

***NEW PROGRAMMING TO STRENGTHEN CAMPBELL RIVER'S GROWING INNOVATION ECONOMY***

*Latest initiatives include entrepreneur-focused podcast, speaker series, virtual business hub and Hackathon*

COURTENAY, 7 December 2021 – A new project in Campbell River will build on existing successes by launching a suite of initiatives designed to strengthen innovation and entrepreneurship, with funding support through the Island Coastal Economic Trust's (ICET) DIVERSIFY – Capital and Innovation Program.

The Modern Entrepreneur Innovation Series project, led by the City's economic development department, will include four components that address the growing need to engage differently with community entrepreneurs and their markets, including a podcast, speaker series, online business hub and hackathon.

"It's inspiring to see a project developed to complement and enhance the growing entrepreneurial ecosystem," says ICET Board Chair Aaron Stone. "Not only does this suite of programs foster a culture of innovation, but it also aligns with the region's TechIsland.io strategy, supporting investment and business attraction into our communities."

Opportunities in the tech and innovation sector, for skill development and access to resources, networking and marketing, have been increasing in recent years. This latest Campbell River project will help businesses and entrepreneurs expand into national and international markets.

"We are thrilled to be launching these new programs that will help develop and enhance our innovation ecosystem," says Andy Adams, Mayor of the City of Campbell River. "This is perfect timing, as we are seeing growing support for the local supply chain and the variety of programming components will encourage the creation of a diverse and accessible entrepreneurial network."

The complementary set of virtual and enhanced programming will offer several opportunities for skill-development, networking and expansion. The bi-monthly recorded podcast series will cover a series of topics, including a highly anticipated segment featuring successful businesses in the community. These interviews and profiles will be shared with the international trade and investment representatives for use in their regional marketing efforts abroad.

The three-part speaker series will be offered in both hybrid virtual and in-person format in 2022 and 2023, with each event featuring an expert keynote and regional speaker. The virtual business hub will build on the current TECHatchery website and will integrate podcasts, livestream events, blog posts and other resources. The final component, the Business Innovation Hackathon, will be developed in partnership with The Campbell River Area Angel Group (CRAAG) and promoted to post-secondary students to help local businesses solve pandemic-related challenges.

The initiative is supported with funding from ICET's DIVERSIFY – Capital and Innovation Program, through the Innovation Support funding stream. Project activities are expected to get underway shortly.



Building a diverse and sustainable economy.

For more information about the DIVERSIFY – Capital and Innovation Program, please consult the ICET website: [www.islandcoastaltrust.ca](http://www.islandcoastaltrust.ca)

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#### **About the Island Coastal Economic Trust**

Created and capitalized by the Province of BC in 2006, the Island Coastal Economic Trust (ICET) mission is to create a more diverse and globally competitive Island and Coastal economy. In partnership with local and regional governments, non-profits and Indigenous communities, ICET serves over half a million residents. Funding and support for economic infrastructure and other economic diversification initiatives is delivered through a unique community centered decision-making process. Since inception, ICET has approved more than \$55 million in funding for over 280 initiatives. These investments have leveraged over \$270 million in new investment into the region creating more than 2600 construction phase jobs and 2750 long-term permanent jobs.

#### **For further information:**

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