

**For immediate release
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**NORTHERN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INITIATIVES COMMITTEE MOVES AHEAD
WITH PLANS TO FORM REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP**

Lillooet, BC – The Northern Economic Development and Initiatives (NEDI) Committee of the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD) is moving ahead with plans to form a regionally-based and community-driven committee / working group to coordinate economic development in the northern SLRD and explore the potential of creating a shared economic development service for the sub-region. The initiative is a key recommendation of the *Economic Development Governance Model Feasibility Study* conducted by the Fraser Basin Council for the NEDI Committee in 2014. Funding to establish the working group and see it through the initial development phase is being provided by the SLRD.

The intent is to form an inclusive, multi-party working group composed of representatives from local governments including First Nations, business organizations, community groups, and members of existing committees or groups doing similar work. An independent third party organization will be hired to establish the working group, recruit members and provide secretariat support. A Request for Proposals (RFP) to perform this work was issued earlier this week; the deadline to submit proposals is May 19. The NEDI Committee intends to award the contract by the end of May, with the first meeting of the new working group expected to take place this summer. The RFP can be downloaded from the SLRD website: www.slrd.bc.ca.

“A lot of planning and engagement has been done over the past few years to show us a path forward,” says Debbie Demare, SLRD Electoral Area A Director and Chair of the NEDI Committee. “What we’ve heard time and again from both the experts we hired and from our communities is that we must find ways to improve communication, strengthen relationships and work together. Establishing this working group is a positive step that will help us do just that; we’re excited to get started.”

The NEDI Committee is a Standing Committee of the SLRD Board. Composed of elected officials from both the SLRD and the District of Lillooet, its purpose is to develop and recommend strategies and implement plans that support and enhance sub-regional economic development opportunities and initiatives in the northern areas of the SLRD.

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