



Indigenous Innovation Initiative

Our vision is to improve people's lives through Indigenous innovation

Our Creation Story: This journey started with the first Indigenous Innovation Summit in 2015 and the first Indigenous Innovation Demonstration Fund in 2016, both of which highlighted the potential impact of innovation by and for First Nation, Inuit and Metis Peoples in Canada, and a lack of investment in this space. In response, the Indigenous Innovation Initiative was launched in 2018 in partnership with Grand Challenges Canada and Indigenous leaders from across the country.

Our approach: We understand that supporting Indigenous innovation is about more than just increasing access to capital – it requires wrap-around support for innovators to unlock their fullest potential. Through core values of inclusion, self-determination, sustainability and creativity, we use a gender-lens approach for investment to support First Nation, Inuit and Metis Peoples to develop and test innovative ideas that re-inspire healing, creativity and opportunity for their communities, while also benefitting non-Indigenous people and the Land. This includes:

- **Access to capital:** In partnership with donors, philanthropists and impact investors we are addressing the resource gaps and investment needs of innovators
- **Building capacity:** Together with a network of collaborative partners, we are supporting innovators with the Knowledges, skills and tools they need to succeed
- **Cultivating networks:** As they are ready, we connect innovators to a meaningful ecosystem of relationships and opportunities that increase their social capital
- **Driving interest:** Successes are celebrated as we share innovators' stories of hope, possibility and impact, while modeling and inspiring the next generation of Indigenous innovation

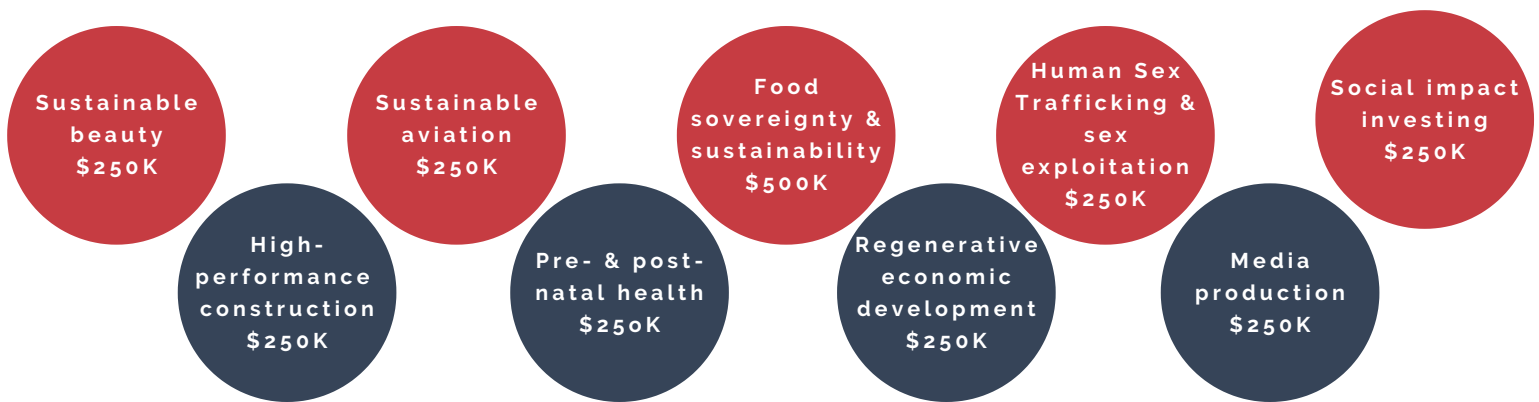
"Innovation isn't always about creating new things. Innovation sometimes involves looking back to our old ways and bringing them forward to this new situation."

The Honourable Murray Sinclair, 2015 Indigenous Innovation Summit



Funding portfolio: In June 2020, we launched the Indigenous Gender Equality Program. The ultimate goal of this program is to advance Indigenous gender equality across health, economic and social dimensions through transformative innovation and large-scale systemic change that is by and for First Nation, Inuit and Metis women, Two Spirit, queer, Trans and other gender diverse individuals. From the first open call for proposals, **10 projects totaling \$2.5-million CAD** were selected for proof of concept (seed) grants, out of the 238 proposals submitted from every province and territory in Canada. We hope to fund many more innovation projects with support from new partners.

Impact: Indigenous innovators and entrepreneurs generate immeasurable social, cultural and economic impact. The first cohort of 10 projects are working to create impact across these areas:



Culturally rooted wrap-around supports, including access to specialized coaching and venture advisors, are also provided to uplift innovators throughout their journey

"The Indigenous Innovation Initiative understands how to generate success from a distinctly cultural perspective, and they work in ways that are rooted in culture."

~ Innovator from round 1 of the Indigenous Gender Equality Program

We all play a role in Indigenous Innovation: Supporting outcomes that matter most to First Nation, Inuit and Metis peoples in Canada aligns with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and provides the opportunity to collectively co-create our shared future. Indigenous innovators are revitalizing and strengthening First Nation, Inuit and Metis communities and economies, and sparking the next generation of Indigenous innovation leadership. To invest in this journey of uplifting Indigenous innovation, visit us at **indigenouinnovate.org** and follow us online:



We are grateful for funding support from:



Women and Gender Equality Canada



Indigenous Services Canada



Femmes et Égalité des genres Canada

Services aux Autochtones Canada