



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Stó:lō Community Futures Receives Western Economic Diversification Fund Award

Wednesday, August 23, 2017– Chilliwack, BC: The Honourable Navdeep Bains, Federal Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, and Minister overseeing Western Economic Diversification (WED), today announced that Stó:lō Community Futures (SCF) was awarded a three-year funding agreement under the Western Diversification Program (WDP). This three-year funding will formalize an existing partnership between SCF and Simon Fraser University (SFU)'s Beedie School of Business, to anchor the RADIUS First Peoples Enterprise Accelerator (FPEA) Program and launch the Program in S'ólh Téméxw, the Stó:lō Traditional Territory. Minister Bains was very pleased to announce the Federal Government support that will continue the growth and development of the rapidly expanding Indigenous economy in S'ólh Téméxw, a Federal priority.

Colin Pennier, Chairman of the Board of Directors of SCF, thanked Minister Bains and WED, for the generous Federal support in awarding these very valued funds to SCF. Mr. Pennier indicated, "that SCF, was very pleased with its formal partnership with SFU Beedie School of Business – RADIUS, in anchoring the FPEA in S'ólh Téméxw. We have a rapidly growing Indigenous entrepreneurial community and the RADIUS Programs, featuring the Trampoline program for Indigenous pre-entrepreneurs and the Slingshot program for advanced Indigenous entrepreneurs, designed to grow their companies to the next level, the Program will be profoundly beneficial in advancing **STÓ:LŌ MEANS BUSINESS™**. SCF has been receiving significant recognition for its award-winning **STÓ:LŌ STRATEGIC VISION**, which is focused upon developing a major Indigenous business center in S'ólh Téméxw and this announcement from Minister Bains furthers that recognition", said Mr. Pennier.

Dr. Ali Dastmalchian, Dean of the SFU Beedie School of Business, was also very pleased to receive Minister Bains' announcement, and to advance the Collaboration Agreement between SCF and SFU. "Our RADIUS FPEA Program, which has received funding from the Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) Foundation, is facilitated through RADIUS and SFU's Executive MBA in Aboriginal Business and Leadership. The Program is designed to provide support and services to Indigenous entrepreneurs who wish to become the next generation of leading innovators. With assistance from local Indigenous partners, its incubation programming offers technical assistance as well as strong research and evaluation processes. We are very pleased with our partnership with SCF, and look forward to working with SCF to advance the Indigenous economy in S'ólh Téméxw."



Michael Watson, General Manager of SCF, indicated that the first intake of Indigenous entrepreneurs for the Trampoline Program will begin in the Fall of 2018. Mr. Watson stated, “I am certainly very excited with the announcement from Minister Bains' Office for the funding programs and the supports that SCF will be putting in place, over the next three years in advancing entrepreneurship in S’ólh Téméxw.”

Donovan Woollard, Co-Director of RADIUS Ventures, also stated “SFU has been working with SCF for the last year, in finalizing the strategies for the RADIUS-First People's Enterprise Accelerator Program in Stó:lō. We have recently completed a comprehensive survey of the local Indigenous business community and are very excited, to be working with SCF in developing the Program and advancing Indigenous entrepreneurship S’ólh Téméxw.

Details on client applications can soon be found on the SCF website at www.stolocf.ca.

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