PUBLIC OVERVIEW | MANITOBA

Inawendiwin Trust

INDIGENOUS STEWARDSHIP PARTNER PROGRAM

"Nation-authorized partnerships that turn recurring business contributions into transparent, locally directed stewardship."

NATION-AUTHORIZED PARTNERSHIP | RECURRING CONTRIBUTIONS | PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY

Inawendiwin Trust connects First Nations and aligned Manitoba businesses through place-based stewardship programs. Each participating Nation or authorized Indigenous body defines the relationship, protocols, priorities and public claims. Businesses commit to those terms, complete orientation, make a recurring contribution and renew annually. The Trust safeguards program funds, supports administration and publishes clear evidence of how contributions are used.

PURPOSE

First Nations carry enduring responsibilities for lands, waters, culture and community. Businesses often benefit from the same territories and local economies, yet practical pathways for ongoing contribution are limited. Inawendiwin creates a credible, repeatable mechanism for relationship, accountability and Nation-led action.

WHO SETS THE TERMS

Programs begin only with written Indigenous authorization. The partner approves the program name, geographic or issue focus, protocol, contribution formula, eligible uses, participation criteria, public claims and annual reporting.

HOW CONTRIBUTIONS WORK

Businesses choose an approved contribution method:

- 1% of defined participating revenue or a customer-facing stewardship contribution; or
- a fixed annual tier suited to smaller firms, professionals, suppliers and founding individuals.

Contributions are tracked separately by program. Contributors receive no units, ownership interest, repayment right or financial return.

WHAT CONTRIBUTIONS SUPPORT

Guardian and land-based work; water and habitat monitoring; restoration; cultural and ecological education; youth field training; community care; planning; local staffing; and other partner-approved priorities. A program may also acquire and retire verified environmental assets where that action directly supports its approved stewardship plan.

WHO PARTICIPATES

The program authority is a First Nation, tribal council, Indigenous-owned development corporation, Guardian program or other authorized Indigenous stewardship body. Participating businesses and organizations may include tourism, hospitality, retail, transportation, construction, agriculture and food, resource suppliers, professional services and major employers.

WHAT PARTICIPATING BUSINESSES RECEIVE

- time-limited participation status and an approved program mark;
- onboarding, orientation and approved educational materials;
- public participant listing and communications support;
- ongoing liaison, relationship support and networking opportunities; and
- annual proof of contribution and program impact.

WHAT PARTICIPATION DOES NOT MEAN

Participation is not Indigenous ownership or blanket endorsement. It is not consent, a universal sustainability rating, an offset or carbon-neutrality claim, preferential access or a social licence. It does not replace consultation, accommodation, permits, taxes, procurement commitments, commercial obligations or Nation decision-making.

RECOGNITION AND PUBLIC PROOF

Each program maintains a current participant register and publishes a clear record of aggregate contributions, approved uses, administration and impact. Where verified environmental credits are retired, registry evidence is made public.

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

1 AUTHORIZE An Indigenous partner approves the program, priorities, protocol and public claims.	**2 DESIGN** Workshops, market testing, budget, criteria, agreements and independent program identity.	**3 JOIN** A business signs the protocol, completes orientation and selects an approved contribution method.
4 VERIFY Participation and contributions are verified; time-limited recognition is issued.	**5 STEWARD** Funds are safeguarded and released only to partner-approved priorities or authorized retirements.	**6 REPORT & RENEW** Results are reported publicly and participation is renewed against the program requirements.

OPERATING MODEL | PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY

Nation-led by design.

TRANSPARENT BY PRACTICE.

WHAT INAWENDIWIN DELIVERS

01 PLANNING & VISIONING Community and stakeholder workshops, feasibility, market assessment, stewardship priorities and capital planning.	**02 PROGRAM DESIGN** Nation-specific protocols, participation standards, contribution formula, agreements, program identity, claims and renewal rules.
03 BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT Founding cohort recruitment, onboarding, orientation, staff education, events and relationship building.	**04 ADMINISTRATION & LIAISON** Contribution tracking, verification, records, renewals, participant support and ongoing coordination with the Indigenous partner.
05 COMMUNICATIONS & PUBLIC PROOF Participant registry, approved messaging, media support, contribution summaries and annual impact reporting.	**06 FUNDING & PROJECT DEVELOPMENT** Funding strategies, grant applications and implementation support that build on predictable local contributions.

PROGRAM ROLES

INDIGENOUS PARTNER Rights-holder and program authority. Approves the terms, priorities, representatives, eligible uses, expenditures, claims and public reporting.	**INAWENDIWIN TRUST** Purpose-bound stewardship vehicle. Receives and segregates contributions, maintains records, authorizes disbursements under the agreement and publishes program accountability.
PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR Delivers planning, outreach, onboarding, verification, liaison, communications, reporting and funding support under a written mandate.	**PARTICIPATING BUSINESS** Signs the protocol, contributes, completes orientation, uses the participation mark accurately, renews annually and does not overstate its status.

FINANCIAL INTEGRITY

Program-development and administration costs are defined through written service agreements. Stewardship contributions are ring-fenced for the approved program. Administration is paid separately where possible; any contribution-funded share is capped, disclosed before enrolment and reported annually. Separate ledgers, contribution records and approval controls support traceability.

GOVERNANCE

Startup governance includes a trustee or small trustee group, a partner-approved steering function, independent bookkeeping and written conflict, procurement, contribution, claims and disbursement policies. Contributors do not control Trust assets or Indigenous partner decisions.

CERTIFICATION AND CLAIMS

Certification confirms only that a participant met the named program’s protocol, contribution and reporting requirements for the stated period. It is not blanket proof that the business or every product is sustainable, Indigenous-owned, carbon neutral or compliant with every Indigenous law. Contributions do not purchase consent, satisfy consultation or accommodation, waive rights or replace regulatory and commercial obligations.

FOUNDING PROGRAM PATHWAY

01 Secure written Indigenous partner authorization.
02 Define the stewardship priority, protocol, budget and claims.
03 Confirm a founding cohort of four or five aligned businesses.
04 Receive the first verified contribution and fund an approved action.
05 Publish the participant register and first impact record.

PURPOSE

“Establish and steward Indigenous-authorized business partnership and certification programs; receive, hold, administer and deploy recurring contributions for Nation-led environmental, cultural and community stewardship; and acquire, hold and retire verified environmental assets and related conservation interests - including carbon, water, biodiversity and other nature-based credits or rights - for long-term ecological protection.”

WHY A TRUST? A trust structure ring-fences contributions around a continuing stewardship purpose, separates protected program assets from ordinary operating revenue, and supports continuity and public accountability. Program services may be delivered directly or by an appointed administrator under contract.	**WHO IS IT FOR?** First Nations and authorized Indigenous stewardship bodies seeking stable, locally generated stewardship revenue and program capacity; and Manitoba businesses seeking a credible, relationship-based and publicly verifiable way to contribute.

Program terms, contribution formulas, eligibility, use of marks and approved expenditures are established through written agreements with each participating Indigenous partner.