



PROGRAM GUIDE



BC FIRST NATIONS EQUITY FINANCING PROGRAM





CONTENTS

Program Overview	4
Program Goals	4
Who Can Apply	5
Eligible Projects	6
Project Sizes, Loan Guarantee Amounts and Fees	6
Project Examples	7
Ineligible Projects	7
How To Apply and What To Expect	8
Stage One: Pre-Screen Intake	10
Stage Two: Screening Application	11
Stage Three: Full Due Diligence	14
Stage Four: Negotiation	16
Stage Five: Monitoring and Reporting	16
Contact Information and Support	17

Program Overview

The First Nations Equity Financing Program (FNEFP) provides provincial loan guarantees that support First Nations to secure equity ownership in new and incremental revenue-generating projects within their traditional territories. By improving access to capital, the program supports First Nations ownership in projects, strengthens participation in project governance, advances long-term economic benefits for participating First Nations, and supports economic growth and prosperity in British Columbia.

The program has a cumulative cap of \$1 billion for provincial loan guarantees. These guarantees are expected to help drive new development and/or substantial expansions of existing assets, attract incremental investment, create net new employment opportunities, and support stronger, more sustainable economic outcomes for First Nations, local communities, and the Province.

The Program's design incorporates a robust risk management approach, including rigorous due diligence, similar to what would be expected with a commercial lender. Applicants must demonstrate that project proposals are commercially viable as a condition for loan guarantee approval.

Program Goals

- > Support First Nations to secure equity positions in net new project investments that deliver long-term economic impacts
- > Improve access to capital and reduce borrowing costs for First Nations through loan guarantees
- > Create lasting economic prosperity for First Nations through increased participation in projects in their territories
- > Strengthen partnerships among First Nations, industry and the Province
- > Build First Nations business capacity by encouraging increased participation in commercial activity
- > Support First Nations to leverage other funding sources and attract investment into British Columbia
- > Encourage equitable benefit and risk-sharing among First Nations, public and private sectors
- > Contribute to provincial economic impacts, including job creation, GDP growth and market diversification

What is a loan guarantee?

- > A **loan** is issued directly from a lender to a borrower. The lender is responsible for issuing the debt and managing it over the agreement term.
- > A **loan guarantee** provided by a third party or government (the guarantor) is a commitment by the guarantor to support repayment in the event of default, in accordance with the terms of the guarantee agreement. It does not replace normal lending due diligence, and borrowers remain responsible for meeting all loan obligations.



Who Can Apply:

- > B.C.-based Indigenous Governing Bodies (e.g. Band Councils and Modern Treaty Nations)
- > First Nations Development Corporations (requires proof of support from the relevant Indigenous Governing Body)
- > Other incorporated entities owned and controlled by an Indigenous Governing Body (requires proof of support from the relevant Indigenous Governing Body)

Applicants must:

- > Be able to provide a Letter of Support from the organization's leadership (Band Council, First Nations leadership, or another appropriate source) that supports the project and application
- > Demonstrate ability to meet debt repayment obligations and access capital financing to successfully participate in the project
- > Demonstrate that they have begun seeking financing through one or more lenders

Eligible Projects

Eligible projects must:

- > Be located in the applicant's **traditional territory**
- > **Involve new capital construction** or **substantial capital expansion** of existing assets
- > Demonstrate **strong projected financial performance**
- > Contribute to **new economic growth, investment attraction, revenue, and jobs** for First Nations, businesses and the Province
- > **Operate independently from existing assets** through separate legal structures
- > Generate sufficient financial returns to **be commercially viable**
- > Have a **minimum total capital cost of \$25 million (M)***

* Operating costs (e.g., core staff salaries, bonuses, operating inputs, loans repayments, cost-share obligations or refinancing of debts, fines or penalties, membership fees, dues, taxes, depreciation of assets, etc.), and costs not directly related to the project are ineligible.

Project Sizes, Loan Guarantee Amounts and Fees

Small & Medium Projects	Total capital cost: \$25M - \$125M
Large Projects	Total capital cost: Over \$125M
Loan Guarantee Coverage	Up to 20% of total capital project costs E.g. A \$50M project with \$25M equity purchase can be considered for up to \$10M loan guarantee.
Loan Guarantee Limits	Between \$5M to \$400M
Term	Up to 20 years

The Province will provide up to \$1 billion in loan guarantees, with a portion of this limit reserved for small- and medium-sized projects to diversify investments and ensure benefits extend beyond large-scale developments.

Applicants who are approved for a loan guarantee will be responsible for paying an initial fee, calculated as a percentage of the loan principal at the time the guarantee is issued. Additionally, there will be an ongoing annual fee for monitoring and administration, based on a percentage of the loan's remaining balance each year.

Contact us at FNEFProgram@gov.bc.ca to discuss your project, explore eligibility or seek guidance on the intake and application process.

Project Examples

The program offers support for eligible projects across a variety of sectors including natural resources, energy, tourism, agriculture, aquaculture, and more. The following table provides examples of eligible project types; however, projects are not restricted to the examples listed below.

Sector	Example
Energy Infrastructure	Transmission lines, renewable energy developments, hydroelectric facilities
Resource Development	Revenue generating mining projects, LNG projects, and related processing facilities; forest product manufacturing facilities
Transportation & Connectivity	Revenue generating transportation assets such as toll roads, terminals, ports, and rail infrastructure
Community Infrastructure Supporting Economic Development (Commercial Uses)	Industrial parks, and utility infrastructure that enables or supports commercial activity

Ineligible Projects

Example	Description
Existing Businesses/Assets without Incremental GDP Impact	Equity ownership that does not create new economic growth, employment or revenues (i.e., existing infrastructure that is not being expanded, Crown tenures, etc.)
Non-Revenue Generating Assets	Equity ownership in assets that do not generate revenues or shareholder returns
Projects with Limited New Construction and/or Operational Employment	Projects must create significant net new employment opportunities for First Nations and the Province
Pre-Construction Development Activities	Project proponents/investors are responsible for costs leading up to Final Investment Decision (exploration, regulatory, feasibility, financial, market, etc.)
Non-Equity Project Financing	Provincial loan guarantees are to secure First Nations equity positions. First Nations applicants and/or proponents must seek other credit and project investments to meet project financing needs.
Projects in the following sectors/categories	Housing; Gaming; Forest Tenures; Natural Resource Exploration Projects



Application Process

The program will accept proposals on a continuous basis beginning in spring 2026 until the available loan guarantee room is fully allocated.

Applicants will generally follow a three-stage application process:

- > **Stage One – Pre-Screen Intake:** Applicants submit preliminary information to confirm eligibility, project readiness and alignment with Program goals.
- > **Stage Two – Screening Application:** Eligible applicants may be invited to provide detailed project and business documentation, leading to a decision that invites the strongest projects to Stage Three.
- > **Stage Three – Due Diligence Review:** Selected projects will undergo comprehensive due diligence, comparable to commercial lending. If a project successfully passes this stage, they will be invited forward to negotiate the specific terms of a loan guarantee.

How to Apply and What to Expect

Before applying, we welcome you to reach out to our team at FNEFProgram@gov.bc.ca to discuss your project, explore eligibility or seek guidance on the intake and application process.

Applicants begin by submitting a Stage One pre-screen intake form found on [our website](#). Program staff use this form to assess project eligibility, readiness, and alignment with program goals. If your project is selected to proceed to Stage Two, an emailed invitation will be sent to the project contact, including a link to the screening application.

An invitation to submit a Stage Two application does not guarantee that a project will be selected for a loan guarantee.

Accessing the application forms with a Business BCeID

To access the online form, you will need to log in with a Business BCeID which enables a designated representative of an organization (Primary User) to administer sign-in IDs and passwords for other members of the organization (Secondary Users).

Follow these steps below to get a Business BCeID if you do not already have one (please note that it may take a few business days):

1. Go to the [BCeID website](#) and follow the instructions to receive a Business BCeID. This must be done by someone who is authorized to act as a Primary User.
2. You will receive notification from BCeID, including your BCeID log in information, when registration processing is complete.
3. After you have received your BCeID, log on to the [BCeID website](#) to set up your account information and reset your password. You can then use your BCeID to log in to the FNEFP intake form.
4. Create usernames and passwords for Secondary Users. Providing access to more than one person helps prevent disruptions if staff changes occur. Note that each individual must log on to the BCeID website and reset their password before attempting to log into the application form.

Stage Two involves a longer application requiring more detailed information on the project. This information helps the FNEFP team to assess the project and prepare a decision package for review. Projects able to demonstrate investment readiness, viability, and alignment with the program goals may be selected and invited to proceed to full due diligence (Stage Three).

At Stage Three, selected projects will undergo comprehensive due diligence comparable to commercial lending, including detailed financial, legal, commercial, and technical analysis. If they successfully pass this stage, they will be invited to negotiate the specific terms of a loan guarantee for the project.

Applications should include only business and project-related details; do not include personal or identifying information.

Detailed information about each application stage is outlined on the following pages.



Stage One: Pre-Screen Intake

Application Process

Information requested: Preliminary information to confirm eligibility, project readiness and alignment with Program goals.

What to expect: You will be asked to complete a self-assessment questionnaire followed by a series of questions about your organization and the project you are planning. It should take approximately 60 – 90 minutes to complete the intake form.

Information requested generally includes:

- **Eligibility check** - Confirmation that the applicant, project type, location, size, and financing request meet basic program criteria
- **Applicant information** - Organization name, type, business registration number, contact details
- **Indigenous Governing Body support** - Confirmation that the Indigenous Governing Body supports the project and application (letter or resolution)
- **Project overview** - Project name, description of the asset, how it will earn revenue and how revenue will be shared with the Nation, location, and sector
- **Territory confirmation** - Confirmation that the project is within the applicant Nation's traditional territory (maps and/or shapefiles will be required), including whether there are any other Nations asserting rights and/or title claims at the project location
- **Partnerships & ownership** - A description of the project's ownership, including whether the project involves partners, joint ventures, or the creation of a new entity
- **Project readiness** - Current development stage, planning completed to date, anticipated construction and completion timelines, and known regulatory approvals and status
- **Financial overview** - Estimated project costs and capital funding sources, equity stake, equity loan amount, historical financial information that demonstrates the ability to secure an equity loan, provincial guarantee request and other sources of equity financing, and prospective lenders
- **Decision timing** - Expected timing to reach a Final Investment Decision

Optional supporting documents: You may also choose to include optional supporting documentation to expedite your request,

including:

- Business Plan
- Market Assessment
- Letters of Support
- Partnership Agreement/Memorandum of Understanding
- Signed Term Sheet from Lender
- 10+ Year or Life-Of-Guaranteed Term (e.g. FNEFP contract term) Financial Forecast (in some cases projections may be mandatory to advance to Stage Two)
- Engineering Reports/Construction Plans

Assessment Process

Upon submission of your initial intake form, you will be contacted by our team within four weeks to review your project and confirm that all required information has been provided. We will keep you informed regarding the status of your application, noting that decision timelines may vary depending on the complexity of your project and the volume of information necessary for assessment.

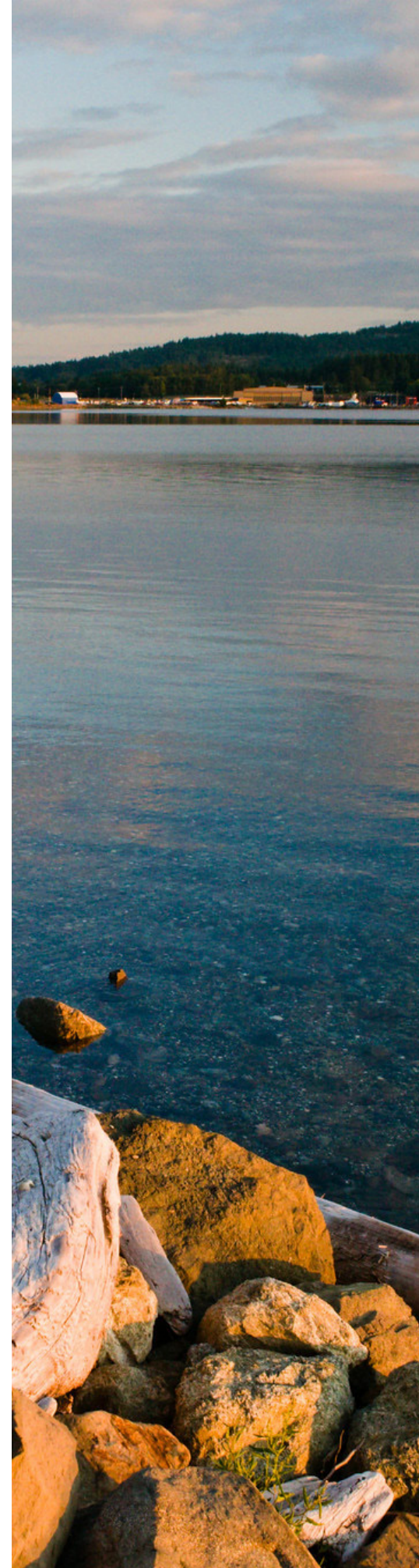
The FNEFP team will assess the intake form along with submitted supporting documentation. Projects that meet all eligibility requirements, demonstrate strong viability and readiness, and exhibit strong potential to secure a loan may be invited to submit a Stage Two Screening Application. The FNEFP team may ask for more information or arrange a meeting to discuss the project before a decision is made.

Stage Two: Screening Application

Application Process

Information requested: Detailed project information and supporting documentation to confirm program alignment, project and investment readiness, and evaluate financial and technical viability and risk.

What to expect: If your project is selected to move to Stage Two, we will ask you for more comprehensive information about your organization and project and collect additional materials and financial documentation to confirm project viability. This stage may include follow-up questions, meetings, and document review.





Information requested generally includes:

- **Basic applicant and project information** - Who is applying, what the project is, where it's located, and the size of the investment
- **Confirmation of Indigenous Governing Body's support and project location within territory** - E.g. Band Council Resolution or Letter of Support to confirm the project is located within the Nation's traditional territory, and whether there are any other Nations asserting rights and/or title claims at the project location
- **Project description and rationale** - Why the project is being pursued and how it aligns with the Nation's priorities
- **Project readiness and development status** - Key approvals, development milestones, contractors, insurance planning, and timelines
- **Ownership, governance, and partnerships** - How the Nation holds equity, who any partners are, and how both project and financial risk plan to be structured
- **First Nations participation and workforce considerations** - Equity participation, revenue benefits, employment, and workforce plans
- **Financing and loan guarantee details** - Equity cost, guarantee request, other financing sources, and why the guarantee is needed
- **Site, technical, and operational overview** - Land access, technical requirements, markets, customers, and supply chain considerations
- **Commercial and financial viability** - Long term financial projections, funding structure, key risks, and mitigation strategies

Required supporting documents: You will be asked to submit supporting documents applicable to your project (if they were not provided with your initial project proposal) which may include:

- Maps or shapefiles confirming the project location and traditional territory boundaries
- Formal written confirmation of your Indigenous Governing Body's support for the project (e.g. Band Council Resolution or Letter of Support)
- Detailed project schedule and cost analysis (including timelines, milestones, progress to date, budget vs actual, and estimate to complete)

- Ownership & Governance Documents (organizational chart for current and proposed corporate/management structure)
- Employment history and bios for owners and senior management
- Financial model outlining detailed revenue and cash flow projections
- Proposed repayment plan that outlines debt servicing approach over the guarantee term
- Sensitivity analysis and project impacts of adverse changes (e.g., lower revenues, higher costs)
- Summary of historical financial information for the Project Entity (most recent 3 fiscal years), where the Project Entity has existing operations

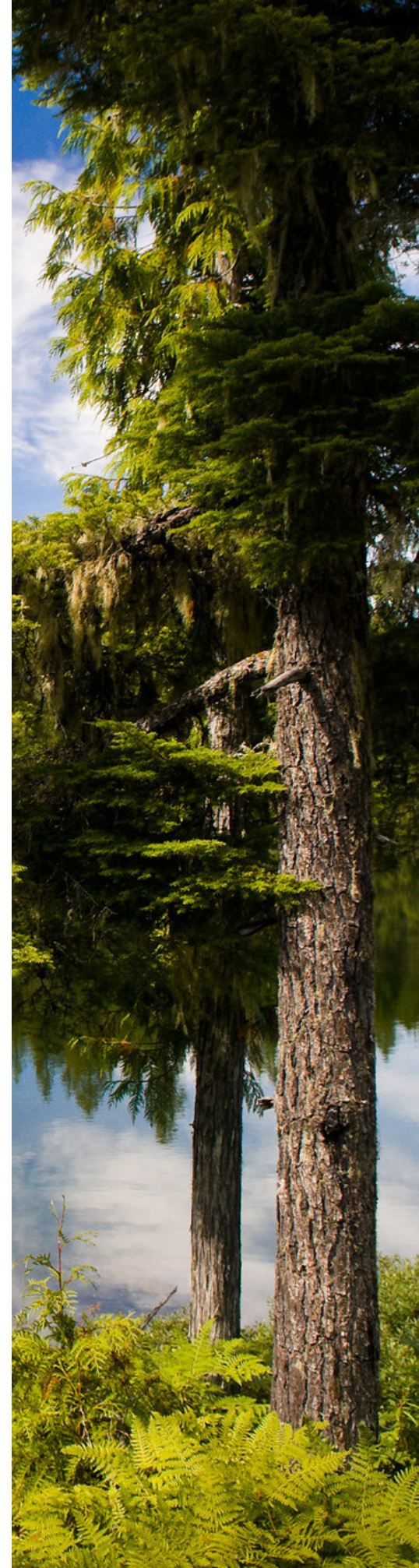
Assessment Process

We will keep you updated on the status of your application, as decision timelines will be dependent on the complexity of the project and the amount of information required for the assessment. **Typically, once all requested information is received, we will aim to provide an update within approximately 12 weeks on the status of your Stage Two application.**

The FNEFP team will review the application and supporting documents to assess alignment with the program goals, project and investment readiness, governance and legal compliance, First Nations equity and benefits, technical and operational capacity, financial viability and risk, using thorough analysis and cross-sector due diligence as needed.

Projects will be considered against the following criteria:

- **Need for Loan Guarantee:** How essential the guarantee is to secure equity and advance the project
- **Economic and Social Impact:** Jobs, revenue, broader economic effects, community benefits, and alignment with government priorities
- **Funding and Partnerships:** Ability to leverage federal or private funding, address urgent needs, and support partnerships
- **Project Readiness:** Current readiness or a clear, credible plan to reach it
- **Risk and Feasibility:** Financial and technical risk, strength of the business case, governance, and team experience





Successful applications should clearly articulate project fundamentals, expected outcomes, market analysis, and associated benefits. Collaboration with government and other strategic partners is strongly encouraged.

Meeting program eligibility requirements does not guarantee that a project will advance to Stage Three or receive a loan guarantee. Once the Stage Two evaluation is complete, invitations will be provided to Stage Three for only the strongest projects that are ready to move forward and with considerations given to the available loan guarantee limit. Eligible projects that are not initially selected to move forward may be held for future consideration.

Stage Three: Due Diligence

Application Process

Information requested: Updated project information and additional supporting documents.

What to expect: If your project is invited forward to Stage Three full due diligence it will undergo rigorous due diligence, similar to what would be expected with a commercial lender. This stage is more technical, and is intended to verify information provided up to this point, and any underlying assumptions or risks. This stage will include follow-up questions and a series of meetings as needed to walkthrough and review the documentation provided.

Information requested includes:

- Confirmation the project is still active, and its purpose remains the same
- Identifying any material changes since Stage Two (e.g. costs, schedule, scope, governance, or partners)
- Participating in targeted meetings or walkthroughs where needed (e.g. financial or technical discussions)

Required supporting documents:

- A detailed financial model

- Permits and regulatory status updates
- Most recent financial statements (if available)
- Updated contracts or agreements
- Updated feasibility, technical, or engineering studies
- Any other documents needed to support due diligence

Assessment Process

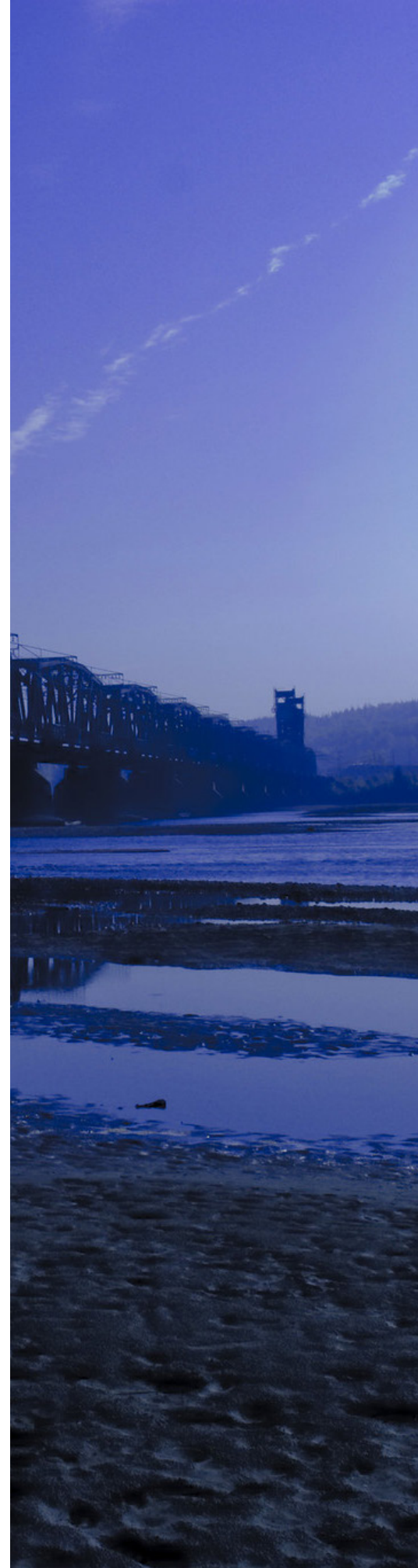
At this stage, your submission undergoes a full financial, technical, legal, regulatory, and risk review, including an assessment of First Nations participation and benefits. The information collected at Stage Three assesses the project's alignment with government objectives and projected financial performance.

The assessment at this stage will be looking to:

- Confirm the project is feasible and aligned with program goals
- Verify the project has a commercially viable business case that has a high probability of generating sufficient revenues to sustain operations
- Ensure contracts, permits, financing, and securities are complete or near final
- Check that both First Nations and broader public benefits are measurable and time-bound
- Document all risks and mitigation strategies

This stage can take significant time to complete. Assessment will move at the pace of the project and will normally take several months or longer.

During the application process, financial assistance may be available to support the completion of certain due diligence activities. Applicants invited to Stage Three may contact the program for further information regarding eligibility and requirements.





Stage Four: Negotiation

If your project successfully completes the three-stage evaluation and receives Government endorsement to negotiate a loan guarantee, you will move into the negotiation stage. This stage is designed to establish a fair agreement that protects the Province, provides appropriate benefits to you as the applicant, and meets all lender requirements.

During this stage, applicants will work with provincial representatives, other loan guarantors, commercial lenders, and other relevant parties to negotiate the terms of the loan guarantee. Applicants will be required to provide negotiated and definitive equity loan term sheets executed with lenders, including equity loan repayment schedules and a proposed form of provincial guarantee.

Documentation should include, but is not limited to, the security available for equity lenders and the guarantor, terms of default and recourse to the guarantor.

The Province and the applicant will mutually agree on the appropriate timing, form and content for ongoing monitoring and reporting for the project and the equity loan guaranteed by the Province, see Stage Five: Monitoring and Reporting.

Stage Five: Monitoring and Reporting

Projects with approved loan guarantees will be subject to ongoing monitoring throughout their lifecycle. During construction, oversight emphasizes overall progress, budget alignment, schedule adherence, and compliance with applicable requirements. Once projects are operational, monitoring shifts to assessing financial sustainability and continued compliance with agreed-upon conditions.

Regular review of overall performance, revenue sufficiency, cost management, liquidity, and key indicators of financial health helps ensure the project remains capable of meeting its debt obligations and maintaining required financial safeguards. Additional monitoring expectations may be applied based on the terms negotiated as part of the loan guarantee.



Contact Information and Support

If you have questions about the program or want to discuss your project, contact us at: FNEFProgram@gov.bc.ca

Find the Stage One intake form, frequently asked questions, and other program information on the FNEFP website at:

gov.bc.ca/FirstNationsEquityFinancingProgram