

# ACR Aboriginal Programs Project Program Template

<b>Program Area:</b>	3.0	Business Development
<b>Sub Program:</b>	3.2	Strengthening Business Capabilities
<b>Template:</b>	3.2.2	Environmental Consulting Business Partnership
<b>Sponsor(s):</b>	<i>Jacques Whitford Environment Limited</i>	

## 1. Objective

To establish and operate a sustainable, for-profit Aboriginal environmental services and solutions consulting business, increase Innu employment and business capacity, and provide training and mentoring.

## 2. Description

Minaskuat (pronounced “min-ah-sqwat”) Limited Partnership was created to provide environmental consulting services to resource developers in Labrador and other areas and to achieve long-term social and economic benefits associated with encouraging and developing Innu-owned and controlled businesses. It is the direct product of a long-term investment in building a business relationship and establishing trust between an Innu-owned environmental consulting firm (Innu Environmental Limited Partnership) and an international engineering, environmental and earth sciences consulting firm (Jacques Whitford).

Prior to forming Minaskuat (Innu-aimun for “in the bush”), its partners worked together in a spirit of cooperation and actively engaged in transferring business skills to and mentoring and training of Innu in environmental and archaeological methods and techniques over a period of approximately six years. The decision to enter into a formal business partnership was seen as mutually beneficial and a natural progression for working on key resource developments in the Innu land claims area. These include low-level military flight training, Voisey’s Bay mine/mill, Trans-Labrador Highway, proposed Lower Churchill hydroelectric development and other projects.

Minaskuat is 51% owned and controlled by Innu Environmental Limited Partnership and meets the Government of Canada’s definition of an Aboriginal business. It is committed to employing and training as many Innu as possible, at all levels of the company, in keeping with sound business principles and practices. Minaskuat is also committed to conducting its work in a manner that is respectful of the environment and Innu culture and traditions.

Minaskuat is based out of Sheshatshiu and Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador, and currently employs seven people on a permanent full time basis, four of whom are Aboriginal. Minaskuat’s seasonal staff can reach up to 30+ people, 99% of which are Aboriginal (mostly Innu). The services that Minaskuat provides include:

- Environmental impact assessment, including socio-economic impact assessment
- Environmental protection and management system planning
- Baseline environmental studies, including studies of freshwater, marine and terrestrial ecology
- Archaeology and heritage, traditional and cultural resources studies
- Traditional ecological knowledge studies
- Aboriginal community and public consultation
- Innu labour supply
- Logistical support and project management
- Materials testing
- Environmental engineering
- Geotechnical engineering
- Integrated risk assessment
- Innu Aimun and Inuktituk translation

### **3. Implementation**

Some of the key elements for implementation and management of this program are:

- Minaskuat was initially formed through a memorandum of understanding between its parent companies and later defined in legal agreements. Once established, the Labrador offices of its parent companies merged, their employees were laid off and immediately re-hired by the new company at a single location.
- Innu and other Aboriginal employees receive mentoring, on-the-job and other training. For example, an Innu woman is training for a managerial position. When she has learned the necessary management and business skills, she will be responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of Minaskuat.
- Innu pursuit of post-secondary education is recognized as important and Innu employees are encouraged to pursue post-secondary education. Minaskuat believes it has a role to play in encouraging education and the pursuit of environment-related careers in the Innu communities and with Innu youth. This includes participating in career fairs and other Innu-led initiatives.

### **4. Timeframe for Results**

The partners are committed to a long-term business relationship in Minaskuat.

### **5. Measurable Criteria**

- Increase in revenue and profit
- Performance, attendance, attitude and retention rates for Innu employees and employee satisfaction

- Innu advancement into management and/or meaningful positions
- Increased levels of education and skills development in Innu employees
- Client satisfaction
- Repeat business and expanding client base
- Expansion of the business and service lines
- Safety and quality performance

## **6. Budget**

Budgets are established on an annual basis by the board of directors.

## **7. Partners and Sponsors**

Minaskuat Limited Partnership is a legal business partnership between Innu Environmental Limited Partnership and Jacques Whitford. Innu Environmental Limited Partnership's parent company, Innu Development Limited Partnership, is owned by the Sheshatshiu Innu and Mushuau Innu Band Councils in Labrador. Jacques Whitford is a full-service engineering, environmental and earth sciences solutions provider with 1000 employees and offices across Canada, in the United States and other international locations.

## **8. Experience with the Program**

The experience has been positive from all perspectives (clients, partners and employees) and has achieved acceptance within the Labrador community.

IDLP (Innu Development Limited Partnership) has been nominated Band Enterprise of the Year for Eastern Canada. Companies like Minaskuat have come a long way since 2003 and are growing every day. The IDLP group of companies is also expanding and taking on new services and creating new opportunities for the Innu people.

## **9. General Applicability**

This model is applicable where a business case exists and a relationship of trust is or can be established and maintained between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal partners. The approach is particularly advantageous for resource development clients that are operating in areas subject to land claims and/or impacts and benefits agreements.

## 10. Additional Information or Support

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