

ESG Strategy Support Program Guidelines

The ESG Strategy Support program is a temporary funding program available to assist STEP members in developing ESG initiatives to support their export market development. This program may support the costs of engaging services of an ESG consultant to carry out initiatives such as :

- Undertaking an ESG baseline assessment
- Creating an ESG strategy or program
- ESG Program implementation and reporting
- Brand/Marketing development of the sustainability strategy as part of an export market development plan

Funding is 50% of consulting costs submitted up to a maximum reimbursement of \$5000 per approved applicant. Applications must be for projects undertaken between April 1, 2023 and March 30, 2024.

Eligibility

- STEP Regular or Premium Member in good standing
- Be in full compliance with all government laws and regulations;
- Be currently an incorporated business, partnership or proprietorship based in Saskatchewan and must be a registered company (federally or provincially) for a minimum of two years. Applicants may be asked to produce a copy of certificate of incorporation or other supporting documentation.

Eligible Costs:

Fees for the services of a consultant, may be claimed as part of the sustainability strategy. When choosing a consultant please note:

- The “**Consultant**” must be an **independent contractor**, not affiliated with the applicant company in any way, and all transactions must be at arm’s-length and at fair market value. Expenses are ineligible where there is indication of an employer-employee relationship or an affiliation.
- The Consultant must have a **specific expertise or training** not otherwise available within the applicant company and cannot be a representative or employee that is conducting business on your behalf.
- The program requires evidence in support of the work performed, such as contracts, scope of work and/or results of the work and proof of payment.
- The consultant must be undertaking work for Saskatchewan operations
- To be considered, your application must clearly explain the work that will be completed by the Consultant.
- Retainer fees and monthly installments are not eligible.
- For initiatives around building ESG into an applicant’s Brand/Marketing development – consultancy services may include the development and design of marketing materials (such as brochures, web pages, testimonials and technical documents) highlighting sustainability by an outside firm. The printing or production of materials in hardcopy, full corporate website re-development, multimedia/video production as well as media buys are not eligible costs.
- Consultants charges for travel fees and /or per diem fees are not eligible under the program and these expenses must be deducted from the claim



- Fees for the services of a consultant must be charged and claimed during the term of the agreement. Failure to demonstrate that the work was performed as per contract deliverables and for the duration of the approved project may render the claim ineligible.
- Each application can only have **one consultancy** attached to it. Only fully completed applications will be accepted for assessment. Applications will be accepted, assessed and approved based on available funding.
- **Please note that a completed application is not a guarantee of funding**
- Applications will be accepted on a first-come first serve basis as funding is limited for this fiscal year. This program is temporary and ends on March 31, 2024. A program extension may be considered based on program outcomes and available funding.

STEP reserves the right to determine the eligibility of expenses.

Reimbursement of Consulting Services

Reimbursement Procedure: All disbursements under the program are made on a reimbursement basis for direct costs incurred. Funding advances are not provided.

- a) Prior to reimbursement, the applicant must provide a detailed invoice/ receipt along with clear proof of payment for the consultancy services.
- b) The applicant will have 21 days from the end of completion of work in which to submit the requested documentation
- c) Upon receipt of all required documentation, reimbursement will be issued by EFT within four weeks in Canadian dollars
- d) The EFT will be sent to the company/legal entity, not the individual
- e) If the applicant is unable to meet the conditions and timelines noted above, then they will be considered in default of the program, eligibility will be rescinded, and they will not receive reimbursement

In order to be eligible for funding, any other Provincial or Canadian financial resources from government sources (federal, provincial and municipal) CANNOT be used to cover the same costs submitted under the application.

For additional information please contact stepspp@sasktrade.sk.ca

