



FIRST NATIONS OF QUEBEC  
AND LABRADOR ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION



FEMMES AUTOCHTONES DU QUÉBEC  
QUEBEC NATIVE WOMEN



## Call for Interest – Women’s Collective Entrepreneurship Project (*StartUP Nations Ikwe*)

### 1. Introduction

The **Women’s Collective Entrepreneurship** project is led by Quebec Native Women (QNW) and the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Economic Development Commission (FNQLEDC). It is made possible thanks to the financial support of the Native Women’s Association of Canada (NWCAC), the Chantier de l’Économie Sociale, the Secrétariat à la Jeunesse and the Secrétariat à la Condition Féminine. The main objective of the **Women’s Collective Entrepreneurship** project is to support six groups of women in the development of a collective project, which may ultimately lead to the creation of a social economy enterprise in the form of a cooperative or NPO. It will allow for the establishment of an innovative entrepreneurial “StartUP” process that is adapted to the pre-startup stage of collective projects. The term “Ikwe”, which means “woman” in the Anishinaabe language, reflects the specific nature of this process that is designed for First Nations women.

### 2. Context

Quebec Native Women (QNW) and the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Economic Development Commission (FNQLEDC), in collaboration with the First Nations Social Economy Regional Table (FNSERT), are reaching out to First Nations organizations, which are located in urban areas or in communities, to find out if they would like to participate in the **Women’s Collective Entrepreneurship** process.

By promoting women’s entrepreneurship, organizations that are dedicated to First Nations development allow all First Nations members and communities to improve their living conditions. Indeed, according to a survey commissioned in 2015 by the FNQLEDC, a primary concern of First Nations women entrepreneurs is to achieve their personal goals while generating positive spinoffs for their communities (Entrepreneurial potential of Aboriginal women, 2015, FNQLEDC). The social economy is therefore a preferred means of development for women because it aims to combine the social purpose with the economic viability of the projects through an approach that focuses on democracy, cooperation (partnership), autonomy and empowerment of local authorities.

First Nations culture is defined by connection to the territory, knowledge and know-how which bear witness to its history of being passed down from generation to generation. Through its social values, similar to the vision of First Nations communities, the social economy becomes a model of development that is adapted to the cultural and social realities of First Nations. The social economy allows this while putting forward human values, the common good and the preservation of the territory.

### 3. Project description

The purpose of this call for interest is to reach out to organizations and communities that are interested in recruiting a cohort of three to five (maximum) First Nations women who have both an entrepreneurial spirit and a desire to develop their environment in order to support them in a training program focused on collective and social entrepreneurship.

Here are the objectives targeted by the **Women’s Collective Entrepreneurship** initiative:

- Support the development of socioeconomic projects and social economy enterprises that are initiated by First Nations women in urban areas or in communities, based on their values, aspirations and cultural wealth;
- Develop the entrepreneurial skills of women;
- Highlight the involvement of women in their respective communities;
- Develop the network of partners of the First Nations women entrepreneurship support ecosystem;
- Develop support tools for the pre-startup stage of collective projects initiated by First Nations women.

The project provides for the deployment of training, workshops and activities structured in three (3) phases: mobilization, ideation and prototyping of a collective project. In order to take into account the context of COVID-19, the activities of the process will primarily be taking place online.

The project aims to provide tools to those who work with women in urban areas or communities who wish to support the leadership and engagement of women so that they can contribute to the social, cultural and economic development of First Nations and improve the living conditions in their environment. Workers from the selected organizations will act as mobilization agents. They will receive adapted training as well as all the support necessary to organize the activities of the process and support each group of women.

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Initially, the mobilization agents of each organization will be accompanied by QNW and the FNQLEDC during the summer in order to recruit and mobilize participants wishing to undertake a collective project. Once the groups have been formed, the process will be officially launched in September 2020 with the holding of a project ideation workshop, which will be facilitated by FNQLEDC Advisors. If public health authorities are prohibiting gatherings of 10 people or less due to COVID-19, the workshops will be offered online.

Thereafter, training will be offered online over the course of the fall by the FNQLEDC. Several modules will be offered through a combination of webinars and participatory workshops with a view to developing key entrepreneurial skills (writing business plans, financing, project management, branding, etc.).

At the end of the process, a final gathering event where the various projects are presented will be organized, online or in person, according to the gathering possibilities allowed by the authorities.

Two cohorts of three collective projects are planned for fall 2020 and winter 2021.

The main activities and timelines for the first cohort of the *Women's Collective Entrepreneurship* project are as follows:

Activities	Timelines
Call for interest for mobilization and support agents	From July 21 to August 21, 2020
Recruitment of participants	From August 24 to September 11, 2020
Training intended for mobilization agents	Week of August 24, 2020
Initial ideation workshop	From September 14 to 25, 2020
Hosting webinars and workshops online and in groups locally	From September 28 to November 27, 2020
Final team gathering activity (in person or through videoconference)	Week of November 30, 2020
Assessment and evaluation of the experience	December 2020

The timelines will be further specified by the mobilization agents. The timeline for the winter 2021 cohort will follow the same steps as outlined above. Participants will be recruited in December 2020 and January 2021, and the initial ideation workshop is scheduled for the week of January 25, 2021.

#### 4. Eligibility criteria for organizations in urban areas or communities

Organizations or communities will be selected based on the following criteria:

- The engagement of women in First Nations socio-cultural and economic development is a priority for the organization or community;
- The willingness of stakeholders to acquire knowledge and tools to support women in their collective and social entrepreneurship process;
- The availability of adequate premises that could be used to carry out weekly meetings with the collective entrepreneurs;
- The availability of resources or stakeholders who will participate in the project;
- Experience in socio-cultural facilitation, community organization, entrepreneurship or intervention among First Nations women are considered assets.

Other factors demonstrating the willingness of stakeholders to participate in the *Women's Collective Entrepreneurship* project may be considered to determine the eligibility of organizations. Please refer to the evaluation grid (appendix 1).

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## 5. Procedure to follow

Interested mobilization agents, organizations and communities must answer the following questions:

- Can we provide the time, premises and human resources necessary for the successful completion of this project?
- Are we able to identify and recruit a group of participants who are keen to undertake a collective project?
- Do we agree to engage in the process from start to finish? Do we agree to share our experiences and assessment with a view to consolidating the project and allowing other organizations to benefit from them?
- Are we prepared to include this type of service as part of the daily activities of the workers?

If you answer “yes” to all of these questions and are interested in this project, please send us, **before August 21, 2020**:

- a) **A letter of intent confirming your interest and explaining why your organization or community is a good candidate for the project.** We encourage you to refer to the eligibility criteria and facilitating factors outlined in Appendix 1 – Evaluation grid.
- b) **The completed evaluation grid (appendix 1).** The level of knowledge of the workers, organizations or communities is only for information purposes. It will allow the coordination team to better prepare the training and support intended for the human resources or workers involved in the project.

Once the call for interest and the applications process is completed, all applications received will be examined by a selection committee according to the criteria mentioned above.

## 6. Role of the FNQLEDC and QNW

Their role consists of working in close collaboration with the mobilization agent of the organization or the community in order to organize the activities of the *Women's Collective Entrepreneurship* process, which may include the following activities:

- Developing and adapting women's collective entrepreneurship tools;
- Providing the guide to workshops and activities in collective and social entrepreneurship (social economy) intended for the mobilization agents;
- Offering preparatory training intended for mobilization agents;
- Offering support and advice to the mobilization agents throughout the training and facilitation period;
- Coordinating the ideation workshops, training and the final event;
- Reimbursing, according to the policy in force, travel and material expenses related to the holding of activities.

## 7. Role of the organization or community

The interested organization or community must accept the following responsibilities and commit to:

- Designate a worker (mobilization agent) who will be in charge of coordinating the collective entrepreneurship process;
- Recruit, with the help of QNW and the FNSERT, a group of three to five women who are keen to undertake a collective project;
- Make sure the designed worker has the necessary time to participate in the adaptation of support tools and activities;
- Use the adapted materials and tools that will be provided;
- Participate in the preparatory training planned for August 2020, the training course in the fall of 2020, the final event of the process and a meeting to take stock of the lessons learned (in December 2020).

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## 8. **Deadline to confirm your participation**

The requested documents must be sent by email, **no later than August 21, 2020**, to the attention of Nathalie Bussière ([emplois@faq-qnw.org](mailto:emplois@faq-qnw.org)) or Marie Hanquez ([mhanquez@cdepnql.org](mailto:mhanquez@cdepnql.org))

If you have any questions regarding the project, please contact:

**Nathalie Bussière**, Employment and Training Coordinator, QNW | 450-632-0088, ext. 224 | [emplois@faq-qnw.org](mailto:emplois@faq-qnw.org)

**Emmanuel Bertrand-Gauvin**, Women Entrepreneurship Advisor, FNQLEDC | 418-843-1488, ext. 1227 | [ebertrand-gauvin@cdepnql.org](mailto:ebertrand-gauvin@cdepnql.org)

**Marie Hanquez**, Social Economy Advisor, FNQLEDC | 418-843-1488, ext. 1230 | [mhanquez@cdepnql.org](mailto:mhanquez@cdepnql.org)

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