



**- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -**

## **ENTREPRENORTH LAUNCHES WITH A SIX-MONTH ENTREPRENEUR SUPPORT PROGRAM**

**NUNAVUT, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES, YUKON – MAY 1, 2018** – EntrepreNorth is excited to announce the launch of a six-month entrepreneur support program to empower, connect and accelerate the efforts of northern community-based entrepreneurs. Responding to the needs of entrepreneurs, the program will combine practical business training, invited guest speakers, one-on-one business mentorship and life coaching, and networking opportunities with investors. Programming will take place in each of the three territories and will be complemented with online group support.

Benjamin Scott, Project Director of EntrepreNorth, says “there is a belief that northern Indigenous entrepreneurs can be catalysts of prosperity and drivers of social change within their own communities. The development of sustainable business, no matter how big or small, can create local economic opportunities to help break through poverty, address social challenges, and strengthen Northern ways of life.”

Driven by the priority to foster sustainable livelihoods in northern communities, Tides Canada is spearheading the launch of EntrepreNorth. Many communities across Northern Canada suffer from a lack of local business and employment opportunities, driving many northern residents into cycles of social welfare and poverty. There is, however, desire and opportunity to transform this reality with the incredible talent, innovation, and entrepreneurial spirit that already exists throughout the North. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report states that “First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples ...want to establish and develop their own businesses in ways that are compatible with their identity, cultural values, and world views”.

With these imperatives in mind, Tides Canada convened a multi-sector design team workshop in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, in September 2017. The design team was comprised of federal and territorial government officials, northern and indigenous entrepreneurs, territorial and philanthropic funding organizations, and those with experience supporting sustainable economic development in other parts of Canada. The purpose of the workshop was to collect

strategic advice to inform the design of a northern entrepreneurship support program. The workshop resulted in a number of themes that are shaping the design of the six-month entrepreneur support program.

Leena Evic, Executive Director/Founder of Piruvik Centre and an EntrepreNorth Project Advisor, says “from an Indigenous perspective there is a strong desire out there to build programming that creates agency for our people to build businesses in a way that reinforces and strengthens culture, identity, pride, and connection to community.”

Recruitment for the first cohort of entrepreneurs will begin May 1st, 2018 with an open call for applicants residing in Nunavut, Northwest Territories and Yukon. The first cohort theme is focused on “Land and Marine Based Products” and the second cohort theme will focus on “Local Tourism Services”. All program costs will be covered for successful applicants. Further program criteria and application details can be found online at [EntrepreNorth.ca](http://EntrepreNorth.ca). The application deadline for the first cohort is June 15, 2018.

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EntrepreNorth is a project initiative that offers programming to empower community-based entrepreneurs to build sustainable businesses and livelihoods across Northern Canada.

EntrepreNorth is a project on Tides Canada’s shared platform, which supports on-the-ground efforts to create uncommon solutions for the common good. Tides Canada is a national Canadian charity dedicated to a healthy environment, social equity, and economic prosperity.

The launch of the EntrepreNorth program was made possible through seed funding from the RBC Foundation, the Peter Gilgan Foundation, the 7th Generation Fund advised by Mike Robbins, the CJ Foundation, the Oak Foundation, and The Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation.

**Website: [entreprenorth.ca](http://entreprenorth.ca) | Social Media: @entreprenorth | #innovationspirit**

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