



BC Indigenous Forest Bioeconomy Program

Program Guide

Program Overview

The Indigenous Forest Bioeconomy Program (IFBP) enables Indigenous communities to unlock the economic, social and environmental benefits of their participation in BC's forest sector with partners across BC through specific project support. These projects are related to the support and expansion of BC's bioeconomy, and include the development of bioproducts from concept to commercialization, fibre capture logistics, and biomass supply and processing analysis, among other topics. The IFBP is guided by the goals, principles, and objectives of the Indigenous Forest Bioeconomy Framework which was developed through collaboration and engagement with numerous First Nations and Indigenous organizations in BC.

Applications are assessed on a rolling basis, beginning each spring and continuing while funds last. However, each project must be fully completed within the fiscal year, which ends each March.

Funding will be provided to enable an applicant to:

- Conduct feasibility studies;
- Complete research integral to future economic development opportunities; or
- Advance a fledgling business or to grow an extant venture by supporting First Nations communities in cultivating projects that reflect their needs, goals, and values.

Examples of projects that may be supported include:

- Non-timber forest products (e.g., essential oils, processed foods, teas, etc.);
- Assessment of residuals as supply for a processing facility;
- E-commerce platform launch and marketing for businesses using wood biomass;
- Fibre utilization feasibility studies; and
- Biomass supply and processing analyses.

It may be helpful to review our previous [Annual Reports](#) to get an idea of what types of projects the IFBP has previously supported.

Questions? Information?

Please contact IBIO.Mail@gov.bc.ca with any questions.

Application Process

How to Apply

Applicants must complete and submit an IFBP application form (the “Application”), along with supporting documentation to IBIO.Mail@gov.bc.ca. The IFBP application form is available at: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/forestry/supporting-innovation/ifb/ifbp>

- The Application is a fillable word document form and can be completed electronically. Please note that the response areas beside each question will accommodate additional space.
- Once complete, please save the Application with the following file name format: Applicant Name, Program intake (e.g. ApplicantName_IFBP)
- Please use this form to apply for Bioeconomy projects, as well as Conventional or Accelerator projects.

Eligibility

In order to be eligible for funding under the Indigenous Forest Bioeconomy Program, projects must:

- Have demonstrable community support;
- Be located (or have a major component located) in BC;
- Utilize forest biomass;
- Relate to the economy; and
- Provide social, economic and environmental benefits.

Communities must fall into one of the following categories to qualify as eligible to receive funding:

- a) A First Nation “band” as defined by the Indian Act (Canada);
- b) A First Nation governing body, representing exclusively one or more First Nations; or
- c) A First Nation enterprise (e.g. a non-governing body such as a business or an economic development arm of a First Nation).

Things to note:

- Funding is provided free of formal consultation or accommodation requirements.
- Cost sharing is eligible in this program, however it is the responsibility of the proponent to determine if they are eligible under other funding sources.
- A single community can be associated with multiple project applications to the IFBP.
- An individual or group can apply, with a letter of support from their Nation.

Applicant Steps

Applicants should review this document (the Program Guide) and then fill out the Application Form as fully as possible. Once completed, submit the form to IBIO.Mail@gov.bc.ca.

Applications will be reviewed by the selection committee using the evaluation criteria below, and ranked. During this review period, applicants may be contacted for additional information

or supporting documentation. At the close of the review period, applicants with top-ranking projects will be contacted with proposed funding allocations.

Program staff are reviewing applications on a rolling basis and should reply to applicants within a few weeks with either requests for additional information or a final funding decision. Once all funds for the current fiscal year are allocated, applications will still be reviewed but funding will not be available for commitment until the next fiscal year. Successful applicants should expect to sign a formal funding agreement with the Province or with our designated Program Delivery Agent. Once signed, successful projects will be able to commence work. All deliverables associated with the project must be completed by March 1st, 2024.

Applicant Financial Contribution

Many community partners provide either a 20% or a 50% investment in the overall cost of their project. It is recognized that this can sometimes create an undue barrier in accessing/leveraging additional funding, and IBIO seeks to identify solutions collaboratively to ensure that we can support successful, Indigenous-led businesses. Please contact us at IBIO.Mail@gov.bc.ca to discuss if this could pose a barrier to your project.

How to Fill Out the Application

The application form is intended to gather all relevant information about the proposed project. As it covers a wide range of potential bioproducts and project development phases, not all questions may be relevant to each project. Where information is not yet known, simply write “unknown” in the value column. The Indigenous Forest Bioeconomy Program is intended to be inclusive and supportive of all Indigenous communities and entities interested in pursuing forest bioeconomy opportunities. Please get in touch with us at IBIO.Mail@gov.bc.ca if you have any questions about the program or this application.

Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be evaluated and ranked by a selection committee comprised of Provincial staff. Eligible applicants may be contacted by Program staff during the evaluation process to provide more information or clarify certain aspects of their application.

The selection committee will evaluate, and score applications for each stream based on the following criteria and scoring system:

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Alignment with Indigenous Forest Bioeconomy Program Goals	The IFBP's overall goal comes from the Indigenous Forest Bioeconomy Framework (see below) and is to promote the development of forest bioeconomy opportunities that respect and support Indigenous community culture, values, traditions, and traditional territories. Is the project maximizing the forest biomass value? Does the project relate to an advanced bio-product (see "Bio-product Categories" section)? Is the IFBP the most relevant funding stream, or are there other programs better situated to provide funding (e.g. NRCan Indigenous Forestry Initiative , the Indigenous Forestry Program , TRICORP or the geographic equivalent, Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program , etc.)? <i>Note: stacking of funding is permitted through the IFBP.</i>	30 possible points (minimum 20 points to pass)
Benefits for Community	What are the economic, social, and environmental benefits expected from this project? Are there cultural benefits?	30 possible points (minimum 20 points to pass)
Innovation	Is the project innovative in how it seeks to maximize the forest biomass value? Does the project address a current gap related to forest bioeconomy development?	20 possible points
Lasting Impact	Will the project lead to a long-term benefit (e.g. a new self-supporting business, or expansion of an existing one)? Does this project wholly depend on funding grants or does it become self-sustaining?	20 possible points

After scoring, the selection committee will apply the following two lenses before making the final application selection:

- The need for diversity of product/technology types; and
- The need for geographic representation (i.e. projects located in different regions of the Province).

The following sections may provide useful background information to assist you in filling out the application form.

BC Indigenous Forest Bioeconomy Framework

Purpose

To provide a strategic framework for guiding forest bioeconomy development opportunities with First Nations across B.C.

Background

Forest bioeconomy development is based on using forest biomass as the key input for producing consumer goods and/or industrial products, or **bio-products**, while displacing petrochemical based products throughout our economy. A forest bioeconomy uses a broader lens than conventional forestry to consider a wide range of product and resource development opportunities beyond conventional products like lumber, or pulp and paper products.

The overarching goal is to maximize the value of forest biomass. Within the context of a forest bioeconomy, value is viewed as a holistic measure that encompasses: **environmental** values such as sustainable forest management and the production of environmentally friendly forest bio-products; **economic** values such as profitable revenue streams from the manufacture and marketing of these bio-products; and **social** values such as addressing community infrastructure needs and providing job opportunities for communities around the province in forest operations, manufacturing, high-tech design and production applications, and artisanal applications.

A forest bioeconomy provides opportunities to use local forest biomass as material inputs for a wide range of bio-products that can enhance the sustainability of local and regional economies while providing entrepreneurial opportunities and jobs for Indigenous communities across BC. As part of implementing the United Nations Declaration for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action, the Province takes a collaborative approach to identifying and pursuing economic opportunities that reflect Indigenous interests. The **Indigenous Forest Bioeconomy Framework** aims to provide another platform for Indigenous-centric opportunities in the natural resource sector by responding to a community's interests and needs through collaboration and partnerships. The principles, goals, objectives and economic development pathway reflected in this Framework are the result of engagement and collaboration with numerous First Nations across the province over the last couple years. As we continue to work with First Nations on Indigenous forest bioeconomy opportunities, we will continue to improve and refine this Framework.

Framework Principles

- I. Support is provided in addition to and independent of negotiated treaty or non-treaty agreements (i.e. this collaborative approach is not directly tied to government-to-government agreement processes)
- II. Supports reconciliation objectives, constitutional and historic obligations but is not an alternative to land claim negotiations
- III. Recognizes and prioritizes Indigenous values, traditions, and knowledge
- IV. Supports Indigenous community and/ or Indigenous business-driven projects designed to meet community needs while also supporting regional economic development opportunities

- V. Supports collaboration with industry and business, as well as across ministries and agencies to meet common objectives
- VI. Considers and supports Indigenous community capacity development

Goal

To promote the development of forest bioeconomy opportunities that respect and support Indigenous community culture, values, and traditional territories.

Supporting Objectives

1. Identify and prioritize bioeconomy opportunities
 - a. Engage with Indigenous communities to identify opportunities and priorities
 - b. Collaboratively develop action plans to realize priorities with relevant partners
2. Develop bioeconomy opportunities
 - a. Generate community-based employment and businesses
 - b. Build capacity for diversification and scalability
3. Increase participation in the natural resource sector
 - a. Prioritize clean tech and innovative projects that contribute to sustainability in natural resource management
 - b. Foster Indigenous entrepreneurship and participation in the natural resource sector

Bio-product Categories

The IFBP seeks to support the creation of businesses tied to advanced bio-products. Figure 1 shows the different categories of forest bio-products, overall grouped into conventional and advanced bio-products.

		Conventional Bio-products	Advanced Bio-products	
Paper Mills	→	Packaging, Newsprint, Publishing, Substrate, tissue	Composites & Textiles: Cellulose nanocrystals, Cellulose filaments, Micro-fibrillated cellulose, Composites using cellulose fibres, Bioplastics	 Advanced Bio-materials
Chemical Pulp Mills	→	Market kraft pulpt Tall oil, Turpentine, Dissolving pulp		Chemicals & Additives: Methanol, Ethanol, Acetate, Lignin, Lubricates, Surfactants and rheology, Pharmaceuticals
Mechanical Pulp Mills	→	Market high-yield pulp	Liquid Fuels: Pyrolysis oil, Bio crude, Gas, Bio diesel aviation fuel, Dimethyl ether, Natural Gas (Nexterra Syn-Gas, Gas Technology Institute)	
Forests and Process Residues	→	Pellets, Boilers		Solid Biomass: Bio-energy intermediates, Torrefied pellets, Bio-coal, Heat and Power
Plywood Engineered Wood Products Oriented strand board Mills	→	Panels	Next-gen Engineered Wood: Cross-laminated timber (CLT), Multi-attribute panels, Wood fibre insulation, Hybrid/tall building solutions, etc.	
Sawmills	→	Lumber		
Harvesting	→	Log		

Figure 1 Conventional and Advanced Bio-product Categories

Project Development Scale

The IFBP is only able to commit funding for the relevant fiscal year (from April through March), but most projects have timelines that are much longer than this. For this reason, a phased approach is appropriate, and can be described using the Project Development Scale shown below in Figure 2. A project being submitted to the IFBP for consideration could be anywhere along the scale, and would likely move up one or two steps at the close of the project. For example, if a feasibility assessment had already been completed for a novel bioproduct, then the application for this intake might be to prototype the product, which would move the project from the assessment phase to the testing phase.



Figure 2 Project Development Scale

Administrative Fee Cap Policy

Funding from the Innovation, Bioeconomy and Indigenous Opportunities Branch (IBIO) includes overhead and administrative costs for approved projects. A maximum of up to 15% of the total funds may be allotted for administrative costs which includes:

- Subsequent overhead and administrative costs (e.g. hiring new professionals, outsourced accounting required for the project, etc.)
- Costs apportioned from the current organization's expenses directly part of the IBIO-funded project (e.g. the relevant portion of rented space, or existing staff's time designated for supervision of the funded project)

Costs not considered overhead and administrative expenses include capital expenses and direct program costs needed to run or deliver the funded project. These fall under a separate category within the funding envelope.