Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub | Portail de connaissances pour les femmes en entrepreneuriat

Transcript – WES Ecosystem Fund Information Session

01-19-2022

00:00:10.440 --> 00:00:15.330

Sabine Soumare: So we'll get started in just a couple of minutes to give participants time to join the webinar.

00:00:59.130 --> 00:01:01.710

Sabine Soumare: Just one more minute and then we'll get started.

00:01:03.480 --> 00:01:04.380

Sabine Soumare: Thank you for joining.

00:02:11.310 --> 00:02:21.750

Sabine Soumare: Okay, good afternoon everyone, thank you for joining us today for our information session for applications for the second round of the women entrepreneurship strategy, also known as WES, Ecosystem Fund. My name is Sabine Soumare and I am the Executive Director of the Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub at the Diversity Institute of Ryerson University.

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Sabine Soumare: Before we begin, I would like to first and foremost acknowledge that the work we do takes place on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit, The Anishnaabe, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples, which is now home to many diverse First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples. Our partners across Canada similarly gather on the traditional territory of many Indigenous nations who have cared for this land since time immemorial.

00:03:06.930 --> 00:03:27.270

Sabine Soumare: Let us take a moment to recognize the many traditional lands on which we are connecting and acknowledge with gratitude and respect the many First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples whose footsteps were first to mark these lands.

00:03:30.630 --> 00:03:41.250

Sabine Soumare: Please note that live French translation is available for this session. You can access it by clicking the Interpretation button on the bottom of your screen and selecting French.

00:03:42.300 --> 00:03:54.210

Sabine Soumare: Please note that closed captions are available for today's session in English only. The French transcript of the Info session will be made available online within a few days of the session.

00:03:55.500 --> 00:04:03.630

Sabine Soumare: We look forward to answering any questions you may have about the application process for the second round of the WES Ecosystem Fund.

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Sabine Soumare: As we go through the information session, please place your questions in the question and answer box.,We will do our best to answer as many questions as we can today.

00:04:14.820 --> 00:04:33.870

Sabine Soumare: But if we don't get to all of them, we will be sure to follow up on any unanswered questions, either directly or by updating the Frequently Answered Questions Pageon the Ecosystem Fund website. You can also ask your questions in French. I will take care to share them during the session so that we can answer them.

00:04:38.070 --> 00:04:55.350

Sabine Soumare: As you know, we are here today because The Honourable Mary Ng, Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, announced a second round of applications for the WES Ecosystem Fund. This fund is a key element of Budget 2021's commitment to accelerate the Women Entrepreneurship Strategy by building capacity in the ecosystem, to support women entrepreneurs to start or grow their businesses.

00:05:08.790 --> 00:05:20.340

Sabine Soumare: Please note that this information session is intended for not-for-profit organizations supporting women entrepreneurs, seeking funding from the WES Ecosystem Fund for the first time.

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Sabine Soumare: I'm joined today by Etienne-Rene Massie, Director General of ISED, to give an overview of the parameters for the second round of applications, and will answer any questions you may have in English or French.

00:05:39.540 --> 00:05:40.710

Sabine Soumare: Welcome, Etienne-Rene!

00:05:43.980 --> 00:05:52.800

Etienne-Rene Massie: Hello and thank you Sabine. Good afternoon to everyone, or good morning, depending on where you are across Canada, and thank you for the kind introduction.

00:05:53.760 --> 00:06:04.140

Etienne-Rene Massie: As I begin I am speaking to you from the traditional and unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabe People. I'm grateful to have the opportunity to present in this territory.

00:06:05.460 --> 00:06:21.420

Etienne-Rene Massie: And I would also like to express my appreciation, as we get underway to the Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub for hosting the event today. The Knowledge Hub continues to be a very good and important partner in our efforts to support the women entrepreneurship ecosystem in Canada.

00:06:22.740 --> 00:06:30.270

Etienne-Rene Massie: And they do great work, however, I would note that the Knowledge Hub is not involved in the design and the delivery of the Women Entrepreneurship Strategy Ecosystem Fund, that is, with us at Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED), so the Knowledge Hub is being a gracious host and if you have questions with regards to the initiative we will be happy to answer that.

00:06:46.740 --> 00:06:57.900

Etienne-Rene Massie: I am the Director General of the Small Business branch at ISED. One of my teams is responsible for overseeing a number of the initiatives under the federal government's Women Entrepreneurship Strategy.

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Etienne-Rene Massie: Today I'd like to provide an overview and elaborate on the eligibility for the ecosystem fund that was recently announced by Minister Ng.

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Etienne-Rene Massie: Launched in 2018, the Government of Canada's Women Entrepreneurship Strategy aims to increase women-owned businesses access to financing, to talent, to networks, and to expertise that they need to start up, scale up, and access new markets. The strategy encompasses a number of initiatives, including the Ecosystem Fund.

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Etienne-Rene Massie: The ecosystem fund was designed to provide non-repayable contribution funding to not-for-profit organizations to deliver projects that will help close service gaps and strengthen the capacity within the women entrepreneurship ecosystem.

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Etienne-Rene Massie: The first ecosystem fund supported 52 projects across Canada.

00:07:49.890 --> 00:08:01.260

Etienne-Rene Massie: We funded those projects in 2018 and the details on those projects are available on the Women Entrepreneurship Strategy website and links to that site are being posted in French and English in the chat function.

00:08:02.970 --> 00:08:11.250

Etienne-Rene Massie: Budget 2021 which was announced last spring announced additional funding for various initiatives under the Women Entrepreneurship Strategy.

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Etienne-Rene Massie: And of this funding, $25 million has been allocated to support a new call for proposals for the Ecosystem Fund.

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Etienne-Rene Massie: In a nutshell, this second call will support, not-for-profit organizations not previously funded under the call. It is designed to strengthen capacity and address ecosystem gaps for diverse and or underserved populations of women entrepreneurs.

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Etienne-Rene Massie: Selected projects will be national or multi-regional in scope, and a multi- regional project is one that serves five or more provinces or territories.

00:08:49.620 --> 00:09:04.560

Etienne-Rene Massie: Projects must serve clients and be delivered in both official languages and I'd like to take some time today to discuss who can apply, what types of projects that will be supported under the fund, and what will be required in an application.

00:09:05.790 --> 00:09:21.120

Etienne-Rene Massie: Links to the program guide are going to be posted in the chat function, and I will be referring to them throughout the presentation and I would encourage you to read through the guide and validate your application against the guide, as you develop it as you go on.

00:09:23.820 --> 00:09:35.340

Etienne-Rene Massie: So first I'd like to discuss eligibility, which is outlined in section B of this guide. This call here that we are talking about today is open for Canadian-based not for profit organizations which operate at a local, regional or national level and fall into one of the following categories.

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Etienne-Rene Massie: They are business or entrepreneur support organizations, they're research or innovation hubs, they're organizations that certify diversity suppliers in Canada, Indigenous organizations or business accelerators and incubators.

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Etienne-Rene Massie: And organizations that apply must have been in operation for a minimum of one year, as of the deadline for submission, which is March 15 2021.

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Etienne-Rene Massie: The submission deadline is March 15, 2022 so you have to be operating as of March 15 2021.

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Etienne-Rene Massie: And you have to be able to demonstrate at least one of the following criteria: that you have an established mandate focused on supporting women and/ or women entrepreneurs, and you have existing programming that has been offered in the past year, focused on women entrepreneurs and building skills for women entrepreneurs.

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Etienne-Rene Massie: Please note that the recipients currently funded under the WES Ecosystem call for proposals are not eligible to submit applications for this call.

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Etienne-Rene Massie: We recognize and commend the great work that these organizations have been doing and we invite their participation on the future call for proposals under the ecosystem.This is one of two calls into the ecosystem, this first one today, and there will be another call later on.But 2018 organizations can apply as partners in applications that other organizations submit. The next question I'm sure people are asking is when that second call for proposals is coming.

00:11:28.140 --> 00:11:41.610

Etienne-Rene Massie: Just stay tuned, keep a watch on our website and we will be communicating further information on that call and just like this one, here, we will work with the Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub to make sure that communication goes out widely in the ecosystem.

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Etienne-Rene Massie: For this call for proposals partnerships between organizations are encouraged, particularly because we're seeking projects that are national or cover several provinces or territories.

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Etienne-Rene Massie: A partnership is formed when organizations operating in a similar sphere come together to deliver an initiative, this could include Community organizations connecting with others that serve similar purposes or clientele across Canada.

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Etienne-Rene Massie: Our definition of a partner organization is provided in the glossary of the application guide, but for a partner organization it is fundamental that in the delivery of the proposed project that it is invested in the completion and success of the project through the provision of either financial or non financial contributions.

00:12:29.340 --> 00:12:44.700

Etienne-Rene Massie: In this case, when developing the proposal content that you will be submitting, both the lead applicant and the partner's experience and expertise may be used to demonstrate the skill set and capacity to meet the required assessment criteria and ensure a successful project delivery.

00:12:45.810 --> 00:12:51.420

Etienne-Rene Massie: So, for example, if one Organization has two years of experience in working with underserved women entrepreneurs and they form a partnership with another organization for years in the same field, then the partners can demonstrate in their application that they've collective experience of six years working with the underserved and which will bolster their application.

00:13:05.580 --> 00:13:13.770

Etienne-Rene Massie: Similarly, in that, if an applicant organization lacks certain capabilities, for example, delivering in both official languages, they can partner with other organizations that have these abilities to ensure that the program requirements are met. But it is imperative in the application that that be clearly articulated and the supporting information you provide in the proposal you submit.

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Etienne-Rene Massie: Partnership applications must include an agreement between the parties and the letter of support from each of the partners that describes their contribution, their roles and responsibilities and, if applicable, any financial or in kind contributions to the project.

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Etienne-Rene Massie: For further information on eligibility criteria I encourage you to consult section B of the Ecosystem Fund guide.

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Etienne-Rene Massie: If you're looking to connect with other organizations to discuss possible partnerships, the Knowledge Hub's Sharing Platform is available to connect those who have an ask with those who have support to give, and that could be a good tool to make those connections. It's a free online platform available at sharing.wekh.ca.

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Etienne-Rene Massie: We'll be putting the link in the chat and if you've never used the platform before you'll need to take a minute to create an account and then you'll instantly be able to post your asks or view asks from others.

00:14:28.950 --> 00:14:36.960

Etienne-Rene Massie: We recommend using the connection category to post or find other collaborators on your application. We also recommend including the wording "seeking ecosystem fund partnership" in the title of your ask just to facilitate the search function as other people will be looking through it.

00:14:48.060 --> 00:14:58.260

Etienne-Rene Massie: And if you have any questions about the sharing platform, you can contact the Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub directly and we can post the link to that email .

00:15:00.420 --> 00:15:13.380

Etienne-Rene Massie: Having discussed who can apply I'd like to discuss what types of projects we're looking for and again the details of this component of the presentation are in section B of the application guide with links being posted now in the chat.

00:15:14.670 --> 00:15:24.300

Etienne-Rene Massie: So eligible focus areas include one or more of the following, so you can work on scale up, supplier diversity, recovery planning and adaptation, supporting start-ups and other areas that will support or contribute to strengthening the network of women entrepreneurship organizations in Canada.

00:15:35.550 --> 00:15:41.190

Etienne-Rene Massie: Of note, projects must include some networking and mentorship as one of the components of the project.

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Etienne-Rene Massie: It doesn't need to be exclusively that but we ask that there is part of a project that is related to that activity. Additional information on all eligible activities is outlined in detail in Section B of the guide.

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Etienne-Rene Massie: Project budgets for this call proposal are a minimum of $400,000 and a maximum of $4 million over the course of the project.

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Etienne-Rene Massie: The operating or administrative costs for delivery organizations are capped at a maximum of 15% of the total amount requested for the project.

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Etienne-Rene Massie: Costs that are reasonable, incremental, and required to carry out the eligible activities will be reimbursed and I would encourage you to review all of the eligible and ineligible activities or coststhat are outlined in section B of the guide - that's a good reference bar as you're preparing your budget.

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Etienne-Rene Massie: And now like to turn to outline what will be required in your application. So these requirements are outlined in section B-7 of the guide and the links are provided in the chat.

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Etienne-Rene Massie: Each application will include a number of documents, so your completed application form andyour proposal paper which should be 10 pages maximum 12 point font and double space.

00:17:04.410 --> 00:17:26.580

Etienne-Rene Massie: 12 pages for applicants in French, because of the language, one year of past financial statements audited or review engagement, your incorporation documents, your completed budget detail template and the sustainability plan to cover the period after the funding ends in '24 - '25.

00:17:27.960 --> 00:17:34.650

Etienne-Rene Massie: If you are applying as a partnership, you will need to provide those signed letters of support that we've discussed from the partner organizations, which detail their roles in delivering the projects. Quebec based organizations will also need to confirm that they comply with M-30.We will work with any successful candidate to ensure proper authorizations are obtained from the government of Quebec.

00:17:50.820 --> 00:17:59.910

Etienne-Rene Massie: Through the proposal paper each applicant will be asked to elaborate on a number of areas, including how the organization meets the eligibility requirements, who are the key partners in the project and their respective roles, and an overview of the project team. By that we mean the experience in project management in working with women entrepreneurs and diverse /intersectional populations of women, the objectives of the project, the scope and the activities that will be undertaken, including who will be served and how services will be delivered.

00:18:26.730 --> 00:18:35.820

Etienne-Rene Massie: Any associated risks and the plan to mitigate those risks when you put your project in place, and you will of course be required to provide a budget for your project.

00:18:36.540 --> 00:18:45.930

Etienne-Rene Massie: And how the activities that you propose to provide will contribute to the planned outcomes of the Women Entrepreneurship Strategy Ecosystem Fund.

00:18:47.220 --> 00:18:55.440

Etienne-Rene Massie: And because this funding is for up until '24 - '25, we will ask you for a sustainability plan once the funding ends.

8:56.790 --> 00:19:12.360

Etienne-Rene Massie: Section B-5 of the guide provides instructions on how to format the project proposal and the specific details that are being sought for each element of the project proposal. We will encourage interested applicants to review this section closely in advance of preparing an application.

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Etienne-Rene Massie: And now turn to timelines and assessment. So the deadline for applications is March 15 2022 at 12pm Pacific Standard Time.

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Etienne-Rene Massie: We strongly recommend that you submit your application well before the deadline to ensure that there are no unforeseen technical issues at the time of submission as late submissions will not be considered. And I will reinforce that quite strongly, every time we do a call for proposals we do get people who email us two minutes after the proposal, indicating that there are technical issues that impeded them from sending their documents in and, unfortunately, in those cases, we cannot make accommodations. So my plea to you is to definitely apply before the last hour, preferably before the last half day of the application to ensure that, if there are technical issues, you have a plan B to submit your documents.

00:20:12.690 --> 00:20:26.370

Etienne-Rene Massie: Throughout the application period if you have questions you can send them to the WES inbox and officials on the team will answer them. We've posted the link to the web to that email address in the chat function.

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Etienne-Rene Massie: However, please note that if you send us questions again at the last minute, we can't guarantee you we will be able to answer.

00:20:33.990 --> 00:20:47.040

Etienne-Rene Massie: In the last 24 to 48 hours there's usually a flood of questions that come in and at that point we can't promise answers within that time, just given what the volume of questions we often get at that point.

00:20:48.630 --> 00:20:59.100

Etienne-Rene Massie: Now, once the call for application closes, Innovation Science and Economic Development Canada, the department will assess the application based on the criteria set out in the application.

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Etienne-Rene Massie: When you submit your application through our system, you will receive an acknowledgement that we have received your application.

00:21:07.590 --> 00:21:19.140

Etienne-Rene Massie: And then we will probably go silent, as we usually do as we do our review process, and then there will be decisions that will be indicated and everyone will be advised in writing of their project, of the outcome of their application, it may just take a bit of time, so we ask for your patience as we work through the many applications we expect to get.

00:21:30.210 --> 00:21:41.490

Etienne-Rene Massie: Successful proposals under this call for application will be awarded three years of non repayable contribution funding through a contribution agreement that you will sign with the Department of Innovation, Science and Economic Development. This means that successful applicants will receive funding and their project can go up into March 31 2025.

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Etienne-Rene Massie: So an important consideration is that successful recipients will be required to report regularly to ISED for the initiatives.

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Etienne-Rene Massie: This will include quarterly progress reports, annual reports, and a final report. The quarterly and the annual reports also can help us process your claims for those successful applicants to be able to flow money to you, to be able to deliver the services.

00:22:26.850 --> 00:22:38.160

Etienne-Rene Massie: We will also encourage recipients to work with other ecosystem providers and the Knowledge Hub, for the greater benefit of the woman entrepreneurship ecosystem in Canada.

00:22:39.750 --> 00:22:55.290

Etienne-Rene Massie: So that concludes sort of the key points of the presentation and that gives us a good half hour, a little more than a half an hour for questions, so I will turn it back to Sabine who will moderate the Q&A portion of the session.

00:22:58.050 --> 00:23:03.270

Sabine Soumare: Thank you Etienne, thank you for this presentation, we do have questions.

00:23:03.720 --> 00:23:18.930

Sabine Soumare: Quite a lot of questions, so what I will do I will perhaps start with the French questions, because we have five, and then we'll turn our attention to the English questions and my colleague Wendy Cukier here will help me with that.

00:23:20.340 --> 00:23:34.140

Sabine Soumare: So the first question is from Mariam Coulibaly and her question is, in French, whether it's possible to partner with a private company under this project?

00:23:36.720 --> 00:24:03.630

Étienne-René Massie: Okay, thank you for this question, Sabine. You see, what's important here is that the recipient under the contribution agreement with the department has to be a not-for-profit organization and it is this not-for-profit organization that receives the funding; but partnerships can include private organizations and not-for-profits.

00:24:05.250 --> 00:24:11.910

Étienne-René Massie: So Sabine, given that we have English into French and French into English interpretation, do I need to repeat what I said?

00:24:12.450 --> 00:24:14.250

Sabine Soumare: No, it's all being translated. Thanks.

00:24:16.050 --> 00:24:17.850

Sabine Soumare: Next question, Karine Prud'homme.

00:24:18.930 --> 00:24:23.280

Sabine Soumare: Is it possible to partner, or at least submit a joint application, with an educational organization?

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Étienne-René Massie: That's a good question. Once again, the organization receiving the funding has to be a not-for-profit organization of the kind I mentioned earlier for the proposal, meaning an organization whose role is to support entrepreneurship, an organization like an incubator or an accelerator, an Indigenous organization, or a diversity supplier.

00:25:00.390 --> 00:25:15.180

Étienne-René Massie: So a school board can be a partner, but if it's a Quebec organization, steps would have to be taken with respect to M-30 to comply with the Quebec government's Order in Council.

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Sabine Soumare: Okay. Next question, Francine Lapointe: can the project be limited to a single province or does it have to include all the provinces?

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Sabine Soumare: I think you've already answered that, but…

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Sabine Soumare: Perhaps briefly.

00:25:27.720 --> 00:25:38.940

Étienne-René Massie: No, it's worth going over it again. Thanks for the Question, Francine. Our goal with this call for proposals is to fund national and multi-regional projects.

00:25:39.720 --> 00:26:00.750

Étienne-René Massie: And multi-regional is defined as five provinces or territories. We therefore encourage you to partner with organizations in other parts of the country. We mentioned the Knowledge Hub's sharing platform, the Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub, which helps organizations connect and establish ties.

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Sabine Soumare: Thank you. Another question, COVID-related this time, from Nerlande Gaëtan : is there a specific amount for COVID?

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Étienne-René Massie: We're very much aware of the fact that we are still mired in a pandemic and really looking forward to its eventual end.

00:26:22 --> 00:26:34

Étienne-René Massie: I would suggest that if your programming has a public health measures component, you should mention it.

00:26:35 --> 00:26:48

Étienne-René Massie: No specific amount is specified for any required health measures, but if there are any for the project, you should tell us about them.

00:26:48 --> 00:26:53

Étienne-René Massie: And in this pandemic of ours, things could change. And new variants could appear.

00:26:53 --> 00:27:03.720

Étienne-René Massie: We hope not, but if that were to happen after project funding has been allocated, we could talk to people here in the department to work towards a solution.

00:27:04.890 --> 00:27:27.060

Sabine Soumare: And the final question in French, if you could take it, Étienne. From Katherine Lanteigne: I think, once again, that some further information was provided about this, but can a partner that has previously received ISED funding be a partner, or would it have to be one that did not receive funding in the first or second round?

00:27:28.710 --> 00:27:49

Étienne-René Massie: That's a good question, and it needs clarification. Our goal is to provide funding to new organizations that do not currently have a contribution agreement under the last call for proposals in 2018.

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Étienne-René Massie: However, if you are currently a partner in an agreement, if you have an agreement and want to partner with another organization, we strongly encourage you to do so. It's definitely okay to be in a partnership with other organizations.

00:28:08.010 --> 00:28:11.040

Sabine Soumare: Thank you, Étienne. Wendy over to you for the English questions.

00:28:11.550 --> 00:28:21.960

Wendy Cukier (she/her): Thanks, thanks so much, and thank you Etienne and Sabine and all for joining us and as mentioned, we will have a transcript. So hopefully we'll get through the questions.

00:28:22.650 --> 00:28:41.640

Wendy Cukier (she/her): I'm going to take a slightly different approach and group the questions together as best I can, as opposed to going through them one at a time, so I hope that works to make space for many of the people who have posed 80 questions.

00:28:42.780 --> 00:28:51.510

Wendy Cukier (she/her): So I think there are a number of questions specifically about eligibility and you had mentioned nonprofits there was a question about, does that nonprofit need to be incorporated first off, and then secondly, there was a question about whether the incorporation needed to be provincial or federal or if either was fine.

00:29:07.410 --> 00:29:12.630

Etienne-Rene Massie: Thanks Wendy and I appreciate the approach and hold me accountable if I don't answer all the questions here so.

00:29:13.110 --> 00:29:21.330

Etienne-Rene Massie: The first question is yes, you must be a not for profit organization and you must be incorporated as a not for profit to apply.

00:29:21.870 --> 00:29:34.050

Etienne-Rene Massie: The incorporation if you've incorporated under the incorporation act of Canada or a provincial a territorial incorporation act is not important to us, as long as you are incorporated according to a provincial and federal statute.

00:29:35.610 --> 00:29:45.240

Wendy Cukier (she/her): The next question was - you had mentioned, I think that the project needed to be in five provinces or regions and someone just wanted clarity that that includes the territories.

00:29:46.800 --> 00:29:50.370

Etienne-Rene Massie: Yes, completely the territories would count as one of those five.

00:29:51.540 --> 00:30:00.150

Wendy Cukier (she/her): Another set of questions had to do with the eligibility of previous WES funded projects, so, as you know, with the previous ecosystem funding, there were a number of partnerships, so there might be a lead applicant with partners and the question was could the partners who were funded as part of a previous WES project apply as individuals to lead a project this round.

00:30:21.330 --> 00:30:37.440

Etienne-Rene Massie: So thanks for the question. So yes, that is a possibility, so if you were a partner on a previous recipient for WES ecosystem in 2018 you can apply. The important thing that we will look at in those situations is that we will look at the partnerships that are in the new project, and make sure that they meet the objectives of this call for proposals. So it can't be a way to get more funding for a previous project. It has to be focused on what the goal of this call for proposal is.

00:30:56.100 --> 00:31:11.040

Wendy Cukier (she/her): Thank you very much, another question that came forward was can an organization be a partner as part of the consortium on one application and lead in other applications, so, in other words, can you be part of more than one application.

00:31:11.490 --> 00:31:19.050

Etienne-Rene Massie: Yes, of course, you can be part of different applications you just need to specify your role on each, in each of the applications you're a part of.

00:31:22.950 --> 00:31:46.830

Wendy Cukier (she/her): OK, the next question has to do with Indigenous organizations and whether or not there would be consideration of, for example, English and Ojibwe as bilingual, meeting the bilingualism requirement, or if the requirement is French and English for all applicants, including Indigenous ones.

00:31:49.290 --> 00:31:55.050

Etienne-Rene Massie: That's a, that's a very good question. I think if there are more than one language, more than one Indigenous language, we would welcome that.

00:32:00.660 --> 00:32:04.140

Etienne-Rene Massie: We would like a preference definitely for both official languages, because that may be warranted, but I think it's a bit of a tricky question, quite honestly, because I do want and we do want as a team to encourage Indigenous organizations to apply.

00:32:18.450 --> 00:32:33.210

Etienne-Rene Massie: And we don't want to create a burden, I think, in your application, if you were to apply if you could clearly specify the different Indigenous languages you're going to provide and the scope of which both official languages, you can or are looking to provide.

00:32:34.260 --> 00:32:43.560

Wendy Cukier (she/her): Okay, thank you very much for that. There was another question specifically about whether or not credit unions would be eligible.

00:32:52.920 --> 00:32:54.390

Etienne-Rene Massie: As the lead applicant?

00:33:02.220 --> 00:33:05.220

Etienne-Rene Massie: I guess, we would go back to the not-for-profit.

770 --> 00:33:17.280

Etienne-Rene Massie: That they have to be a not for profit organization, so I'm, the cooperatives this would be a financial cooperative correctly?

00:33:17.370 --> 00:33:18.600

Wendy Cukier (she/her): I believe so, yes.

00:33:18.630 --> 00:33:30.090

Etienne-Rene Massie: Yeah, so I would have to sort of check, let me just hold that question. I'll ask the team sort of in the background, if they can sort of provide me with an answer that I can maybe come back to Wendy.

00:33:30.660 --> 00:33:41.700

Wendy Cukier (she/her): The other option, I think that we have is if there are questions that you don't feel comfortable answering definitively we have everybody's email, so we can always follow up on any questions that weren't clarified through this discussion with a follow up note just the Q and a's if that works.

00:33:51.510 --> 00:34:00.870

Etienne-Rene Massie: Yes that works for me perfectly Wendy. I'm just trying to - because there's different incorporation when it comes to financial institutions - so I don't have that offhand.

00:34:01.620 --> 00:34:11.400

Wendy Cukier (she/her): Okay, great. So I'm looking through the list, and I think that there were other questions specifically about access to the forums and whether or not this session would be recorded and I think that information has been posted.

00:34:25.260 --> 00:34:32.280

Wendy Cukier (she/her): A question about the limits: is there a cap on individual applications and how much money they can apply for.

00:34:33.960 --> 00:34:42.690

Etienne-Rene Massie: Yes, so there will be recordings and there will be transcripts of this session available for sure on the financial pieces.

00:34:43.800 --> 00:34:59.640

Etienne-Rene Massie: I'm just trying to make sure I get the numbers here right, so the maximum budget is $4 million for one project and the minimum amount is $400,000, and that is over the duration of the project.

00:35:01.050 --> 00:35:13.830

Wendy Cukier (she/her): Okay, another question is, will projects that support organizations to increase the number of women hired be eligible.

00:35:16.860 --> 00:35:28.320

Etienne-Rene Massie: So I'm just trying to sort out what exactly is meant by women hired. Like we are looking, this initiative is to support women entrepreneurs who start businesses or build their businesses or grow their businesses, and as they grow their businesses, they will likely hire employees, so that is part of the overall objectives.

00:35:43.710 --> 00:35:55.860

Etienne-Rene Massie: We do not sort of provide direct wage subsidies to sort of help hire or retain employees, that's not part of this call for applications.

00:35:56.730 --> 00:35:59.070

Wendy Cukier (she/her): Okay, another eligibility question.

00:36:00.210 --> 00:36:14.040

Wendy Cukier (she/her): Indigenous Institute, Post Secondary institute that has some women-focused programming, but the mandate is primarily Post Secondary in remote communities, would they qualify?

00:36:16.890 --> 00:36:26.430

Etienne-Rene Massie: We would encourage that organization to partner up with a not-for-profit organization that could sort of deliver the services.

00:36:28.440 --> 00:36:34.950

Etienne-Rene Massie: Academic institutions are not part of the eligible organizations for this call for proposal.

00:36:35.940 --> 00:36:38.190

Wendy Cukier (she/her): But they could be included as partners on another application.

00:36:38.220 --> 00:36:45.150

Wendy Cukier (she/her): Okay another question has to do with whether there's a requirement for matching funds.

00:36:46.890 --> 00:37:07.530

Wendy Cukier (she/her): There is a question as well about stackability, can you use these funds in conjunction with funding through another federal agency, for example, WAGE, and then the final related question was around sustainability plans and whether guidelines would be provided.

00:37:08.610 --> 00:37:25.290

Etienne-Rene Massie: So, on the first question, there is no sort of matching requirement as part of this call for applications, we of course, encourage organizations to partner, and if they have in-kind or financial contributions that they can bring to the projects with partnerships that's most welcome.

00:37:27.150 --> 00:37:30.240

Etienne-Rene Massie: The second question Wendy was with regards to…

00:37:31.980 --> 00:37:34.050

Wendy Cukier (she/her): Um if you've received other federal funding.

00:37:39.060 --> 00:37:51.270

Etienne-Rene Massie: The stacking provisions are that you can bring other federal dollars and other public dollars to the project, but there is a stacking limit as, so we will not pay twice for the same expense.

00:37:51.750 --> 00:38:03.360

Etienne-Rene Massie: And if you are funded by other organizations I'm sure your project officer that you are currently working with at that public organization will want to know what we were funding should you be successful, and we could work.

00:38:04.560 --> 00:38:13.620

Etienne-Rene Massie: With that, should you be funded, but in your application, you cannot exceed 100% of the expenses, you can't ask for the same money from two organizations.

00:38:14.580 --> 00:38:29.490

Wendy Cukier (she/her): Okay The question is, if the lead applicant has a clear mandate supporting women, can the partner organizations have a mandate that is different, so I think they're thinking in terms of an organization with a specific women focused mandate partnering with others, that may have more general mandates.

00:38:48.330 --> 00:39:02.340

Etienne-Rene Massie: Yes, that is completely allowable I would encourage the project needs, however, as a combined partnership, needs to get to the objectives of this call, which is to help women entrepreneurs at the intersection of women and entrepreneurship in diversity communities in Canada.

00:39:07.950 --> 00:39:18.300

Wendy Cukier (she/her): There's another question about whether the ranking criteria will be included in the guidelines so that people are very clear on what's being weighted and how.

00:39:20.070 --> 00:39:25.980

Etienne-Rene Massie: So in the application guide, if memory serves, we do outline the criteria that we will be assessing.

00:39:27.150 --> 00:39:35.520

Etienne-Rene Massie: I'm not sure we've put the ranking proper in the guide.

00:39:38.160 --> 00:39:55.170

Wendy Cukier (she/her): Another question is this is an interesting one: so bilingual capability is a requirement, but the question is, do all elements of the program need to be bilingual or could you presumably have some elements that are targeted at English audiences and others that are French.

00:40:01.800 --> 00:40:04.560

Etienne-Rene Massie: We do have to respect the Official Languages Act.

00:40:05.190 --> 00:40:17.340

Etienne-Rene Massie: And when we do fund projects, we need to ensure that services are provided in both official languages. I think the organization, would need to sort of detail exactly what they're proposing here, to be able to get a better understanding. And if an organization is funded, we would sort of have a conversation to see exactly what that means.

00:40:25.980 --> 00:40:31.920

Wendy Cukier (she/her): Then there are a number of questions around wrap around supports, for example, if child care is going to be an eligible expense.

00:40:37.020 --> 00:40:40.170

Wendy Cukier (she/her): Are there other provisions for funding that goes directly to the women entrepreneurs, for example, seed grants and so forth.

00:40:50.340 --> 00:41:09.960

Etienne-Rene Massie: So, what we are looking to find here are organizations that provide advisory and sort of networks of support to women entrepreneurs, so if an organization is hosting events training networking and they wish to provide childcare, I think that would be allowable.

00:41:11.070 --> 00:41:20.220

Etienne-Rene Massie: We do not sort of, this is not a program that can provide childcare subsidies to entrepreneurs or the funding for entrepreneurs directly.

00:41:20.760 --> 00:41:28.350

Etienne-Rene Massie: You will recall that the Government launched the Women Entrepreneurship Loan Fund call for applications in the fall.

00:41:29.340 --> 00:41:47.250

Etienne-Rene Massie: We are currently reviewing that and that is the element that will seek to provide additional funding for women entrepreneurs in the ecosystem and we do hope to be able to provide an update on that component to the whole ecosystem in the near future.

00:41:48.060 --> 00:42:10.200

Wendy Cukier (she/her): Just to be 100% clear and because maybe I was I didn't catch this part of it, I think the question was not providing childcare subsidies generally to women entrepreneurs, but, for example, a program which is offering training for a woman entrepreneur at a certain time assuming we ever come back in person, could providing supports at that training program for childcare or food or other things be considered eligible expenses.

00:42:26.730 --> 00:42:29.880

Etienne-Rene Massie: Yes, that would be considered eligible, yes.

00:42:30.120 --> 00:42:33.180

Wendy Cukier (she/her): Yeah I think that was the focus.

00:42:35.790 --> 00:42:36.900

Wendy Cukier (she/her): So.

00:42:38.310 --> 00:42:39.990

Wendy Cukier (she/her): Let me see what else.

00:42:42.300 --> 00:42:53.670

Wendy Cukier (she/her): So you already answered the question about whether Post Secondary Institutions can be included as partners, there was also a question about whether for-profit organizations can be included as partners.

00:42:54.900 --> 00:43:04.830

Etienne-Rene Massie: Yes, for-profit organizations can be included as partners, as long as the contribution agreement is with a not-for-profit and, of course, just to be super clear, that not-for-profit has to be the lead applicant and be the lead governance and manager of the project as well, but many private organizations could come and form a consortium together to support the delivery of the project.

00:43:21.900 --> 00:43:42.780

Wendy Cukier (she/her): This is another eligibility issue that you may want to follow up on. You know we may want to put together some specific answers to these, but can a Small Business Center that is a division of an Economic Development Department of a municipality apply.

00:43:43.800 --> 00:43:45.210

Wendy Cukier (she/her): Either I guess as a lead or a co-applicant.

00:43:51.120 --> 00:44:03.660

Etienne-Rene Massie: Yeah, so I think Wendy your preface is probably right here, we would need a bit more detail to get that and we can sort of provide an answer on our Frequently Asked Questions.

00:44:04.170 --> 00:44:14.610

Etienne-Rene Massie: The one element here is that if you are part of a municipal government or a body or creature of a municipal government or provincial government, you would be deemed ineligible to apply.

00:44:16.110 --> 00:44:16.560

Etienne-Rene Massie: But. You can be a partner, of course.

00:44:20.220 --> 00:44:31.500

Wendy Cukier (she/her): Okay, there is this the question again about in kind contributions was raised, but I think you, you asked you answered that question.

00:44:33.090 --> 00:44:40.350

Wendy Cukier (she/her): I think and I'm hoping Sabine you've been scrolling through these as well, because I have been doing my best to cover them, I think there's some very specific questions like we've been offering programming for a full year but we weren't incorporated until fairly recently, can we apply, so I think you have answered that, but if you wanted to clarify that one more time that might be helpful.

00:45:03.060 --> 00:45:13.380

Etienne-Rene Massie: Sure, so you have to have been incorporated at least one year before the close of the call for proposal which we are closing on March 15 2022.

00:45:14.370 --> 00:45:22.770

Etienne-Rene Massie: I will say like there's a lot of questions that may be precise, and people may be looking for precision and I appreciate that and everyone's circumstance and eagerness to sort of better understand if they can apply is important, and I would encourage everyone in the chat we've posted our inbox for the program and like I mentioned officers are there and we will prepare and we will sort of give you as much detail as we can without favoring, without giving you a preferential advantage in your application.

00:45:46.710 --> 00:45:53.760

Wendy Cukier (she/her): That's great. Sabine while I'm scrolling through again, were there any that you notice that I missed?

00:45:54.390 --> 00:46:04.320

Sabine Soumare: I mean, there is one, one thing that comes out a couple of times I've seen, the sustainability plan.

00:46:05.190 --> 00:46:22.110

Sabine Soumare: So guidelines around the sustainability plan. What I'm looking for, is it more like results or sustainability of service delivery and also a question on, are you providing a template or any type of document to start with?

00:46:23.580 --> 00:46:34.530

Etienne-Rene Massie: Sure, so that's a good question, thanks Sabine. I think Wendy, you asked and I forgot to answer that one earlier, so the sustainability plan just takes into account that we are only, the government has voted and provided this initiative until March 31 2025.

00:46:46.710 --> 00:46:54.930

Etienne-Rene Massie: And after that time, we cannot promise or guarantee any funding and what happens is that there's a lot of great supports that are put in place and delivered.

00:46:55.470 --> 00:47:04.620

Etienne-Rene Massie: So we would like these projects to continue, and I know the absence of funding can be very difficult, but sometimes partnerships are established and things can sort of progress, so we would like applicants to sort of indicate, like are they winding down the services on March 31 2025 and, if not, what's their plan to continue these services post 2025.

00:47:22.410 --> 00:47:35.790

Etienne-Rene Massie: And how do they propose to do that and that's a small part of the evaluation, but it just helps us better understand, like the sustainability of the federal investment post its conclusion.

00:47:37.980 --> 00:47:45.120

Etienne-Rene Massie: And as to how we do it it's a separate document that you would attach to the application.

00:47:46.980 --> 00:47:48.780

Wendy Cukier (she/her): Great um.

00:47:48.840 --> 00:47:54.150

Sabine Soumare: Would you provide a template? I think that was also one question that comes back to us.

00:47:54.180 --> 00:47:59.100

Etienne-Rene Massie: I do not think we have a template for that piece.

00:48:02.520 --> 00:48:04.560

Etienne-Rene Massie: Yeah there's no template, my team has just confirmed.

00:48:06.120 --> 00:48:10.800

Wendy Cukier (she/her): There's another question, and this has come up in other contexts, about how you're defining the organization. So you've said that they need to be a nonprofit, do they also need to be led by diverse women or is it more that they are providing services to diverse women?

00:48:28.890 --> 00:48:47.070

Etienne-Rene Massie: We are looking for organizations that have a mandate and our active programming supporting diverse women. I think in past interactions with diverse communities across Canada there's always a preference within the Community, often for working with organizations that understand and appreciate the reality of the Community, so we don't have anything that is specific that sort of has that criteria, except that you do have a mandate, that your Organization has a mandate, to work on entrepreneurship support and that you have programming with this regard and that you work with diverse equity seeking groups.

00:49:19.140 --> 00:49:19.500

Wendy Cukier (she/her): Great.

00:49:20.550 --> 00:49:23.430

Wendy Cukier (she/her): Sabine, anything else that you notice that I have missed?

00:49:25.320 --> 00:49:38.370

Sabine Soumare: Quick questions in French, Étienne, so: when can we expect confirmation on the funding? And secondly: at what point… when can the project actually get underway?

00:49:39.600 --> 00:49:39.960

Sabine Soumare: It's related.

00:49:40.590 --> 00:49:51.030

Étienne-René Massie: Of course. Thank you, Sabine, for these questions. We're going to close the call for proposals on March 15, 2022.

00:50:00.600 --> 00:50:18.150

Étienne-René Massie: And we are going to work very hard to finish assessing all the applications received. I can't really come up with a specific date because I don't have all the… detailed information yet. But I think that what's needed… is for people to plan for… Basically, I think that if the closing date is March 15, people shouldn't say their project will begin on April 1, and should instead probably plan to really launch their project towards the fall.

00:50:40 --> 00:50:42

Sabine Soumare: Yes, that makes sense.

00:50:43.260 --> 00:51:01.590

Wendy Cukier (she/her): One other question was, and again I think you've answered this, but maybe you want to say it again, is the definition of the five places someone has - could it be five regions within a province so maybe you want to address that again.

00:51:02.250 --> 00:51:11.670

Etienne-Rene Massie: Sure, so we are looking here for national projects or multi-regional projects and multi-regional projects are five provinces or territories.

00:51:12.540 --> 00:51:22.260

Etienne-Rene Massie: So we do appreciate that some organizations do fantastic work in either a region or province, and we would ask and encourage them to work with other organizations that do just as good work in other parts of the country to be able to sort of learn and leverage from each other as a collective experience.

00:51:34.650 --> 00:51:37.890

Wendy Cukier (she/her): The other question that I picked up, this may not be something that's in the application but might be useful, is specifics around the reporting requirements and whether or not people can, for example, get access to what the reporting requirements are going to be in advance.

00:51:58.080 --> 00:52:13.440

Etienne-Rene Massie: So I think the guide provides sort of the key points that we will be looking for in the reporting guide, we do have metrics that sort of, we have to sort of report on based on the federal investments.

00:52:14.820 --> 00:52:23.460

Etienne-Rene Massie: So we will be looking at the number of clients served, what types of services are offered, and the net impact of those services for women entrepreneurs.

00:52:27.000 --> 00:52:38.700

Etienne-Rene Massie: So the guide has a bit of information there, what we do is we usually process quarterly claims, so a successful project will usually get a small advance at the front end of their project to be able to start delivering.

00:52:39.210 --> 00:52:54.090

Etienne-Rene Massie: And then they will be submitting quarterly reports, which will be reconciled and funding will be then transferred to those organizations and the metrics usually there are some quarterly metrics and there are more metrics that are provided on an annual basis.

00:52:55.710 --> 00:53:04.800

Wendy Cukier (she/her): That's great. I think there are still some questions that we haven't necessarily got through.

00:53:05.820 --> 00:53:17.010

Wendy Cukier (she/her): And maybe Sabine can have another look but I know you've also got a hard stop so we probably only have time for a couple more but I'll just reiterate what you said, which is there will be people who can give one-on-one advice, because a lot to me look very specific. Like "we have this kind of year-end", "can we support these kind of financial statements as part of the application."

00:53:30.480 --> 00:53:42.570

Wendy Cukier (she/her): So it looks to me like a lot of the questions are quite specific to individual organizations, but I'll troll through them one more time while Sabine asks.

00:53:43.590 --> 00:53:57.450

Sabine Soumare: Yes, so there is one question. I have a question in French: are travel expenses eligible, including travel for international entrepreneurs, if the project involves foreign travel?

00:53:58.740 --> 00:54:00.450

Sabine Soumare: So, travelling is…

00:54:01.980 --> 00:54:03.180

Sabine Soumare: Is it eligible, actually?

00:54:06.270 --> 00:54:08.970

Étienne-René Massie: Thank you for the question.

00:54:13.590 --> 00:54:31

Étienne-René Massie: Every project may of course require people to travel to connect with their community. Domestic travel expenses reimbursed in accordance with the Treasury Board travel directive guidelines on amounts eligible for reimbursement.

00:54:31.590 --> 00:54:41.100

Étienne-René Massie: All the required details and information can be found on their website, along with answers to FAQs. But foreign trips are not…

00:54:41 --> 00:54:42

Sabine Soumare: Are not covered.

00:54:42.240 --> 00:54:42.600

Étienne-René Massie: Are not covered.

00:54:43 --> 00:54:44

Sabine Soumare: Right. Thank you.

00:54:45.300 --> 00:54:46.140

Wendy Cukier (she/her): There's… also, the question sorry.

00:54:49.770 --> 00:54:50.400

Sabine Soumare: That's it for me.

00:54:51.000 --> 00:54:54.690

Wendy Cukier (she/her): Okay, there was also a question about whether or not, as part of the proposals, proponents could subcontract with, for example, consultants to offer certain kinds of services to the entrepreneurs.

00:55:10.800 --> 00:55:26.070

Etienne-Rene Massie: That is completely part of it, you just need to describe that in your application.

00:55:27.810 --> 00:55:48.300

Wendy Cukier (she/her): Great and I think that some of the attendees have actually gone into the applications and they have questions about the length of the application, the structure and so on. My recommendation is perhaps those big questions are directed to your hotline.

00:55:49.740 --> 00:55:51.360

Wendy Cukier (she/her): Questions and answers.

00:55:51.960 --> 00:55:59.640

Etienne-Rene Massie: Yes, please, we'd be happy to answer that and I'll just be clear for everyone, like if we see that a lot of people are asking the same question, what we will do is, we will update our Frequently Asked Questions to include that response so people can benefit from their response. So I would say, like stay tuned and have a look at the FAQs on a regular basis in case they are updated.

00:56:18.330 --> 00:56:29.550

Etienne-Rene Massie: And please send us your questions at the inbox. The team is very responsive and they work through them, some of them are easier, some of them require a bit of reflection, but we will always sort of provide a response.

00:56:30.510 --> 00:56:37.620

Wendy Cukier (she/her): Yeah I think one of the persistent questions is around the length and I know from other applications, like the Black Entrepreneurship Project and others, you have set limits of 10 pages and so on, maybe you can talk through just a quick advice strategy for working within those limits.

00:56:55.260 --> 00:57:04.860

Etienne-Rene Massie: Yes, so it's important that people sort of respect the page limits that we have, we would ask you to sort of be concise and to the point.

00:57:06.330 --> 00:57:16.560

Etienne-Rene Massie: When you're completing your applications, the reason, like you can annex information if you wish, but you have to realize that the 10 pages are where we will go and grab the majority of the information so we've seen applicants that have sometimes provided, like we have it on another call for both, I think we had a 15 page limit and we got 60 pages. Well to ensure fairness for everyone, we read through the first 15 in that case.

00:57:36.000 --> 00:57:52.320

Etienne-Rene Massie:, So in this case here, we will read through the first 10 pages and you need to sort of cover the key points that we are asking you in the application. I know that can be a challenge but that's also part of the process for the application.

00:57:53.520 --> 00:58:10.920

Wendy Cukier (she/her): And I think the flip side of this is that some Community organizations in particular find the very, very large - you know we've responded to RFPs which were 200 pages long - and I think sometimes that presents barriers as well.

00:58:16.350 --> 00:58:25.140

Sabine Soumare: Thank you Etienne. I think we are very close to the end, so thank you again for this presentation of the WES Ecosystem Fund. I hope it was helpful and informative for all of you. Thank you for joining us. A replay of this webinar will be made available to all registered attendees so feel free to share the recording with your colleagues and with the people who were not able to attend today. So for any further questions about the WES Ecosystem Fund, please contact - and I'm pretty sure the team has left the email address, the exact address is in the chat box. If you have any additional questions about the webinar please get in touch with di.wekh@ryerson.ca.

00:59:08.520 --> 00:59:21.450

Sabine Soumare: So that's WEKH, our team. These email addresses have been dropped into the chat box for your convenience. Thank you once again for joining us. Thank you everyone, thank you for your questions.

00:59:22.890 --> 00:59:25.020

Sabine Soumare: Enjoy the rest of your day, thank you.