



Atlantic Canada
Opportunities
Agency

Agence de
promotion économique
du Canada atlantique

Canada

News Release Communiqué

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ATLANTIC WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS EXPLORE NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPAND THEIR BUSINESSES

MONCTON (NB) - March 4, 2011 – It will soon be easier for women entrepreneurs in Atlantic Canada to expand their businesses, thanks to WEConnect Canada’s Women Business Enterprise (WBE) certification program. This program paves the way for women business owners in the region to access global supply chains and supplier diversity programs with Fortune 500 companies, thereby helping to increase their export capacity and economic opportunities.

“Our Government declared 2011 the Year of the Entrepreneur because businesses play a key role in securing Canada’s ongoing economic recovery,” said the Honourable Keith Ashfield, Minister of National Revenue, Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway. “Every year, entrepreneurs create about 130,000 new companies in Canada. We are pleased to support businesses through programs and services that stimulate economic growth, create more jobs for Canadians and open doors to new export markets.”

WEConnect Canada is a non-profit organization that qualifies eligible firms under the WBE certification program and connects them with the growing corporate and public sector demand for diverse suppliers in Canada and abroad. WEConnect will manage the delivery of the WBE certification program in Atlantic Canada. Through this program, WEConnect will train more certified assessors in the region, provide mentoring and coaching for certified WBE’s, as well as create more general awareness about the benefits of becoming certified.

“WEConnect Canada is thrilled to be able to help meet a growing demand for diverse suppliers through our certification program and mentoring efforts,” said Mary Anderson, Executive Director of WEConnect Canada. “ACOA’s funding will allow us to deliver certification that ensures women business owners meet an international standard needed to access global supply chains, and will help us introduce women-owned businesses to a comprehensive network of large corporations. It’s great news for women entrepreneurs in Atlantic Canada.”

ACOA is providing a contribution of over \$134,000 toward the project, through its Business Development Program (BDP); WEConnect is investing an additional \$152,000.

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FOR BROADCAST USE:

Women entrepreneurs in Atlantic Canada will have increased opportunity to reach new export markets and do business with Fortune 500 companies, thanks to a certification program for women-owned businesses. WEConnect Canada will manage the delivery of the certification program for women-owned businesses in Atlantic Canada and provide mentoring and coaching for certified businesses.

ACOA Minister Keith Ashfield said helping entrepreneurs grow their businesses creates a stronger economy for Atlantic Canada.

The Government of Canada, through ACOA, is investing over \$134,000 in the initiative.

News releases are available on ACOA's website at: www.acoa-apeca.gc.ca.

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