



NEW RELATIONSHIP TRUST

INVESTING IN FIRST NATIONS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

“AN EXAMPLE OF ECONOMIC RECONCILIATION” – FIRST NATION-LED CLEAN ENERGY PROJECTS AWARDED \$2.8M FUNDING

(Vancouver, August 13, 2020) – Indigenous-led clean energy projects often face systemic barriers and high costs that diminish the opportunity to develop their sustainable energy sovereignty.

To help overcome these barriers, the British Columbia Indigenous Clean Energy Initiative (BCICEI) has awarded thirteen Indigenous groups nearly \$2.8M to advance their clean energy projects in 2020–2021.

The BCICEI was launched in 2016 as a collaboration between Western Economic Diversification Canada and New Relationship Trust (NRT) with \$4.2M in funding through the Government of Canada’s Strategic Partnership Initiative (SPI). In August 2019, the Government of Canada, the Province of British Columbia and the NRT announced a further \$9.5M in renewed funding to support the BCICEI for another three years.

Delivered by NRT, in partnership with Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) and the Ministry of Energy, Mines, Petroleum and Resources (MEMPR), the BCICEI’s funding will support First Nations-led projects in both early and late development stages. This funding supports remote communities looking to reduce reliance on diesel energy as well as Indigenous-led clean energy projects that increase self-sufficiency and potentially generate revenue.

A key feature of the initiative is building community capacity and empowering First Nations to participate in arrangements that include ownership, revenue sharing, business development, and local employment. Both Fort Nelson First Nation and Saulteau First Nation received \$500,000 each to help with late stage costs to get past the finish line for their own energy projects—geothermal and wind, respectively. These projects will generate revenue by selling power to the grid. All funded projects are headed by groups that are majority First Nation owned.

“The NRT is proud to have a role in an important initiative for First Nations in BC. In the era of reconciliation, it is a collaborative effort to achieve economic growth and advance First Nation’s clean energy needs. These efforts contribute towards the energy transition that will have positive legacy impacts for generations to come. The unique Indigenous-led BCICEI model will hopefully inspire further partnerships between governments, industry and First Nations.”

- Walter Schneider, New Relationship Trust, Chief Executive Officer



“Through CleanBC, we are collaborating with New Relationship Trust and Western Economic Diversification Canada on the B.C. Indigenous Clean Energy Initiative to support First Nations-led clean energy projects,” said Bruce Ralston, Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources. *“Together we are providing important funding to Indigenous communities across B.C. to develop projects that will help them achieve energy independence and reduce reliance on diesel.”*

“The British Columbia Indigenous Clean Energy Initiative is an incredible project that will help advance reconciliation, fight the climate crisis and create jobs and opportunities for Indigenous peoples. Green technologies are vital to the future of our communities, our economy and our planet, and I’m excited to see the difference this initiative will make for First Nations across BC.”

-The Honourable Mélanie Joly, MP for Ahuntsic-Cartierville, and Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages and Minister responsible for Western Economic Diversification Canada

“The Government of Canada is supporting Indigenous-led clean energy projects through the BC Indigenous Clean Energy Initiative. Not only do these projects contribute to creating economic opportunities in First Nation communities, but they are helping to fight climate change and move Canada towards a cleaner and greener future.”

-The Honourable Marc Miller, Minister of Indigenous Services.

Demand for the clean energy program is high and the selection process competitive. While BCICEI provided 13 groups \$2.8-million in support, nearly 40 groups applied, with a total funding request of approximately \$8-million. Next year’s intake of supported projects will take place early 2021.

The full list of chosen BCICEI Phase II recipients, with details on their project and funding, can be found [here](#).

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About New Relationship Trust

In 2006, NRT was created by the BC Government and First Nations leadership and launched as a \$100 million fund. NRT is mandated to support BC First Nation communities to build capacity in order to become healthy, prosperous and self-sufficient. To date, 98% of the 203 First Nations in BC have accessed NRT funding.