



July 18, 2018

***ISLAND AND SUNSHINE COAST COMMUNITIES CREATING COMMUNITY BENEFIT HUB
Strategic public-sector procurement will leverage tax dollars to meet community goals***

COURTENAY – Public-sector purchasing is an important part of the Vancouver Island and Coast economy, and ‘strategic procurement’ is a significant way to leverage tax dollars to achieve social, economic, and environmental outcomes aligned with community values and objectives.

A first-of-its-kind community benefit hub will help Island and Sunshine Coast communities leverage those public-sector purchases to meet their community goals, thanks to funding support from the Island Coastal Economic Trust.

The two-year project will create a Community Benefit Hub, designed to provide expertise, materials and training to communities to support the development and implementation of strategic procurement. An expert contractor will be hired to develop template policies and procedures adaptable to the more than 60 local governments across the region and provide direct support to municipal government staff. The project contractor will also conduct outreach and education activities with communities and the private sector, to support optimal participation.

“The Community Benefit Hub is a collaborative grassroots approach aimed at fostering innovation and collaboration between industry and all levels of government,” said Qualicum Beach Mayor Teunis Westbroek. “This project will help maximize the value of public sector spending in order to achieve greater long term value for our economy and our communities.”

As an example, a community might have a strategic goal of increased Indigenous or youth employment or providing more training for local apprentices in Red Seal careers. Strategic procurement will allow communities to tailor their procurement processes to include those outcomes in the assessments of proposals.

The project is the result of a two year development process and partnership of multiple founding members including Cumberland, Ladysmith, Cowichan Valley Regional District, Gibsons, Powell River, Tofino, Campbell River, with the Town of Qualicum Beach and the City of Victoria sharing project leadership and administration duties.

The broad support for this project across the region is indicative of the level of interest and enthusiasm for the concept. A steering committee comprised of local elected officials and local government staff from across the region will provide broad oversight and guidance to the project.

“Local governments understand the impact that their purchasing can have but needed support and expertise to create the policies and frameworks needed to implement strategic local purchasing,” said ICET Chair and Mayor of Duncan Phil Kent. “This project will build those tools and templates, ensure best practices are shared and also provide outreach and training to the supply side, ensuring readiness on both sides of the procurement equation.”

With early support from communities across the entire region, the project will quickly reach a critical mass of participation, establishing this region as a knowledge hub for strategic procurement. It’s anticipated that this broad cross-section of participating communities will not only reduce costs through economies of scale but will create a level playing field at the regional level, ensuring stronger supply side participation. Project services could eventually be expanded to support strategic procurement implementation in other regional public sector organizations such as hospitals and educational institutions.

The \$86,000 ICET contribution to the \$260,000 project, was provided through the Innovation Support funding stream of the Economic Infrastructure and Innovation Program. This new funding stream is designed to drive and support growth of the technology sector and tech related projects across sectors, to increase innovation, productivity and competitiveness in key sectors as well as to support projects which pioneer “new ways of doing things” such as the Community Benefit Hub. Up to \$100,000 is available for qualifying projects, and more detailed information can be found under the ‘Programs’ tab at www.islandcoastaltrust.ca.

About the Island Coastal Economic Trust

Created and capitalized by the Province of BC, the Island Coastal Economic Trust has been at the forefront of economic diversification, planning and regional revitalization for the past eleven years.

ICET is independently governed by a Board of Directors and two Regional Advisory Committees which include more than 50 locally elected officials, MLAs and appointees from the Island and Coast. This exceptional team of leaders collaborate to set regional priorities and build vital multi-regional networks.

Through a community centered decision-making process, more than \$50 million in funding has been approved for over 180 economic infrastructure and economic development readiness projects. These investments have leveraged over \$270 million in new investment into the region creating more than 2500 construction phase jobs and 2600 long term permanent jobs.

A full overview of ICET can be found at www.islandcoastaltrust.ca.

-end-

For further information:

Line Robert, CEO
Island Coastal Economic Trust
Tel. 250-871-7797 (Ext. 227)
line.robert@islandcoastaltrust.ca

Mayor Phil Kent, ICET Chair
City of Duncan
Tel. 250-709-0186
mayor@duncan.ca

Daniel Sailland, CAO
Town of Qualicum Beach
Tel. 250-752-6921
dsailland@qualicumbeach.com