



Request for Proposals (RFP)

Feasibility Study for the Establishment of a Creative Industries Hub in Southwest Alberta

Issued by: Economic Development Lethbridge (EDL)

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Introduction

Economic Development Lethbridge (EDL), in collaboration with 16 dedicated community partners, invites proposals from qualified and visionary consultancy firms to conduct a feasibility study on the establishment of a Creative Industries Hub in Southwest Alberta. This study marks the first comprehensive exploration of the region's potential in sectors such as film, digital media, content creation, e-sports, and game development, with a strong emphasis on inclusivity and cultural engagement.

Applicants will have access to:

- Two Graduate Assistant Students to support research, outreach, and stakeholder engagement
- Existing networks and insights from 16 community partners

Note: We are open to proposals from firms with strong strategic planning and engagement expertise. Specialized knowledge in every creative sector listed is not required; thoughtful collaboration and inclusive methodology are most valued.

Project Vision

This feasibility study will evaluate the potential for a Creative Industries Hub in Southwest Alberta to catalyze sector growth in film, digital media, content creators, e-sports, and game development. Key outcomes include assessing regional infrastructure, workforce capacity, and entrepreneurial resources to determine the viability of establishing an inclusive hub. The study will provide strategic insights to support local creative entrepreneurs, foster industry collaboration, and guide investment readiness.

This initiative will assess and build capacity for a future Creative Industries Hub, laying a foundation for sustainable investment. By examining sectors like film, digital media, content creators, e-sports, and game development, it will identify growth opportunities and address regional challenges. Generative AI offers transformative potential for content creation, productivity, and innovation, positioning the region at the forefront of digital advancement. Insights from Indigenous, BIPOC, rural, and youth communities will guide strategies for inclusive growth, embedding diverse voices in economic progress. Findings will shape the hub's structure, attracting businesses and promoting cross-sector collaboration. Local high schools and post-secondary institutions can use these insights to align programs with industry needs, preparing students for new roles. This study will establish the groundwork for a resilient, thriving creative ecosystem in Southwest Alberta.

The envisioned Creative Industries Hub will become a central ecosystem fostering regional economic diversification, talent retention, cultural inclusivity, and positioning Southwest Alberta as a vibrant hub of creativity, innovation, and investment opportunity.

Objectives

- Assess regional infrastructure, workforce capacity, and entrepreneurial resources to determine the viability of establishing an inclusive Creative Industries Hub.
- Analyze industry trends and market potential in film, content creators, digital media, e-sports, and game development, incorporating Generative AI and emerging technologies.
- Identify opportunities for cross-sector collaboration and investment attraction to strengthen regional creative industries.
- Develop workforce strategies that enhance talent retention, align educational programs with industry needs, and create new career pathways for underrepresented groups, including Indigenous, rural, and BIPOC communities.
- Ensure that stakeholder engagement is inclusive, culturally responsive, and designed to integrate perspectives from Indigenous leaders, youth, post-secondary institutions, and creative entrepreneurs.
- Provide a detailed implementation roadmap that includes infrastructure needs, financial modeling, and sustainability strategies to establish a thriving, future-ready creative ecosystem in Southwest Alberta.

Scope of Services

1. Industry and Market Analysis

- Evaluate the demand for creative industries in Southwest Alberta, including film, digital media, content creators, e-sports, and game development.
- Analyze the role of emerging technologies, such as Generative AI, in transforming creative content production and business opportunities.
- Assess competitive positioning of the region against other creative hubs nationally and internationally.

2. Infrastructure and Ecosystem Assessment

- Identify critical infrastructure gaps, including studio spaces, digital production facilities, and co-working environments to support industry growth.
- Evaluate the role of post-secondary institutions and training programs in supporting creative industry expansion.

3. Stakeholder and Community Engagement

- Conduct comprehensive consultations, including focus groups, interviews, and surveys with local businesses, industry leaders, Indigenous and rural communities, post-secondary institutions, and creative entrepreneurs.
- Develop culturally informed engagement strategies to ensure Indigenous, BIPOC, and rural voices are integrated into planning and decision-making.

4. Workforce and Talent Development Strategy

- Assess current workforce skills and gaps, identifying opportunities for specialized training and new career pathways.
- Collaborate with educational institutions to align curriculum and training programs with industry needs.
- Develop a strategy to attract and retain creative professionals in the region.

5. Economic and Community Impact Assessment

- Measure potential economic benefits, including job creation, investment attraction, and regional branding opportunities.
- Evaluate cultural and social impact, particularly how the hub can contribute to regional storytelling, tourism, and cultural representation.
- Identify financial sustainability models and potential funding sources for long-term hub operations.

6. Create Sector Trend Map and Apply Area analysis

- Determine a high level view of trends in the sector and map out the strategic viability of traditional and established areas of the creative economy such as film and television production and video game development along with emergent trends such as independent creators, podcasting, AI content creation, and other social media driven content along with e-sports and live streaming
- Make recommendations based on Lethbridge and Southwest Alberta's existing ecosystem findings the challenges and opportunities of building capacity in emergent versus established areas of the creative economy

Key Deliverables

- **Comprehensive Feasibility Study Report:** An in-depth document that includes market analysis, infrastructure needs, workforce strategies, investment opportunities, and cultural inclusion frameworks. The report must incorporate actionable recommendations and financial modeling for the successful capacity building of the region for a Creative Industries Hub.
- **Strategic Implementation Roadmap:** A step-by-step guide outlining specific phases, milestones, and resource allocations required to build and sustain the hub. The roadmap must include economic impact projections and funding strategies for long-term viability.
- **Stakeholder and Community Engagement Report:** A summary of findings from consultations with Indigenous, rural, BIPOC, and industry stakeholders, ensuring diverse perspectives are reflected in the study.
- **Talent and Workforce Development Framework:** A plan that aligns regional educational institutions, training programs, and industry demands to foster a pipeline of skilled professionals within the creative industries sector.
- **Executive Presentation:** A visually engaging and concise summary of findings, recommendations, and next steps, designed for stakeholder review and decision-making.

Proposal Requirements

Proposals must provide a structured and detailed response addressing the following elements:

- **Company Profile & Expertise:** Demonstrate experience in conducting feasibility studies within the creative industries, including economic development and cultural sector growth.
- **Innovative and Inclusive Methodology:** Present a clear approach that prioritizes diverse community engagement, stakeholder collaboration, and the integration of emerging technologies, such as Generative AI.
- **Work Plan and Timeline:** Provide a detailed project timeline, outlining key phases, milestones, and deliverables over the study's duration. **The grant must be completed with final report and refinements by March 31, 2026.**
- **Budget and Cost Breakdown:** A transparent, itemized budget demonstrating value-for-money and efficient use of resources. **The maximum budget amount of \$90k including GST**
- **Diversity and Cultural Competency Strategy:** Explain how the study will integrate Indigenous, BIPOC, rural, and underrepresented community perspectives to create an inclusive and equitable framework.
- **References & Past Performance:** Provide examples of previous work in creative industry development, regional economic studies, and culturally inclusive research initiatives.

Evaluation Criteria

- Proven Experience and Qualifications (30%)
- Methodology and Approach (20%)
- Cultural and Community Inclusion (10%)
- Detailed Project Plan and Timeline (20%)
- Economic and Sector Impact (10%)
- Transparent Budgeting and Cost-Efficiency (5%)
- Strong References and Demonstrable Success (5%)

Important Dates

- **Release of RFP:** Tuesday May 27, 2025
- **Deadline for Questions:** Thursday June 5, 2025 (by 4:00 PM MST).
 - **Submit Questions to** info@choosethbridge.ca with "RFP Question(s) – [Name of Company]"
- **Answers Provided By:** Friday June 6, 2025
- **Submission Deadline:** Wednesday June 18, 2025 (by 4:00 PM MST)

Submission Guidelines

Submit your proposal via email to: info@choosethbridge.ca

Subject Line: "Creative Industries Hub Feasibility Study Proposal – [Company Name]"

Only successful applicants will be contacted.

Terms and Conditions

- EDL reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals.
- All proposals will remain confidential and exclusively used for evaluation purposes.
- Issuance of this RFP does not commit EDL to award a contract.

Additional Information

Consult NRED Program Fact Sheet and Guidelines to fully understand the strategic alignments and desired outcomes of this pioneering study. <https://www.alberta.ca/system/files/jet-nred-program-fact-sheet.pdf>

Thank you for your interest in shaping an inclusive and dynamic future for Southwest Alberta's Creative Industries.

