

Indigenous Agriculture and Food Systems in Newfoundland and Labrador

Overview: Indigenous Agriculture Development Initiative

The Indigenous Agriculture Development Initiative (IADI), under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable CAP), aims to support Indigenous communities, individuals, and organizations within Newfoundland and Labrador that are interested in advancing the agriculture, agri-food, and agri-products sectors. The initiative provides financial assistance to promote sector participation and revitalize Indigenous food systems. This funding is critical in ensuring that Indigenous peoples can engage in agricultural growth and contribute to food self-sufficiency, while also promoting sustainable and culturally relevant practices.

Eligibility and Program Objectives

Indigenous applicants, including recognized Indigenous communities, governments, and individuals who self-identify as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit, are eligible to apply for support through the IADI. The funding is designed to foster projects that align with the broader goals of Sustainable CAP, which include agricultural growth, environmental sustainability, diversity, and food security. Applications are assessed based on project feasibility, alignment with program objectives, and the specific benefits they bring to Indigenous communities.

Sustainable CAP emphasizes a commitment to diversity and inclusion, ensuring equitable opportunities for Indigenous peoples and other underrepresented groups, such as women and youth, within the agriculture sector. Applicants are encouraged to self-identify to help ensure representation of underrepresented groups and promote diversity in Newfoundland and Labrador's agricultural industry.

Funding and Project Scope

The IADI may provide higher levels of funding and flexibility in stacking limits for projects that demonstrate profitable business opportunities or support the revitalization of Indigenous food systems. Eligible activities include:

- Capital expenditures, such as infrastructure development, and equipment purchases.
- Projects that enhance local food capacity, production, and agricultural growth.
- Initiatives that contribute to the sustainability of Indigenous food systems.

The program also provides special consideration for Indigenous-led projects that align with traditional food harvesting and agricultural practices, including those that enhance food security and promote sustainable use of local resources. However, it is important to note that activities related to wildlife harvesting, hunting, or fishing are not considered eligible for funding under this program. Sustainable CAP is a \$3.5-billion, 5-year agreement (2023-2028), between the federal, provincial and territorial governments to

strengthen the competitiveness, innovation, and resiliency of Canada's agriculture, agri-food and agri-based products sector while also incorporating agricultural production and agri-food processing with traditional Indigenous systems. The agreement includes \$1 billion in federal programs and activities and \$2.5 billion in cost-shared programs and activities funded by federal, provincial and territorial governments.

Indigenous Food Systems and Sustainable CAP

Indigenous food systems are deeply interconnected with the cultural traditions, ecological knowledge, and practices of Indigenous peoples. These systems focus on the sustainable use of local resources and seasonal foods, and the maintenance of biodiversity, reflecting a deep relationship with the environment. The Sustainable CAP recognizes the importance of Indigenous food systems and offers pathways to support their revitalization and development.

Key Characteristics of Indigenous Food Systems:

- **Traditional Ecological Knowledge:** The body of knowledge passed down through generations about ecosystems, wildlife, and the sustainable use of natural resources.
- **Biodiversity:** Indigenous food systems emphasize the conservation of biodiversity by promoting the use of a variety of plants, animals, and natural resources in a sustainable manner.
- **Cultural Significance:** Food is intricately linked to cultural identity, traditions, and ceremonies, making it a cornerstone of Indigenous community life.

Supporting Indigenous food systems through Sustainable CAP contributes to the following goals:

- **Food Self-Sufficiency:** Ensuring production and access to healthy, culturally appropriate food for Indigenous communities.
- **Economic Development:** Providing job opportunities and income generation through agriculture and food-related enterprises.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Protecting biodiversity and promoting land stewardship practices rooted in Indigenous traditions.
- **Cultural Preservation:** Ensuring the continuation of Indigenous cultural traditions and knowledge related to food and the environment.

Indigenous food systems provide valuable insights into sustainable practices that can strengthen the overall agricultural landscape in Newfoundland and Labrador. Sustainable CAP's support for these systems promotes a future where Indigenous knowledge is recognized, valued, and integrated into agricultural development.

Supporting Indigenous Applicants: The Role of the Industry Development Officer

A dedicated Industry Development Officer (IDO) plays a crucial role in supporting Indigenous applicants navigating the Sustainable CAP and IADI. The IDO assists Indigenous communities, organizations, and individuals by:

- Providing guidance on program eligibility and application processes.
- Helping identify potential funding opportunities under Sustainable CAP, including higher funding considerations for Indigenous community projects.
- Supporting applicants in aligning their projects with program priorities, such as food self-sufficiency, sustainability, and the revitalization of Indigenous food systems.
- Offering technical advice and resources for project planning and development.
- Serving as a liaison between Indigenous applicants and Sustainable CAP to advance agricultural opportunities for Indigenous peoples.

Next Steps

For more details regarding the [Sustainable CAP](#), please reference the [Program Guide](#) for dedicated information on the various programs available, contact the IDO at (709) 637-2979 or email scap@gov.nl.ca.

Definitions:

- **Capital Expenditures:** Long-term investments in physical assets, such as infrastructure or equipment needed for the development of Indigenous agriculture and food systems.
- **First Nation:** An Indigenous community officially recognized as an administrative unit by the federal government.
- **Government Funding:** Any financial assistance in the form of provincial or federal grants, loans, or other assistance.
- **Indigenous Agriculture Development Initiative (IADI):** A program under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership providing financial support to Indigenous communities, individuals, and organizations to advance agricultural, agri-food, and agri-products industries while revitalizing Indigenous food systems.
- **Indigenous Peoples:** Individuals who self-report an Indigenous identity, including First Nations, Métis, Inuit, or a combination of these groups.
- **Local Food Capacity:** The ability of a region or community to produce, process, and distribute food to meet local needs.
- **Sector:** Refers to the agriculture, agri-food, and agri-based products sector, including value-added production, processing, bioeconomy activities, and Indigenous agriculture and food systems.
- **Stacking Limits:** The maximum level of total Canadian government funding (federal, provincial/ territorial, and municipal) that a successful applicant can receive.
- **Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership:** A \$3.5-billion, 5-year agreement (2023-2028), between the federal, provincial and territorial governments to strengthen the competitiveness, innovation, and resiliency of Canada's agriculture, agri-food and agri-based products sector. The agreement includes \$1 billion in federal programs and activities and \$2.5 billion in cost-shared programs and activities funded by federal, provincial and territorial governments.