



## **WES Ecosystem Fund Information Session Transcript**

**August 17, 2022**

Wendy Cukier: My name is Wendy Cukier and I'm the research lead for the Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub, and the Academic Director of the Diversity Institute and we are very pleased to be hosting this session today.

Wendy Cukier: Before we begin, I wanted to say that I'm joining you today from St Catherine's, which is the traditional territory of the Anishnaabeg and Haudenosaunee peoples, and I think more than ever, many of us are committed to truth and reconciliation and recognizing the historic genocide that has been perpetrated against Indigenous peoples in this country.

Wendy Cukier: Some of you may know, I'm at the university formerly known as Ryerson now Toronto Metropolitan University and we've changed our name as part of our commitment to truth and reconciliation and all the work that we do.

Wendy Cukier: Through the Women's Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub, we have an intersectionalist lens, taking into account the unique needs of racialized women, Indigenous women, Black women, women with disabilities, women who identify as LGBTQ2+ and others, so that it's important for us to recognize the unique needs of different women entrepreneurs across Canada,

Wendy Cukier: I also wanted to note a few housekeeping things before we get started. This event does have simultaneous translation, so, if you look at the bottom of your screen, you will see a button that allows you to select the language of your choice.

Wendy Cukier: As we go forward, we are going to try to ensure that ISED has an opportunity to answer your questions, so please post them in the Q&A box and we will get through as many as we can, and if some remain unanswered, we will ensure there will be a follow up.

Wendy Cukier: I will also say at the outset that, if you have very specific questions, for example, "my organization does this" or "are we eligible", we may recommend that you direct that to ISED in the email that has been posed in the chat and they will follow up with you.

Wendy Cukier: Also, as you know, because the Honorable Minister Mary Ng, Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development has recently announced a second round of applications for the Women Entrepreneurship Strategy Ecosystem Fund, there's an opportunity



to get more information about the eligibility criteria and what the government will be looking for in applications.

Wendy Cukier: The fund was announced as part of a budget commitment to accelerate the Women Entrepreneurship Strategy and to further build capacity in the ecosystem, to support women entrepreneurs in starting or growing or sustaining their business.

Wendy Cukier: So today we have with us Chad Mariage, who is the director of SME and Entrepreneurship Programs at Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada.

Wendy Cukier: He'll provide an overview of the parameters for the second round of applications and will assist in answering questions either in French or in English. And also with me today is Tania Saba who leads the Quebec hub for the Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub at the University of Montreal, and she will be helping me facilitate the Q&A. So with no further ado, over to you, Chad.

Chad Mariage: Thanks so much Wendy. First, let me apologize for my voice if it sounds a little hoarse, my beautiful little two year old girl decided to gift me a virus a few weeks ago and I've not been able to shake the cough. So apologies if I may have to move to clear my throat as we get through this.

Chad Mariage: As Wendy mentioned my name is Chad Mariage and I'm the director for SME and Entrepreneurship programs here at ISED.

Chad Mariage: Before we kind of get into the presentation, though, I would like to tell you that I am speaking to you from downtown Ottawa from the traditional, unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishnaabeg people. I am grateful to have the opportunity to be present in this territory.

Chad Mariage: I would also like to express my appreciation to the Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub for hosting the event today. The Knowledge Hub continues to be an important partner in our efforts to support women entrepreneurs. However, I would note that the Knowledge Hub is not involved in the design or delivery of the Women Entrepreneurship Strategy Ecosystem Fund; they are simply being gracious hosts for us today.

Chad Mariage: Today, I'd like to provide an overview and elaborate on the eligibility for the Ecosystem Fund that was recently announced by Minister Ng.



Chad Mariage: Launched under Budget 2018, the Government of Canada's Women Entrepreneurship Strategy aims to increase women-owned businesses' access to the financing, talent, networks and expertise they need to start up, scale up and access new markets.

Chad Mariage: The Strategy included a number of initiatives, including the Ecosystem Fund which was designed to provide non-repayable contribution funding to not-for-profit organizations to deliver projects that will help close service gaps and strengthen capacity within the women entrepreneurship ecosystem in Canada.

Chad Mariage: The original call for proposals under the Ecosystem Fund in 2018 supported 52 projects across Canada. Details on those projects are available on the Women Entrepreneurship Strategy website. [Links are provided in the chat.](#)

Chad Mariage: With Budget 2021 announcing additional funding for initiatives under the Women Entrepreneurship Strategy, a \$25 million call for proposals was launched in January of this year which focused on supporting new projects that responded to systemic barriers and gaps for diverse, intersectional and/or under-served women.

Chad Mariage: Successful applicants from that call for applications will be announced in due course. The current call for applications has allocated an additional \$40 million for new projects that will contribute to continued business growth and development, with priority given to projects that either support activities in areas of strength for women entrepreneurs, for example, in the care economy, retail and service sectors; or provide services to women entrepreneurs in rural, remote or northern communities.

Chad Mariage: Selected projects must be national or multi-regional in scope, with multi-regional being defined as a project that serves five or more provinces and territories.

Chad Mariage: Projects must also be delivered in both official languages. I'd now like to take some time to discuss: who can apply, the types of projects that will be supported under the Fund; and what will be required in an application. [Links to the Program Guide](#) are provided in the group discussion, so you can follow along or review at a later time.

Chad Mariage: First I would like to discuss eligibility, which can be found in Section B of the Guide. This call is open to Canadian not-for-profit organizations that fall into one of the following categories: business and entrepreneur support organizations; research/innovation hubs; organizations that certify diverse



suppliers in Canada; post-secondary institutions, universities, colleges and technical institutes; Indigenous organizations; and business accelerators and incubators.

Chad Mariage: Lead applicant organizations must have been in operation for a minimum of three years as of the deadline for submissions, which is September 26, 2022, at 11:59am Pacific Standard Time.

Chad Mariage: Partner organizations must have been in operation for a minimum of one year. Collectively, applicants must demonstrate that they meet at least one of the following criteria: have an established mandate focused on supporting women and/or women entrepreneurs; and/or have existing programming (offered within the past three years) which specifically targets or is focused on women entrepreneurs/women skills development.

Chad Mariage: I would note that in terms of meeting the criteria of having offered programming which targets women entrepreneurs, simply having programming which was primarily used by women is not sufficient. Previous programming must have been specifically designed and/or targeted towards women entrepreneurs or skills development for women.

Chad Mariage: In addition, applicants must apply in partnership with at least one other organization. This requirement will act to further strengthen relationships between organizations within the ecosystem.

Chad Mariage: A partnership is formed when organizations operating in a similar sphere come together to deliver an initiative. This could include community organizations connecting with other organizations that serve similar purposes or clientele across Canada.

Chad Mariage: The definition of a partner organization is provided in the glossary of the Application Guide. In essence, a partner organization is fundamental in the delivery of the proposed project and is invested in the completion and success of the project through the provision of either financial and/or non-financial contributions.

Chad Mariage: When developing your application proposal, both the lead applicant and the partners' experience and expertise may be used to demonstrate the skill set and capacity to meet the required assessment criteria and ensure successful project delivery.

Chad Mariage: For example, if the lead applicant has experience in delivering programming which targets women entrepreneurs, while one of their partners has experience in delivering support to Northern communities, collectively the partners can demonstrate their ability to serve both women entrepreneurs



and Northern communities. Demonstrating experience in both of these areas will serve to bolster your application.

Chad Mariage: Similarly, if an applicant organization lacks certain key abilities, for example delivering services in both official languages, they can partner with other organizations that have these abilities to ensure that key program requirements are met. However, it is imperative that you outline this information in the proposal and how bilingual service will be offered to all women entrepreneurs who may seek to access your services.

Chad Mariage: Applications must include Letters of Support between the lead applicant and each proposed partner (signed by their authorized official) which describes their contribution – their roles and contributions in delivering the required project, experience, expertise and knowledge, and if applicable, financial and in-kind contributions – to the project.

Chad Mariage: I would note that Crown Organizations, Community Futures Development Corporations, Community Business Development Corporations, Sociétés d'aide au développement des collectivités, and Centres d'aide aux entreprises are ineligible to apply as lead applicants, but may apply as partners on projects.

Chad Mariage: 2018 Ecosystem Fund recipients may be eligible to apply, either as lead applicants, or as partners, as long as they meet other eligibility requirements. For instance, a regional Ecosystem Fund recipient will need to partner in order to meet the national or multi-regional delivery requirement.

Chad Mariage: If you are 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 could be a good tool.

Chad Mariage: The free online platform is available at [sharing.wekh.ca](https://sharing.wekh.ca) - we'll also put [a link in the chat](#). 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 "Ask" or view "Asks" from others.

Chad Mariage: You can use the "Connections" category to post or find others to collaborate with on your application by including the wording 'Seeking Ecosystem Fund Partnership' in the title of your "Ask". If you have any questions about the Sharing Platform, contact WEKH directly at [di.wekh@ryerson.ca](mailto:di.wekh@ryerson.ca).



Chad Mariage: Having now discussed who can apply, I would like to discuss what types of projects we are looking for. Details are provided in Section B and we have provided [links to the section on project scope](#) in the chat discussion.

Chad Mariage: Projects must be either national or multi-regional in scope. Priority will be given to projects which deliver benefits to women-owned businesses and/or support activities in areas of strength for women entrepreneurs (e.g. care economy, retail and service sectors) or projects which provide services to women entrepreneurs in rural and remote areas or the North.

Chad Mariage: Eligible focus areas include one or more of the following: enhanced or expanded 2018 WES Ecosystem Fund projects; the delivery of business supports for women entrepreneurs, which may include business operation innovations or supplier diversity and procurement. Additional information on eligible activities is outlined in detail in [Section B of the guide](#).

Chad Mariage: Projects must deliver services and products in both official languages (English and French). Applicants must clearly outline in their application how they plan on providing services in both official languages. Translation costs (if applicable) should be built into the proposed budget.

Chad Mariage: All proposed activities to be funded through this call should be completed by March 31, 2025. Project budgets must have a minimum total budget of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars (\$250 000) and must not exceed three million dollars (in total) (\$3M).

Chad Mariage: The operating or administrative costs for delivery organizations are capped at a maximum of 15% of the total requested project funding. Costs that are reasonable, incremental and required to carry out the eligible activities will be reimbursed.

Chad Mariage: I would encourage everyone to review all of the eligible and ineligible costs which are also outlined in Section B of the guide.

Chad Mariage: Before we turn to questions, I would like to outline what will be required for the application process. These requirements are outlined in Section B-7 of the guide, and [a link is provided in the chat](#).

Chad Mariage: Each application package will include a number of documents: completed application form, proposal paper (12 pages for English and 14 pages for French applicants), three years of past financial statements (audited or review engagement) for the lead applicant, incorporation document (for



the lead applicant), completed budget detail template, sustainability plan (covering the period after funding ends 2024-25), letters of support from each partner organization.

Chad Mariage: Quebec-based organizations will also need to confirm that they comply with M-30 legislation, although we will work with any successful candidates to ensure proper authorizations are obtained.

Chad Mariage: Through the proposal paper, each applicant will be asked to elaborate on a number of areas, including: how their organization meets the eligibility criteria; who are the key partners in the project, and their roles; an overview of the project team (including experience in project management and in working with women entrepreneurs); the project objectives; the scope and activities (including who will be served, where/how services will be delivered); any associated risks and the plan to mitigate those risks; project budget; how the project activities will contribute to the planned outcomes of the WES Ecosystem Fund; and plans for the future sustainability of the project.

Chad Mariage: Section B-5 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 would encourage interested applicants to review this section closely, in advance of preparing an application.

Chad Mariage: Finally, I will quickly provide an overview of the timelines and assessment process. The deadline for applications is September 26, 2022 at 11:59am Pacific Standard Time.

Chad Mariage: We strongly recommend that you submit your application with all the mandatory documentation well before the deadline to ensure there are no unforeseen technical issues at the time of submission, as late submissions will not be considered for funding. We recommend double checking all your documents are properly attached before submitting. Any documentation submitted after the cut off cannot be considered as part of the application in fairness to all other applicants.

Chad Mariage: We also strongly recommend that you review the checklist located in both the application guide and application form to ensure that you have included all necessary documentation.

Chad Mariage: If you have questions, you can send them to the [WES inbox](#), however if you wait until the last minute, we can't guarantee we'll be able to answer in time.

Chad Mariage: Once the call for applications closes, the Government (ISED) will assess the applications based on the criteria set out in the Application Guide.



Chad Mariage: Applicants will receive confirmation of their application's receipt and will be advised in writing of their project's assessment outcome.

Chad Mariage: Successful proposals under this Call for Applications will be awarded, non-repayable Contribution Agreements with funding concluding March 31, 2025.

Chad Mariage: An important consideration is that successful applicants who receive funding under the Ecosystem Fund will be required to regularly report to ISED on the initiative. This will include: quarterly progress updates; annual reports which include audited financials; and a final report.

Chad Mariage: That concludes my presentation. I'll pass things back to Wendy Cukier for the Q&A portion of the session. I hope I did that quickly enough and left enough time for questions, but please, please don't hesitate to ask in either language.

Wendy Cukier: Thanks so much, and we have lots of questions already. I also wanted to thank my small and mighty team. I see Karmjit and Catherine and others are here to support this event, and it was pulled together quite quickly so very pleased we got such a great turnout.

Wendy Cukier: As we said we may not get through all the questions or may not have all the information you need, and so we do have a process to ensure follow up. So I think the first question is really the relationship between this funding call and I guess the call that ended in March 2022, and we have a number of people asking about when those decisions could be expected and then if there's anything to stop an organization or organizations that applied for that call applying to this call.

Chad Mariage: Thank you for that Wendy, obviously you know we understand the challenge of making a decision as to whether or not to apply on the second call without knowing the status of the first call.

Chad Mariage: Applicants to previous calls, including any WES calls including the Loan Fund, Inclusive Women Venture Capital Initiative (IWVCI) and the first call are eligible to apply under this call, as long as they meet the eligibility criteria that I outlined earlier and that's contained in the guide.

Chad Mariage: However, I will note that the same project can't receive funding under multiple contribution agreements so you know it can't be the same, the exact same project that receives the funding. Applicants should ensure that the project proposals meet the requirements and the objectives of the second call for the Ecosystem Fund.





Chad Mariage: The requirements are slightly different so you know the exact same proposal may not fit necessarily well in this call, so folks if they're considering re-submitting their applications as a precaution they should make sure that they are checking all of the requisite boxes in terms of eligibility and you know, making sure they're addressing the scope and the objective of the second call for applications.

Chad Mariage: The decision to apply, obviously, is at the discretion of the applicant and if they have questions they can reach out to the team via the email that I sent earlier.

Chad Mariage: As I mentioned during my remarks in terms of timing I can't commit, unfortunately, to when specific announcements will be made for the first call I will tell you that we're well advanced on our assessments and we're hoping to have something very soon, but certainly in due course, and I can tell you that you know getting those out is definitely a priority for the ministry as well.

Wendy Cukier: Thank you so much, the next question I'll combine these and you've heard this question with respect to other calls, and that is why is the funding not available to Indigenous communities in one official language and plus an Indigenous language.

Chad Mariage: So it is open and we encourage those Indigenous organizations to apply. You just need to partner with another organization that might be able to offer programming with the other official language so we certainly encourage folks and those organizations to apply, we encourage them to provide those services to their communities and in their language.

Chad Mariage: We welcome any other languages. At minimum because of the requirements under the official languages act, we do need to have those services available in both French and English, and we would encourage those organizations to partner with other organizations to demonstrate that they can meet that. However, we certainly encourage them to provide those services in their language as well.

Wendy Cukier: Related question is, Inuvik Nunavut is in four regions not five regions so would you say, essentially the same thing in response to that they would need to partner.

Chad Mariage: In order to meet the eligibility requirement of multiregional, national and given the definition that we've provided they would need to partner with another one to meet that threshold.

Wendy Cukier: Okay I'll ask one more question and then give Tania a chance 'en français'. So there's a question about is it for non-profit only or can a for-profit organization partner with the non-profits as long as it's not a lead.

Chad Mariage: The lead applicant, as I said, needs to be a non-profit. I would say that you know for-profit, can be a partner, I don't see any kind of barriers to that. However, private sector partners will be expected to make a financial or an in-kind contribution to the project.



Chad Mariage: Private sector partners are not intended to be beneficiaries of the funding, and so they will need to come with some money to the table to their partners, because federal funding shouldn't go to the private sector.

Wendy Cukier: Okay, so maybe you can clarify another dimension of this which is can a for-profit partner also be a supplier to the program so there's a bit of cuts.

Chad Mariage: Yes, well absolutely, I think the organization that's going to be delivering the product or the service to women entrepreneurs can certainly enter into a contract with a private entity to help provide and deliver that service, so no issues there.

Chad Mariage: But if they want to join as a partner that's where we can't have a direct investment from our funding to a private sector company and that's why they would need to bring in-kind contribution to the partnership.

Wendy Cukier: Okay great, Tania would you want to pick up a couple of the French questions?

Tania Saba: Yes, sure, thank you Wendy.

[French STARTS]

Tania Saba: Thank you, Chad. Actually, you just answered, I think, several questions along the same lines in French about non-profit organizations partnering with for-profit organizations. So, I think that was very clear. Perhaps, to continue a bit in this direction, you have a question along the same line: "What would be the percentage of contribution, in nature or in money, that the applicants must contribute? Is there an order of size that you have established?"

Chad Mariage: We, and the team will correct me there, but I don't think we have established a threshold for that contribution. I think that it's up for negotiation between the partners, but of course, it has to be a certain amount for it to be valid for the partner. But, as a government, we have not established a threshold, benchmark, or anything of the sort for these contributions.

Tania Saba: Okay. Perhaps also, to continue, an organization asks on the issue of partnerships: if they are in partnership with, precisely, organizations or partners that belong to the same group, to the same federation, is it considered to be a Canadian representation in this case? And are these partners eligible?

Chad Mariage: I would say that if they meet the eligibility criteria in the sense that they are national or that they cover five provinces or territories, I would say that they would be eligible to apply in that sense, yes. As long as that criteria is established: that it is the same organization that is national, that covers the



territory, and that can demonstrate that they are going to deliver the service in those territories, for me they would be eligible.

Chad Mariage: I'm looking forward to being corrected by the team, but I would say that this is it.

Tania Saba: Very good. Can I have one more question, Wendy?

Wendy Cukier: Go ahead.

Tania Saba: You have answered many of the questions from people who have asked about the eligibility and people who have already submitted to other contests. I will not ask Chad again since he has already answered the questions. If there are any specifications, please feel free to give them to us.

Tania Saba: So there's a question that says, "In the same application, can we submit different projects in collaboration with different specialized partners related to each project?". Do you understand? Can we break down the projects into partnerships that are specific to these different projects?

Chad Mariage: I just want to make sure I understand the question Tania. Are we talking about multiple applications for funding or -

Tania Saba: No.

Chad Mariage: Are we talking about a funding application that has several different projects in it?

Tania Saba: Exactly.

Chad Mariage: This would be a difficult question to answer specifically because we are really talking about a specificity. I would say that it would be necessary to demonstrate that the same services are available according to the eligibility criteria, because if we have 5 different projects within a project umbrella but one element is only available in one province, then I would say that we are starting to embark on a path that may be ineligible.

Chad Mariage: So what I would say is that it would have to demonstrate that the project as a whole meets the criteria we mentioned earlier. But nothing prevents this organization from having several partners to help in the delivery of this project.

Tania Saba: Okay, thank you. That's very clear. I think that's exactly what it was. The important thing is that there's a common thread -

Chad Mariage: That's it.



Tania Saba: Across all the services that are offered.

Chad Mariage: Yes that's it.

Tania Saba: Very good, I think it's very clear.

Tania Saba: Thank you, back to you Wendy.

[French ENDS]

Wendy Cukier: Great thanks, so I'll combine a couple of the questions, one of them is clarity on the semantics. So it says priority will be given to projects which deliver benefits to women-owned businesses and or support activities in areas of strength for women entrepreneurs, e.g. care economy, retail and service sectors.

Wendy Cukier: Please clarify both these conditions need to be met so is it conceivable that an organization could come forward with a retail project that was not targeting women entrepreneurs, or is it expected it will be for women entrepreneurs in those designated sectors.

Chad Mariage: So I'll first say that there are no designated sectors, I will say, as I indicated in my remarks, those were really provided as illustrative examples. If there are other sectors that you know women entrepreneurs are involved in, and you know, by all means, they should be included.

Chad Mariage: I would say, on the flip side, as I indicated again in the remarks, as long as what the applicant is proposing is specifically targeted to and delivers services to women entrepreneurs, I'd say they're good regardless of kind of which area they are in as long as it's targeted, I think it would be eligible in that respect.

Wendy Cukier: And Chad, you may feel you've already answered this, but just for clarification, in the tech sector, women are not well represented, would that mean that a program that was aimed at increasing the participation of women entrepreneurs in tech would not be preferred relative to care economy, etc, or would it be ineligible or is it a matter of preference.

Chad Mariage: No, I think it would be assessed on its merits, I don't expect that we would prefer one sector over another, and I think the objective of this call and other calls that we've done is to address a real intersectional kind of diversity of sectors as well

Chad Mariage: I mean if there's a really good project in the tech sector, I don't see why it wouldn't be considered on its own merits. In that sense there wouldn't be a prioritization in terms of the sectors, as I



said, those three were meant just as illustrated examples of sectors. Tech, construction or whatever could very well be included as long as it's targeted to women entrepreneurs, then it should be okay.

Wendy Cukier: Okay, great, and I think one of the things that a couple of folks on the call have asked about is how women entrepreneurs will actually access the services. So will they be announced, how will they know what services are available.

Chad Mariage: So as we've done with other calls, and I think earlier we posted the link to the 2018 recipients, the Minister will announce the successful recipients for the first call and for this call.

Chad Mariage: Once they're announced by the Minister, we will do, similar to what we did in 2018, we will put the list on our website and folks can contact those recipients directly.

Wendy Cukier: Okay, another question about official languages, and I know this has always been an issue for us at WEKH and the question is, can you just be explicit about the requirements for both official languages. So does it mean everything has to be offered in a bilingual format, or can all services be offered, but some in French and some in English, through the various partners.

Chad Mariage: So I would say, as a rule of thumb if I'm an anglophone entrepreneur, I want to be able to go to an organization and have the same service in French or English. I would say that any product or service that is funded by this should be available in both official languages.

Wendy Cukier: I guess the question is, take a webinar, for example, this webinar is bilingual, could organizations be saying we're going to provide exactly the same content, here's the English webinar and here's the French webinar, rather than trying to do it simultaneously.

Chad Mariage: Oh yes, absolutely as long as the same content is available in some fashion, then that's fine as long as entrepreneurs can access in either language, however the organization decides to do that.

Chad Mariage: That's where I think it's important in the application to really outline how they're going to meet. That's why, as I stressed earlier, it's not good enough just to say we're going to do it, it's demonstrating to us how you're going to meet that so that we can really get a good sense of how they're going to meet that threshold of serving in multiple languages.

Wendy Cukier: Thanks so much, Tania, do you want to pick up any other French questions?

Tania Saba: Yes sure, thank you Wendy, maybe a quick question.



[French STARTS]

Tania Saba: Is there going to be another call on a more regional basis since this one has to cover five provinces? Maybe a quick question. Do you know? Is there anything in the works?

Chad Mariage: The first call that closed recently was essentially that.

Tania Saba: Okay.

Chad Mariage: So at the moment, we are focusing on the call that we have right now. If the government decides at another time to launch another appeal, if I could tell you I would, but I don't have those cards in front of me. A government could certainly decide to launch another call, but for the moment we are concentrating on the two we have launched.

Tania Saba: Very good. Two questions are along the same lines: How do we cover five provinces?

Tania Saba: So it's: Do we need to have physical resources in each province? If we're going to do activities - can you maybe give a little more information about covering five provinces?

Tania Saba: If we do programs that are applicable to five provinces, do you see what I mean? The question is: Do you need to have physical resources? Do you need to have specific activities in each province that is covered?

Chad Mariage: Not necessarily physical presences. I would say that there are several ways, I think, to approach this question. Obviously the primary way is through partnerships because we want to encourage an ecosystem that is growing and that will be strengthened as well. But if the applicant can show us that someone, I'm using this as an example, in Halifax can have the same service as the person in Victoria, and between the two, if they can demonstrate that adequately in their application, it will be evaluated.

Chad Mariage: The way in which they will meet the five provinces or territories or national, it is really up to them to demonstrate this to us. I don't have a magic formula for this because there are many ways to meet these requirements.

Chad Mariage: But like I said, and as I mentioned several times, if there are specific questions you can always send them to us by email. Obviously, we can't answer specific questions about specific projects, but if it's a general question, the team will answer it very quickly.

Tania Saba: Okay. Another question: would the department be interested in or be able to provide the various organizations with lists of partners that are available in other provinces?



Tania Saba: Especially, for example, Francophone resources. Of course, what I would say is that within the WEKH, we have made a lot of effort to list many organizations.

Tania Saba: But it's not for me to answer questions on your side, but I will refer the person also to look at all the listings that are made on the PCFE, on the Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub website, in French, in English, where there are many partners that are listed. But on your side, I don't know if you have any- yourself, do you connect partners or is this kind of part of our work?

Chad Mariage: No, so we don't connect the partners. I would say the list that we put out for the 2018 recipients is there. If people want to access it, it's there. But I think that's really the reason why we referred to the Knowledge Hub tool, to be able to just help facilitate these connections.

Chad Mariage: I don't know, Wendy, if you wanted to speak to your tool a little bit just to give people some clarity on that. It might be worthwhile from that perspective, but that's something more that the Knowledge Hub, I think, through their tool would be able to facilitate.

Wendy Cukier: Karmjit, maybe you can make sure you post that en français, so it's clear that that's available in both languages.

Tania Saba: Maybe just one last quick question.

Tania Saba: The 3 million budget that you mentioned is for the total project, I guess? Can you-

Chad Mariage: Yes

Tania Saba: Right, so it's not a contribution. Okay.

Tania Saba: It can be projects that go up to 3 million, right?

Chad Mariage: Maximum 3 million, minimum 250,000.

Tania Saba: 250 000.

Chad Mariage: Over the two years.

Tania Saba: Okay. Very good. So the 3 million, it's not a part coming from the strategy. It's for the project that the person can -

Chad Mariage: That's it, yes.



Tania Saba: Very good, thank you.  
[French ENDS]

Wendy Cukier: I'm conscious of time, so I am going to try to combine questions, but we will make sure that any questions that haven't been answered are followed up on. So one of the questions and I think you mentioned this Chad, but just two are important.

Wendy Cukier: Can funds be used for grants or prizes to women entrepreneurs participating in the program, is that an allowable expense?

Chad Mariage: I believe it is, let me, maybe you can go to a different question and the team will confirm with me. I'll circle back, but I'm almost positive it would be as long as it's within the confines of the program or the project.

Wendy Cukier: Okay, and the other question is, can one organization submit more than one proposal and can one organization participate in more than one proposal. So, for example, could one organization submit a proposal and then support a different proposal as well.

Chad Mariage: So on that question, I would say yes, I would say, as a lead applicant they shouldn't submit more than one. But they're welcome to participate as a partner on others. I know there'd be no limitation on that.

Wendy Cukier: Great, another question is, are there staff available to support applicants in the development of their applications?

Chad Mariage: No unfortunately not, from a fairness perspective, I think you know we're happy to answer general type questions, but specific kinds of development, unfortunately we won't have resources in that respect.

Chad Mariage: And just let me circle back to your question on the grant pieces or direct funding. I stand corrected, grants or direct funding of women entrepreneurs is not an eligible expense so thanks to the team for the quick message on that.

Wendy Cukier: Okay, great. Question, even though it's directed at Canadian organizations, can international organizations be counted as partners if, for example, the focus is on trade and capacity building?

Chad Mariage: So they can be, but money cannot go outside of our borders, the money needs to stay within Canada.





Wendy Cukier: Okay, and I think I can answer this question, I heard you say post-secondary institutions can be a lead.

Chad Mariage: Yes, absolutely.

Wendy Cukier: Tania, are there any more French questions you want to pick up on?

Tania Saba: No, some of them are being covered with English questions, I would just take one.

[French STARTS]

Tania Saba: For organizations that were incorporated very recently like in 2020, 2021, can they be eligible as well? Because you said you have to submit the documentation and so on.

Chad Mariage: So as I explained, to be a partner it has to be a minimum of one year, and to be eligible as a principal applicant it has to be a minimum of three years by the time the call closes on September 26.

Tania Saba: Okay, very good. Thank you.

Chad Mariage: But they can obviously demonstrate to us that they meet these requirements in partnership, et cetera.

Tania Saba: Okay because they say they have been in business for 6 years, but the incorporation was just a year ago. So the official part is one year, but the experience is longer. I guess they can also ask you directly through your-

Chad Mariage: Yes, that's it.

Tania Saba: Very good, I see. Thank you.

[French ENDS]

Wendy Cukier: Thanks. Again, another technical question. Can you confirm if it's three years of audited statements or three years of activity required in one year of audited statements?

Chad Mariage: I have to go back to my notes, but I believe it's three years of audited or review engagement and or, it could be either one, but it needs to be three years of statements.

Wendy Cukier: Okay, great. There are some questions about the design of the program, but I think those perhaps can be taken offline. More questions about when we will hear back from the earlier call.



Wendy Cukier: I think you've answered this but it bears repeating, does the lead partner need to be the one with experience in women's entrepreneurship, or can that be brought in by another partner?

Chad Mariage: I would say that there needs to be demonstrated from the lead as well. I don't have the exact wording in front of me from my notes here. I can find it quickly.

Wendy Cukier: Is it an outright ineligibility if the lead and partner applicant are not present nationally or only present in one province. There have been a number of questions on this, meaning does the lead partner have to be in all five regions or can the lead partner be in one region and bring in partners that operate in the other regions, so that it has the five region coverage. Can you explain?

Chad Mariage: Absolutely that's what we encourage frankly, a development of the ecosystem and an expansion of the ecosystem as long as they can demonstrate that they're meeting that requirement through partnerships, then that would meet that requirement for sure. That could be through, obviously we would need the documentation to support that, but like through letters of support. But definitely that would be encouraged.

Wendy Cukier: Another question is, why are social enterprises excluded from being considered as a lead partner for the fund application?

Chad Mariage: I don't want to give you the wrong answer, so I can come back to that one as well.

Wendy Cukier: Okay, I think it's you know, the definition of social enterprise can include for-profits with the social message.

Chad Mariage: Exactly, that's exactly right, I mean it's targeted to not for profit, so that would probably be the easiest answer.

Wendy Cukier: Okay.

Wendy Cukier: A question about in-kind contributions from the for profit partner, how will that affect the project budget?

Chad Mariage: It needs to be demonstrated in the budget, I mean they need to demonstrate to us that their for-profit partner is providing an in-kind contribution and my recommendation would be that being included in the kind of letter of support that the organization is submitting.

Wendy Cukier: There was also a question about the care economy and how that's being defined, and that's the last question. I realize we are out of time, but we will definitely ensure that everybody who's



typed in a question will get some kind of response and, yes, there is a recording available of the session. So Chad, can you explain the care economy?

Chad Mariage: As I said, those have been used for illustrative purposes, so I don't think that we've come to a definition of what "care economy" is. Just like we wouldn't define the retail sector.

Chad Mariage: I would say, as long as you demonstrate the targeted to women entrepreneurs piece, regardless of the sector, I think you'll be considered, so I wouldn't worry too much about definitions of "care sector" because those were used just for illustrative purposes.

Chad Mariage: And just Wendy I just circled back quickly on the time piece, I will say that when developing the applications, both the lead applicant and the partners experience will be used or can be used to demonstrate that skill set and capacity to meet the required assessment criteria. As I've said, if there's other questions of that nature, please send them to the inbox and we're happy to answer them as well.

Wendy Cukier: So thank you very much to all of you who joined us. I want to thank Chad and his team, I want to thank the WEKH team, I want to thank Tania Saba. I want to underscore that you can send follow up questions to the [WES inbox](#), which has been posted.

Wendy Cukier: If you have any questions about this webinar or access to the recording which will be sent to everybody, feel free to contact us or if you need information about the sharing platform. Lots of emails and contact information have been dropped into the chat so thanks very much really, really appreciate your participation and look forward to talking to you again.

Chad Mariage: Thank you.