

Indigenous Digital Accelerator, Capilano University

A business accelerator is a program that gives developing companies access to mentorship, investors and other support that help them become stable, self-sufficient businesses. Less developed companies not ready for an accelerator would instead use a business incubator for support. In addition to mentorship and investment opportunities, a business accelerator gives growing companies access to logistical and technical resources. The goal is for companies to emerge ready to run on their own, with strong positioning to claim a share of their target markets.

The Indigenous Digital Accelerator (IDA) provides resources to nurture Indigenous business growth in the tech, digital-creative and cultural sectors. The project scales up early stage Indigenous companies with high growth, commercialization, and innovation potential within a framework that emphasizes community development and low environmental impact. The IDA also assists in addressing Indigenous participation gaps. The IDA accelerator program can last up to a year for participants.

The vision of the IDA is to grow a cluster of digital-creative businesses/organizations. The project aims to:

- Scale/grow 15-20 businesses/organizations by 2025
- Create 100 new Indigenous jobs by 2025
- Create hundreds of student employment and research opportunities

The IDA addresses significant gaps in the participation of Indigenous peoples in advanced technology, digital-creative and cultural sectors including, for example, Film, TV, games, and digital media. It will contribute to the development of hundreds of low-carbon jobs. This project will grow Indigenous digital intellectual property (IP) and technology development as well as digital/cultural products/services. Unlike traditional accelerator/incubators the focus on extractive measures, exits and multipliers is instead restored to community, entrepreneurial leadership and regenerative wealth in Indigenous communities.

Participants will receive **\$10,000 in non-dilutive, non-repayable funding** per company to address key technical and business milestones. The number of awards available each year will fluctuate dependent upon the amount of matching funds raised each year to match Western Economic Diversification funds. This \$10K may also be eligible for Mitacs matching funds. Additional support may be available in a variety of other ways, depending on the company's ability and desire to grow. (E.g. industry relevant mentors, prepping for an investor-ready pitch, introductions to investors, creation of a business model canvas.) If you are interested in this opportunity please see the guidelines listed below.

Indigenous Digital Accelerator Application Guidelines:

- Applicants must be an Indigenous owned business, with at least a 51% owner majority
- Businesses will be For-Profit
- Application is open to Indigenous businesses/residents of Canada
- Applicants must be an already established business operating for at least 2 years.
- Business will have existing customers and sales, community support and be poised for growth.
- Applicants must fill out the application completely. Review the questions and if you're unsure about a question(s) reach out to the IDA Manager for guidance:
ida@capilano.ca
- The completed application and Indigenous identity form (if applicable) should be emailed to: **ida@capilano.ca**