

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**The Indigenous Women Entrepreneurship Fund is helping Indigenous businesswomen with innovative ideas, but little access to capital, grow and succeed as entrepreneurs.**

**[May 12, 2024] (Toronto, ON)** – Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business’ (CCAB) Indigenous Women Entrepreneurship Fund (IWEF) was created to assist Indigenous women who have traditionally faced significant obstacles accessing financing through the usual means.

The fund, which is presented by LNG Canada with a contribution from Paper Excellence, is open to Indigenous women-owned businesses that have encountered systemic barriers to lending relationships and have been impacted by the pandemic.

“Women are elemental in the achievement of Indigenous economic prosperity yet, securing affordable financing remains one of the most arduous challenges for Indigenous women entrepreneurs. The lack of access to networks and financial institutions, property for collateral and credit are all factors that we must overcome,” says Tabatha Bull, president and CEO, CCAB. “We are thrilled that LNG Canada and Paper Excellence are taking meaningful action to support Indigenous women entrepreneurs and help grow the Indigenous economy.”

CCAB research has demonstrated that access to appropriate credit and lending is one of the main barriers for Indigenous businesses. The Indigenous Business Survey, Phase II: Indigenous Women Entrepreneurs, which was released in 2021 by CCAB, found close to half (47 per cent) of Indigenous women-owned businesses report no current lending relationships with any financial institutions, compared to almost one-third of male-owned businesses.

“LNG Canada is committed to supporting the advancement and empowerment of Indigenous women entrepreneurs. Indigenous women’s economic empowerment and inclusion is a direct response to the Calls for Justice,” said Hope Regimbald, LNG Canada’s Indigenous and Stakeholder Relations Lead. “Access to capital and financing is critical, which is why opportunities provided through the Indigenous Women Entrepreneurship Fund are so important. We commend Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business for their efforts to enable Indigenous prosperity and remove systemic barriers facing Indigenous women.”

This is the third year the fund has been made available, and applications for the \$2,000 grants will be open until May 19, 2023, at 5 p.m. There is one week left to submit applications for the [Indigenous Women Entrepreneurship Fund](#).

“Paper Excellence recognizes that a rising tide lifts all boats – that when Indigenous business does well, we all succeed doing business right means building business together,” said Lana Wilhelm, Manager, Indigenous & Community Relations. “We are pleased to be a part of empowering Indigenous women

entrepreneurs to build their businesses. And we thank Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business for giving members like us this opportunity.”

Former recipients are saying that these grants have been transformative to their businesses and lives. More than 40 Indigenous women who own businesses have received grants to date.

“I am a proud member of Sapotaweyak Cree Nation with two children, and owning your own business isn't always easy, but grants like this sure do help,” says Brandy Bulycz, the owner of Freedom Embroidery and an IWEF recipient last year. “With this grant, I was able to purchase stock, as well as do some promotion for my business. The help is appreciated more than you know.”

The entrepreneurship fund is administered through CCAB’s Tools and Financing for Aboriginal Business (TFAB) program to enhance Indigenous entrepreneurship through providing access to development and networks.

A lottery system will be used to award grants. A live draw will be made at a future date at which time 20 recipients will receive grants.

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#### **About the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business**

CCAB is committed to the full participation of Indigenous peoples in Canada’s economy. As a national, non-partisan association, its mission is to promote, strengthen and enhance a prosperous Indigenous economy through the fostering of business relationships, opportunities, and awareness. CCAB offers knowledge, resources, and programs to its members to cultivate economic opportunities for Indigenous peoples and businesses across Canada. For more information visit [www.ccab.com](http://www.ccab.com).

#### **About LNG Canada**

The LNG Canada joint venture is building a liquefied natural gas (LNG) export facility in Kitimat, British Columbia, Canada, in the traditional territory of the Haisla Nation. It will initially consist of two LNG processing units, referred to as “trains.” LNG Canada is a joint venture comprised of Shell plc, through its affiliate Shell Canada Energy (40%); PETRONAS, through its wholly-owned entity, North Montney LNG Limited Partnership (25%); PetroChina Company Limited, through its subsidiary PetroChina Kitimat LNG Partnership (15%); Mitsubishi Corporation, through its subsidiary Diamond LNG Canada Partnership (15%); and Korea Gas Corporation, through its wholly-owned subsidiary Kogas Canada LNG Partnership (5%). It is operated through LNG Canada Development Inc.

#### **About Paper Excellence**

Paper Excellence, headquartered in British Columbia, is a diversified manufacturer of pulp and specialty, printing, writing, and packaging papers that owns 10 facilities in Canada producing over 3.0 million tonnes annually with a workforce of over 3,000. Paper Excellence is poised to continue to grow with its strategy of operational excellence and high-quality, cost-effective products.



For **more information** or to arrange interviews with **former grant recipients, sponsors** or **CCAB staff**, please contact:

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