

New Circular Economy Accelerator Program Seeks Vancouver Island and Sunshine Coast Business Participants

Vancouver Island Coast Economic Developers Association and Synergy Foundation support Vancouver Island businesses to become green economy leaders

VANCOUVER ISLAND – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JULY 7, 2022 – A Circular Economy Accelerator Program is launching on Vancouver Island and on the Sunshine Coast to spur the transition to a sustainable, resilient economy. This program – the first of its kind in Canada – is designed to support businesses who seek to adopt circular economy principles, reduce waste and emissions, and develop innovative practices while increasing revenue and reducing operational costs.

The program will offer hands-on support to 16 businesses located north of the Malahat and on the Sunshine Coast. For a participation cost of \$500, businesses will:

- Complete an on-site assessment with a circular advisor to identify circular solutions for their operations,
- Receive a report outlining key opportunities to reduce waste, energy use, and emissions,
- Attend facilitated industry-specific workshops to explore circular economy best practices and strengthen industry connections,
- Incorporate leading sustainability practices,
- Identify cost savings and value-add opportunities, and
- Receive a certificate of completion for the Circular Economy Accelerator Program.

Program participants will have the opportunity to be featured in a Business Resource Toolkit that will be made publicly available at the end of the program. This toolkit will include circular economy best practices, case studies, a self-assessment tool, and a waste audit tool that will support other businesses seeking circular solutions.

The program will be delivered by the Vancouver Island Coast Economic Developers Association (VICEDA) in partnership with the Synergy Foundation. This project has been supported by the Island Coastal Economic Trust and regional partners, including the City of Campbell River, City of Nanaimo, Cowichan Valley Regional District, Gabriola Island Chamber of Commerce, Municipality of North Cowichan, City of Port Alberni, and Sunshine Coast Regional Economic Development Organization. The program will target construction, manufacturing, hospitality, forestry, retail, agriculture, aquaculture, and mining industries.

The Accelerator will position Vancouver Island and Sunshine Coast businesses and VICEDA member regions as leaders in circular economy development, creating a stronger competitive advantage and sustainability focus that will support climate targets and attract talent and investment. The program will also strengthen the Island's business network, build resiliency, reduce community landfill waste, and increase sales of local circular products and services.

Applications for the program will open on July 19 and will be reviewed on a rolling basis until August 31 or until all spots are filled. Businesses will receive a response within four weeks of submitting their application. All interested businesses are invited to attend a free informational webinar on July 20 at 1pm.

Businesses can apply to the program and register for the webinar [here](#).

What is the circular economy?

The circular economy is an economic system that eliminates pollution and waste by retaining resources and manufactured goods within the system through innovation, reuse and repair, redistribution, recondition, and recycling processes, all of which are powered by renewable energy. These principles have been integral to traditional ways of life for Indigenous Peoples since time immemorial and align with natural processes. Transitioning from the current “take-make-waste” linear model to a circular economy reduces emissions, waste, and virgin resource demand while enabling affordable lifestyles and green job creation, and can provide a 4.5 trillion dollar value worldwide by 2030¹.

Quote

“The Accelerator program will foster innovation, stewardship, and collaboration within our business community, providing the hands-on support they need to adopt innovative circular practices. The transition to a circular economy will secure a vibrant, resilient, and prosperous future that will allow our community and environment to thrive.”

- Amrit Manhas, Economic Development Officer, City of Nanaimo

Vancouver Island Coast Economic Developers Association

The Vancouver Island Coast Economic Developers Association (VICEDA) was established in 1996 to foster engagement and involvement in the vast economic development activities in the region. Members meet at least quarterly, and benefit from industry knowledge sharing, ongoing resources including funding opportunities, and special events intended to encourage networking and growth of the Vancouver Island and Coast economy.

Synergy Foundation

Synergy Foundation is a non-profit with a mission to activate change, spark innovation and share ideas to steer our economy and communities towards a more regenerative future. Since its inception in 2013, Synergy has focused on innovative projects and programs that have pushed the envelope, supported hundreds of businesses, and turned great ideas into action.

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