

# ACR Aboriginal Programs Project Program Template

<b>Program Area:</b>	3.0	Business Development
<b>Sub Program:</b>	3.2	Strengthening Business Capabilities
<b>Template:</b>	3.2.11	Support for Community Economic Development: Economic Development Officers
<b>Sponsor(s):</b>	<i>Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries Inc.</i>	

## 1. Objective

To provide Aboriginal communities with the expertise and experience needed to identify business opportunities in their own communities resulting from resource and industrial development.

## 2. Description

Business development capacity is a problem in most Aboriginal communities. There are numerous reports and studies from various companies coming into the band office. In order to assist these communities, Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries Inc. (Al-Pac) recruited economic development officers (EDOs) to work in three different communities. The EDOs report to the chief and council.

The EDOs are persons who are familiar with the oil & gas, forestry and other resource industries. These individuals have had previous experience in assisting communities and individuals in understanding economic opportunities and assisting them to put together the appropriate plan to take advantage of the opportunity.

The EDOs are paid by Al-Pac and carry out specific duties on its behalf. In addition, the EDOs work directly with the chief and council on economic development issues that are not related to the sponsoring company. The EDOs report only information to the sponsoring company that is relevant to it.

The EDO will work with the community to identify an opportunity, develop a plan to address the opportunity, meet with the industry involved, provide advice to the community on decisions required, liaise with the appropriate government agencies as required, and assist with the applications for various licenses, permits, grants and authorizations.

## 3. Implementation

Some of the key elements for implementation and management of this program are:

- Ensure that the community, chief and council are learning through the whole process. Capacity building and the transfer of skills are key features of the program.
- While the sponsoring company pays the salaries, the selection of EDOs is done jointly between the company and First Nation. It is essential that the EDO has the confidence of the chief and council from the start, and that qualified people are selected who are strong advocates of the program's objectives.

- The community must come to see the EDO as a valuable team member on economic development issues.
- There may be benefit in having more than one funding sponsor - either other companies or governments. There are advantages to broader sponsorship in sharing the costs, better access to resources and the capacity to draw on a broader network for support.
- The sponsoring company will have to show patience as gains are likely to be incremental in nature. However, there should be progress and a growing sense confidence by the Aboriginal community in approaching business ventures.

#### **4. Timeframe for Results**

The program and results are reviewed annually between the sponsoring company and the First Nation.

#### **5. Measurable Criteria**

- New business ventures
- Increased employment
- Training and skills transfer
- Strengthened community capacity and readiness to support economic development
- Financial return to the community

#### **6. Budget**

\$110,000 per year for each EDO position established.

#### **7. Partners and Sponsors**

Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries Inc., Bigstone Cree, Heart Lake First Nation

#### **8. Experience with the Program**

This program commenced in April 2002 and has two full-time and one "as needed" EDO positions. It is credited with the development of locally-owned and operated companies involved in providing services to the oil & gas, forestry and other resource industries in north-eastern Alberta.

#### **9. General Applicability**

This program is a model that can be used by any industry in working with Aboriginal communities.

#### **10. Additional Information or Support**

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