initiatives aimed at fostering increased economic activity and improving the quality of life in communities across Western Canada. The five-year agreements, which run until 2008, are cost-shared on a 50-50 basis and will invest a total of \$200 million in the western Canadian economy.

Western Economic Diversification Canada is providing \$25 million in funding to each western province. With matching provincial contributions, each WEPA will invest up to \$50 million to create new employment opportunities, support economic infrastructure and promote entrepreneurship.

### What's ahead for new WEPA projects?

In **BRITISH COLUMBIA**, WEPA funding has now been fully allocated. The 73 projects, which will be completed by 2009, fall under one of four theme areas:

**Entrepreneurship:** Includes investments to increase small and medium-sized business productivity, increase export readiness, assist in business growth and viability, and strengthen the national and international competitiveness of British Columbia business.

**Innovation:** Includes investments to increase access to knowledge-based resources, including the Internet, to increase development and commercialization of new technology, and to increase the participation of youth in the economy.

**Tourism:** Includes investments to further develop eco and cultural tourism, market development, planning and strategies, design and engineering, critical infrastructure, and 2010 related projects.

**Sustainable Communities:** Includes investments that increase business opportunities and economic infrastructure for further development of leading industries, e-commerce, development of rural clusters, planning and strategy, and investments that help communities implement sustainable development strategies. This will also include investments that bring about increased Aboriginal involvement in forestry, oil and gas, and culture and tourism sectors, increased education and skill development of Aboriginal youth, and increased Aboriginal participation in the British Columbia workforce.

In **ALBERTA**, WEPA funding has now been fully allocated. The 24 projects, which will be completed by 2009, fall under one of two theme areas:

**Innovation and value-added industries:** Includes investments that strengthen Alberta's innovation and value-added industries by supporting initiatives that contribute to increased capacity, awareness and use of new technologies, as well as the development of industry-specific research infrastructure and technology commercialization.

**Regional Economic Development and Sustainable Communities:** Includes investments that improve the viability, prosperity and quality of life in Alberta communities by supporting initiatives that contribute to a sustainable approach to regional development that incorporates economic, environmental and social considerations.

In **SASKATCHEWAN**, projects will fall under one of five theme areas:

**Business Development and Competitiveness:** Includes investments to increase small and medium-sized business productivity, increase export readiness, assist in business growth and viability, and strengthen the national and international competitiveness of Saskatchewan business.

**Knowledge-Based Economy:** Includes investments to increase access to knowledge-based resources, including the Internet, increase development and commercialization of new technology, and increase the participation of youth in the economy.

**Aboriginal Participation in the Economy:** Includes investments that bring about increased Aboriginal involvement in forestry, oil and gas, and culture and tourism sectors, increased education and skill development of Aboriginal youth, and increased Aboriginal participation in the Saskatchewan workforce.

**Diversification and Value-Added:** Includes investments to further develop value-added processing activities and increase the economic infrastructure to develop primary resource industries, tourism and the environment. Economic infrastructure is investments in basic and applied research, and other pre-commercial stages of the innovation process.

**Competitive and Sustainable Communities:** Includes investments that increase business opportunities and economic infrastructure for further development of leading industries, tourism, and the environment in Saskatchewan communities, and investments that help communities implement sustainable development strategies.

In **MANITOBA**, projects will focus on two strategic priorities:

### **Building Our Economy**

- Develop key sites of research-led development that generate related spin-off benefits for local companies – for example, Manitoba's health research centres and biotechnology centers.
- Build knowledge-based industries through strategies that retain and attract highly qualified researchers and scientists to Manitoba.

- Accelerate the adoption and development of new processes and techniques to improve productivity and international competitiveness in both the manufacturing and service industries.
- Build Manitoba's emerging economic clusters in advanced manufacturing, aerospace, life science/biotechnology industries, cultural and new media industries, information and communications technologies, and environmental industries including alternative energy.
- Develop trade, investment and tourism, including heritage, cultural and eco-tourism opportunities in Manitoba.
- Train and retrain workers, no matter where they live in Manitoba or at what stage in their careers, for jobs specifically relevant to Manitoba's 21st century economy.
- Retain youth in Manitoba.
- Provide education and training opportunities, particularly for Aboriginal people, leading to employment in the northern part of the Province.

### **Sustainable Communities**

- Contribute to tourism and growth strategies by enhancing heritage and cultural interpretive sites/events and/or investing in cultural and visual and performing arts.
- Encourage regional approaches to economic development through partnerships with communities.
- Work with Manitoba's communities to expand and promote the use of the Internet for commerce and education.
- Assist in the development of northern Manitoba's human and natural resources to ensure northern Manitobans can take full advantage of the opportunities in the region.
- Assist in investments in infrastructure and diversification to sustain rural communities.
- Assist in revitalization of urban communities by supporting community economic development initiatives that undertake downtown and inner city renewal, build community capacity, enhance knowledge and skills, and foster sustainable economic development.

For more Information, contact WD toll-free at 1 888 338-9378, or visit our website at [www.wd-deo.gc.ca](http://www.wd-deo.gc.ca)