Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program
Green Infrastructure - Climate Change Mitigation
CleanBC Communities Fund

Frequently Asked Questions

This FAQ document supports information on the **CleanBC Communities Fund** webpage and in the **Program Guide**. Applicants are advised to refer to all of these resources prior to filling out the application for the program.

GENERAL

Q: What is the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program – Green Infrastructure – Climate Change Mitigation – CleanBC Communities Fund?

A: Canada and British Columbia governments, through a bilateral agreement, are investing in the **CleanBC Communities Fund** to support infrastructure projects in communities across the province.

Canada created the Investing in Canada Plan with the objectives to: create long-term economic growth, support a low carbon, green economy, and build inclusive communities. In 2017, Canada committed $4.1 billion in infrastructure funding to BC in an Integrated Bilateral Agreement for the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) under the Investing in Canada Plan. In signing the agreement, BC agreed to assign provincial funds to the four funding streams: public transit infrastructure, community, culture and recreation infrastructure, green infrastructure, and infrastructure in rural and northern communities.

The CleanBC Communities Fund is funded under the green infrastructure climate change mitigation sub-stream of ICIP, and consists of combined federal-provincial funding. It is a competitive, merit-based grant program, focused on funding infrastructure projects that support the management of renewable energy, access to clean energy transportation, improved energy efficiency of public buildings and the generation of clean energy

For more information on the Investing in Canada Plan, see the Government of Canada websites:
http://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/plan/about-invest-apropos-eng.html or
https://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/pt-sp/bc-eng.html

Q: Can Program staff divulge future CleanBC Communities Fund intakes, amounts and dates for the Fund?

A: There are no guaranteed future funds for the CleanBC Communities Fund. There are additional federal amounts under ICIP that the Province could choose to utilize by pairing with provincial funding. However, the timing and amount of future intakes is not yet determined at this point, as we do not yet have approval of provincial funds.

Q: What are some of the necessary steps to take when preparing to apply to the program?

A: Read the Program Guide and the Application Instructions – they contain all the information you need to fill out the application.

B: Apply for a business BCeID (this can take **15 days**) if your organization does not already have access to the Local Government Information System (LGIS). Applications will be submitted using this system. The deadline by which a BCeID must be obtained is **March 6, 2019**.

C: Once your organization has its business BCeID it must then request access to LGIS in order to gain access to the CleanBC Communities Fund application. Please note that the BCeID must be specific to the applicant (not a consultant assisting with an application). New users to LGIS will be required to complete and submit the Request Access form. This process requires verification (it is not instant**). Please request access to LGIS on or before March 20, 2019.** Once you have completed this step, staff will notify you that this step is complete.

D: Contact staff with questions **before the application deadline to allow time to answer questions**.

E: Prepare key items such as a detailed cost estimate (see template on website), feasibility study, and review permits and approvals necessary to proceed.

F: Review the application questions. These are available on the program website and when accessing the application directly through the LGIS system.

WHO CAN APPLY

Q: Who can submit applications for the CleanBC Communities Fund?

A: Local governments, Indigenous Ultimate Recipients (both on and off-reserve), Not-for-Profit organizations and For-Profit organizations can submit applications.

To be eligible, applications from Not-for-Profit organizations and For-Profit organizations must demonstrate that the organization is working in collaboration with a local government or Indigenous governing body, by including a partnership agreement. **This will not count as an application for the Local Government or Indigenous governing body.** Please refer to section 2.1.3 in the Program Guide for the definition of an eligible Not-for-Profit or For-Profit organization. The project must be for public use and benefit and revenues must not exceed operating expenses in the five years following project completion.

Q: Can I partner with another Local Government or First Nation to apply for funding under this program?

A: Yes, one eligible ultimate recipient can partner with another eligible recipient to apply for funding. A partnership agreement or MOU should be provided with the application. Another organization is generally considered to be a partner when they contribute value to the project (generally funding, either for construction of the project or for ongoing operations and maintenance).

Q: As a First Nations economic development corporation, should we apply as an Indigenous Ultimate Recipient or a For-Profit? What cost-sharing level would the project be eligible for?

A: Please see section 2.1.4 of the CleanBC Communities Fund Program Guide which sets out eligible Indigenous Ultimate Recipients as per the agreement with Canada. If the economic development corporation is a Not-for-Profit organization whose central mandate is to improve Indigenous outcomes, working in collaboration with a band council or Indigenous government, the organization is eligible as an

Indigenous Ultimate Recipient. If the economic development corporation is set up as a For-Profit, and/or earnings go back to shareholders, the applicant should apply as a for-profit.

WHAT PROJECTS ARE ELIGIBLE

Q: What types of projects are supported by the CleanBC Communities Fund?

A: As long as your project supports one of the federal outcomes and meets the additional requirements outlined in the application/program guide, your project should be eligible. Eligible projects will be infrastructure for public use and benefit.

If in doubt regarding eligibility, please contact program staff.

Q: Will the CleanBC Communities Fund support design-only projects?

A: No, projects must physically construct capital infrastructure. However the design costs associated with the infrastructure constructed are eligible costs as part of a successful grant.

Q: In previous programs, projects were not required to meet outcomes. Why does this program require projects to meet outcomes?

A: This program uses a federal outcome based approach rather than a category based approach. Projects that meet the specified outcomes as listed in Section 3.1 of the Program Guide will be eligible for funding. The use of outcomes focuses funding on particular desired results and provides more flexibility around the types of projects able to be applied for under the program.

Q: The Program Guide identifies that the program is designed to support projects that can be completed in five to six years. Does this mean that projects that can be completed in a shorter timeframe are ineligible?

A: All projects that can be completed within this timeframe are eligible, including those that can be completed in a shorter period. We encourage that projects that will take longer than 5 to 6 years to complete be phased.

Q: Can we award the construction tender prior to the project being approved for funding?

A: No, a project is deemed ineligible if the construction tender has been awarded prior to the date a Shared Cost Agreement between the Province and the Ultimate Recipient is signed.

Q: Can we submit an application for a project that was unsuccessful under a previous infrastructure grant program?

A: Yes, if the project has good alignment with the program outcomes and criteria. We recommend that you contact Ministry staff to discuss your previous application and areas where improvements can be made prior to submission under the program. Note that the application questions are different than for previous programs.

Q: Is there a maximum grant amount for projects?

A: There is no maximum grant amount under the program. However, fair distribution of the funds will be considered and larger funding requests may not be able to be granted due to the need for fair distribution

of funds. Applicants are advised to consider whether large projects can be phased, or be completed successfully with a lower funding request.

WHEN CAN I APPLY and WHAT ARE THE FUNDING TIMELINES

Q: What are the application timelines?

A: The application intake opened on **December 18, 2018**. Applications can be submitted until **11:59(PST) March 27, 2019**. **Reminder**: It can take up to 15 business days to obtain a business BCeID, please account for this while creating your timelines for applying. The deadline for obtaining a business BCeID in order to apply for the CleanBC Communities Fund is March 6, 2019, and access to the application system should be requested on or before March 20, 2019.

Q: When will funding decisions be announced?

A: Funding announcements are anticipated to be in **late 2019**.

PROJECT COSTS

Q. Our project incurred costs before we were approved for CleanBC Communities Fund funding. Are these costs considered eligible and can we claim them for reimbursement?

A: No, only costs incurred after the project approval date as specified in the Shared Cost Agreement with the Province of BC are eligible, with the exception of the costs associated with climate lens assessments and community benefit plans. Note that costs associated with climate lens assessments and community benefit plans will not be able to be claimed until a Shared Cost Agreement is in place.

Q: What is the difference between the preliminary greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) assessment (GHG calculation) and the Climate Lens – GHG assessment and their associated costs?

A: All project applications will include a preliminary GHG calculation, required at the application stage; the simplified methodology for which can be found on the CleanBC Communities Fund website, www.gov.bc.ca/Investing-in-Canada-Infrastructure-Program.

The preliminary GHG calculation will provide the foundation for a Climate Lens-GHG assessment which will be required for shortlisted projects. In addition to this Climate Lens –GHG assessment, a Climate Lens – Climate change resilience assessment will be required for shortlisted projects with total estimated eligible expenditures of $10 million or more.

Unlike the certified Climate Lens - GHG assessment, the preliminary GHG calculation does not require validation by a qualified party. Costs associated with completing this preliminary calculation are not eligible for reimbursement under the CleanBC Communities Fund. Costs associated with the certified Climate Lens – GHG assessment and the Climate change resilience assessment will be considered as eligible as part of the funding.

Q: Do invoices need to be paid prior to submitting a claim to the Province for reimbursement under the grant?

A: Yes, invoices will need to have been paid by the applicant prior to reimbursement under the program. The program is claims based.

Q: There are changes or variations to our original, approved project. Do we have to notify the Province?

A: Yes. The proponents need to advise the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, in writing, of any variation from the approved project. Before such changes are implemented they must be approved by the Ministry otherwise costs incurred may not be eligible for reimbursement.

Q: We have decided not to proceed with our project as originally outlined. Can we use the program funds for another infrastructure project in our community?

A: The funding is specific to the project, not the community. Please contact program staff to discuss.

Q: Can we directly award a contract(s) for undertaking the project?

A: All contracts must be awarded in a way that is transparent, competitive and consistent with value for money principles. All records of the tendering process need to be retained and made available upon request. Projects that involve sole source contracting (contracts over $25,000 or, for the acquisition of architectural and/or engineering services, over $100,000) will be subject to federal Treasury Board approval prior to approval into the program. Additional information will be requested from applicants in this case to support a submission and to ensure that contracts are being awarded in a fair manner.

Q: Are we allowed to plan to use our own staff time to carry out project construction?

A: The use of the organization's staff time may be allowed in certain cases where it is not economically feasible to tender a contract. This type of arrangement must be approved in advance and in writing by the Province and by Canada.

Q: If we are unable to move forward with the project after funding is awarded, can we be reimbursed for costs incurred prior to the cancelation?

A: No, any costs incurred to the cancelled project will not be reimbursed. Funding requires that projects meet at least one of the outcomes of the program.

USE OF OTHER FUNDING SOURCES AND BORROWING

Q: Can we use funding acquired from other federal grant programs as our contribution to project funding under the program?

A: It cannot be utilized as part of the ultimate recipient's contribution to the project and federal funding will be reduced to the maximum commitment under the program. Federal government funding is subject to stacking rules. The exception to this is Indigenous Ultimate Recipients who, with approval from Canada, may use other federal sources of funding to fund projects up to 100% of eligible project costs.

Q: Can we use money from Gas Tax Community Works as part of the applicant financial contribution under the program?

A: No, funding obtained under Gas Tax Community Works funds cannot be used as part of the local government funding contribution under this program. It is counted as federal funds and would be subject to stacking rules under the program (i.e. the maximum senior government contribution under the program would be maintained and using these funds could reduce the federal grant award amount).

Q: Where can I find out more about the borrowing process for long term borrowing / loan authorization bylaws (local governments)?

A: More information can be found here: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/local-governments/governance-powers/bylaws/provincial-approval-of-bylaws/loan-authorization-bylaw-requirements. Refer to the section on Borrowing Process. Bringing the loan authorization bylaw to third reading is the initial step in the process.

Q: We are having trouble completing the 3rd reading for a loan authorization bylaw by the intake deadline. What should I do?

A: Please contact program staff for options. Where a delay is justified, a short extension may be able to be given to submit documentation associated with this requirement. Where borrowing and public approval is required, the 3rd reading will still be required for the project to be assessed and progress further in the selection process.

Q: Are there any restrictions to applying under the CleanBC Communities Fund if we have already applied under a different program within the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (such as the Environmental Quality or Community, Culture and Recreation Programs)?

A: An applicant may apply to more than one open ICIP program for the same project, however, the project will only be funded through one program. If an application submitted to more than one program (for the same project) is successful, it will be funded under the program as determined by the Ministry. This decision is final and not subject to appeal. If a project is approved under one ICIP Program, it becomes ineligible for funding under another ICIP program. For example, if a project is approved for funding under the Environmental Quality Program, the same project will be ineligible for funding under the CleanBC Communities Fund. If an application is submitted under the CleanBC Communities Fund for the same project, it will still count towards the application limit for the program.

Q: Can Low Carbon Economy Fund (LCEF) and ICIP fund the same project?

A: No, because the LCEF itself cannot be stacked with any other federal program. Furthermore, projects eligible under the LCEF (e.g. residential/commercial retrofit projects) are explicitly excluded under the Green Infrastructure – Climate Change Mitigation sub-stream to ensure the two programs do not overlap.

HOW DO I APPLY

Q: What is the process for submitting an application for the CleanBC Communities Fund?

A: Applicants must complete and submit an online application form through the Local Government Information System (LGIS). New users are encouraged to start the process of requesting a business BCeID as early as possible, as the BCeID will be required to then request and set up access to the LGIS. This can take up to **15 business days and the deadline to obtain the BCeID is March 6, 2019. The set up in LGIS requires verification (it is not instant) and should be requested on or before March 20, 2019.**

Q: Do I need to answer all of the questions on the application form?

A: Yes. Please note that answering N/A (except when instructed as an option in a question) to required questions may affect your project's scoring and ranking in the technical assessment process. There is a need to ensure that projects align with program criteria and senior government priorities, and to gather enough information to assess applications accordingly.

Q: I don't know how to answer one of the questions on the application form. What should I do?

A: Please contact program staff for guidance if you do not know how to answer a question. We can provide advice.

Q: Where can I obtain assistance in completing the application form?

A: Program staff are happy to provide advice and clarify where we can. However, please note that we are a small team. With a large number of potential applicants we are limited in capacity, so we ask that applicants with questions review the program materials on the website first. This will increase the quality of the conversation and corresponding advice.

Q: What are some tips for submitting an application with multiple phases?

A: The application should clearly identify the breakdown of the different phases, and how each phase contributes towards meeting the project outcome. A detailed break-down for all phases should be included in the Detailed Cost Estimate Template.

PROJECT SELECTION

Q: What is the evaluation process for applications under the funding?

A: The Program is merit based and projects are subject to a comprehensive technical ranking assessment and internal provincial review, with a list provided to the Oversight Committee and recommendations submitted to Canada for final approval. The internal provincial review may include consideration of factors such as regional distribution of funding, previous funding, communities in need, and unmitigated project risks.

Applicants must ensure that their application demonstrates how the project will be eligible for funding (Section 3.2 of the program guide), how the project benefits align with one or more of the outcomes (Section 3.1 of the program guide), how the project aligns with program criteria described in the application form and in this guide, and how the project is supported by sustainable management and planning.

Q: How do I create a strong application?

A: A strong application clearly demonstrates how the project aligns with program objectives, clearly describes the need for the project within the community, has a detailed cost estimate/budget, demonstrates that appropriate stakeholders have been consulted and required permits have been identified, demonstrates a plan for operation and maintenance, and has good alignment with organizational objectives.

A well written application will include the following:

- Be clear and concise, with full but succinct answers that directly address each question;
- Answers will be provided for all questions with no questions left blank. Only use N/A if it is provided as an option to a question and is pertinent to your project;
- Provide qualitative/distinct answers to each question (avoid copying and pasting the same response into several sections of the application);
- Ensure any/all attachments are in a searchable format with corresponding sections referenced in application answers; and
- Include letters of support from organizations such as health authorities where applicable and from any project partners (or a partnering agreement/Memorandum of Understanding).

Note:

- There are character limits for questions within the application form which are visible when using the online application form.
- Please contact program staff for assistance before submitting if you are having difficulty answering any application questions.

SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS

Q: Will an environmental assessment be required?

A: Applicants are expected to determine whether all applicable legislative or regulatory requirements will or have been met, including requirements for federal or provincial environmental assessments.

Q: What should I expect in terms of reporting requirements for a successful project?

A: Ultimate recipients will be required to submit quarterly progress reports and monthly budget forecast reports to provincial program staff. These reports update the federal and provincial agencies regarding timelines, percentage completion, milestones, forecasting and other information regarding the project. Progress reports are required whether or not a claim is made, or whether or not construction has begun. The reports are required for the period between project approval and project completion.

Section 9.6 of the Program Guide contains additional details on reporting requirements.

Q: Do I need to retain ownership of infrastructure assets once the project is complete?

A: Yes. There will be a requirement in the Shared Cost Agreement with the Province that ultimate recipients will need to maintain ongoing operations and retain title to and ownership of the asset for at least 5 years following completion of the project. Assets may be able to be transferred to Canada, British Columbia, or a municipality or regional district in particular circumstances with agreement from the Province and Canada.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR PROJECTS OVER $10 MILLION

Q: What additional requirements will there be for projects over $10 Million?

A: For projects with total estimated eligible expenditures of $10 million or more, requirements will include:

- Climate Lens Resilience Assessment – a Climate Change Resilience Assessment for projects with total eligible expenditures of $10 M or more.
- Community Benefits Reporting – for projects with total eligible expenditures of $25 M or more.
- Value Engineering – for projects with total eligible expenditures of $15 M or more and a sufficiently complex nature that they would benefit from a value engineering assessment. (Application of this requirement is on a case by case basis at the discretion of BC. Contact program staff to discuss this requirement.)

These will be requested following Provincial "approval-in-principle" of the project for funding.

Q: How do these additional requirements affect funding approval?

A: These additional requirements for larger projects, along with a federal form to determine if there are any federal environmental assessment or Indigenous consultation requirements (form is applicable to all projects, not just large projects), will be required to be completed to BC and Canada's satisfaction prior to Canada's approval of a project into the program. Only organizations whose applications are shortlisted and given Provincial "approval-in-principle" will need to complete these additional requirements; they are not required at the application stage.

ENERGY RETROFITS

Q: What is an energy retrofit and are energy retrofit projects eligible under the CleanBC Communities Fund?

A: Energy retrofits are upgrades to a building's energy-consuming systems. They can involve measures ranging from superficial, low-cost measures/modifications to full overhauls or replacement of major systems.

For further information regarding energy retrofit, see National Resources Canada's website. (http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/energy/efficiency/buildings/eeeb/retrofit/4111)

Energy retrofits are eligible when they are conducted on assets (buildings) that are otherwise eligible for funding under the wider Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program. Broadly interpreted, these are buildings that are for public use and benefit.

Under the CleanBC Communities Fund, infrastructure investments in health and education facilities are only eligible when there is a primary benefit to Indigenous peoples that advances the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. Energy retrofits to such facilities would be also eligible under the Green Infrastructure – Climate Change Mitigation sub-stream.

Energy retrofit projects must increase the energy efficiency of buildings. Only the incremental cost of energy efficiency measures is eligible under the program when a new building is constructed. The full cost of building a new community building is not eligible under this program.

Q: What types of infrastructure assets are ineligible for energy retrofits?

A: Government offices, administration buildings, city halls, hospitals, schools, and emergency services infrastructure are examples of assets that are not eligible under the wider ICIP and are therefore ineligible for energy retrofit costs.

Assets such as provincial, territorial and municipal buildings, hospitals, universities, fire halls, emergency services buildings and schools are generally not eligible under the ICIP.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Q: Would construction of renewable energy assets be included under the "increased capacity to manage more renewable energy" or "increased generation of clean energy" outcome? For example, if a community built wind turbines to connect to the public power grid, would this be considered eligible?

A: Construction of renewable energy assets such as wind turbines would align with the "increased generation of clean energy" outcome and are eligible as long as they meets the other program criteria.

Q: Could a province or territory seek funding to subsidize the installation of solar panels on private homes?

A: No, a subsidy or any other program would not be eligible under ICIP. Under the ICIP, funds must be allocated to individual projects (i.e. tangible capital assets) and be for broad public use and benefit. Also, private homeowners are not eligible ultimate recipients.

Q: Would the expansion of a hydro dam's reservoir be an eligible project?

A: Yes, this could be an eligible project under the "increased generation of clean energy" outcome if it allows the dam to maintain or increase its capacity to generate hydroelectricity and meets the other ICIP terms and conditions.

Q: Would an integrated resource recovery system be an eligible project?

A: Yes, this could be an eligible project under ICIP as long as it meets one of the four **CleanBC Communities Fund** Outcomes for increasing the capacity to manage renewable energy, increasing access to clean energy transportation, increasing energy efficiency of buildings and increasing the generation of clean energy, in addition to other ICIP terms and conditions.

Increased Access to Clean Energy transportation

Q: What level of charging infrastructure is eligible under the CleanBC Communities Fund?

A: Level 2 charging infrastructure is eligible under **CleanBC Communities Fund**. Level 3 charging stations are currently supported by Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) via their Electric Vehicle and Alternative Fuel Infrastructure Deployment Initiative Program.

Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change (PCF)

Q: Will projects related to the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change (PCF) be prioritized?

A: Provinces and territories must prioritize projects that support key actions identified as BC's commitments under the PCF under the ICIP agreement. If your project supports actions under the PCF, please identify these in your application.