

*Canada-British Columbia
BUILDING CANADA FUND
Communities Component*

British Columbia
Provincial Program Guide
*(Supplement to the Building Canada Fund-Communities
Component On-line Program Guide)*

July 6 2009

Canada[!]



Foreword

This British Columbia Provincial Program Guide provides an overview of the Building Canada Fund – Communities Component (BCF-CC) program requirements. This Guide will walk you through the application process, and provide helpful information to assist in preparing a comprehensive application.

This Provincial Program Guide is to be used in combination with the Category Specific Supplements which are available for each project category:

- Drinking Water
- Wastewater
- Local Road
- Shortline Rail
- Short Sea Shipping
- Tourism
- Public Transit Infrastructure
- National Highway System Infrastructure
- Green Energy Infrastructure
- Solid Waste Management Infrastructure
- Brownfield Remediation and Redevelopment Infrastructure
- Culture Infrastructure
- Sport Infrastructure
- Connectivity and Broadband Infrastructure
- Local and Regional Airports
- Collaborative Projects
- Disaster Mitigation
- Recreation Infrastructure

These two (2) guides contain the critical information required to successfully complete and submit an application under the Canada - British Columbia Building Canada Fund – Communities Component. Further, the Category Specific Supplements and the Provincial Program Guide contain the significant references to the following documents:

1. BCF-CC On-Line Program Guide
2. BCF-CC Program Agreement

All the guides and the Agreement can be found at:

www.bcbuildingcanadafundcommunities.ca

When you are ready to submit your application, you will submit it electronically using the online application in the Shared Information Management System for Infrastructure (SIMSI), which can be found at:

<https://bcfcc-fccvc.infrastructure.gc.ca>

To be assigned a username and password for the SIMSI Building Canada Fund application system, please forward a request to Infra@gov.bc.ca.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 About the Program

Federal, provincial and local governments are investing \$408 million in British Columbia under the Building Canada Fund – Communities Component (BCF-CC) to support local government infrastructure projects in communities with a population of less than 100,000 people. The federal and provincial governments will each be contributing up to one-third (\$136 million) of the total program funds with the remainder of funds coming from the participating local governments.

The BCF-CC is focused on delivering cleaner air and water, safer roads, shorter commutes, prosperous and liveable communities. Projects will be submitted through an application-based process and will be evaluated on the extent to which they meet environmental, economic, and quality of life objectives. It is important that projects are sustainable in regard to how they are planned, designed, constructed, operated, maintained and managed.

It is expected that there will be more projects that qualify for funding than there are program funds available. Consequently, eligible projects will be ranked according to the extent to which they meet the program's objectives and the eligibility criteria.

An Oversight Committee consisting of two representatives each from the federal and provincial governments and two local government representatives nominated by the Union of British Columbia Municipalities is responsible for managing the BCF-CC Agreement and administering the program.

1.2 Purpose

The BCF-CC will help communities with populations of less than 100,000*, address their infrastructure needs to help develop a stronger economy, cleaner environment and better communities for all British Columbians.

**as determined by Statistics Canada's Final 2006 census*

1.3 Application Deadline

The first deadline is **March 16, 2009** and the final deadline for this intake is **April 24, 2009**. Applications received by March 16, 2009 will be considered during the first round of approvals while applications received by April 24, 2009 will be considered in a subsequent round of approvals.

Municipalities may only submit **two** applications during this intake.

Regional districts may submit **one** application for each community in its area during this intake.

Applications not approved from first intake may be rolled over into this intake per applicants' request in writing. This will count towards the limit on number of applications submitted during this intake.

1.4 Purpose of the Provincial Program Guide

This Provincial Program Guide provides an overview of the BCF-CC program and information necessary for completing the on-line application form in the “Shared Information Management System for Infrastructure” (SIMSI).

The Provincial Program Guide is to be used in combination with the Category Specific Supplements and the following documents:

- The Building Canada Fund – Communities Component On-Line Program Guide; and
- The Canada – BC Building Canada Fund Communities Agreement.

In the event of a conflict between these documents and the Canada- BC Building Canada Fund Communities Agreement, the Agreement prevails.

These documents are available at:

www.bcbuildingcanadafundcommunities.ca

The Provincial Program Guide and the Category Specific Supplements include important information not contained in the BCF-CC On-Line Program Guide and should be followed during project planning prior to submitting the on-line SIMSI application.

The Category Specific Supplements have been created to identify pertinent information that must be reviewed during the application process. This additional information will be required to ensure a comprehensive application is submitted.

2. APPLICANTS

2.1 Eligible Applicants:

- A local government - defined as a municipality, a regional district, a greater board - as defined in the *Community Charter*, or a public authority responsible for delivering local services in British Columbia, if that authority is approved by the Oversight Committee.
- A non-governmental organization whose application is supported by a resolution from the local government where the project is located. Applications from non-governmental organizations, such as improvement districts or water utilities, for water and wastewater projects must be made by the local government in which the project is located. If the application is successful in obtaining program funding, the ownership of the infrastructure and associated assets must be transferred to the sponsoring local government. If a non-governmental organization is applying on behalf of a local government, the limit on number of applications still applies.

2.2 Ineligible Applicants:

- Municipalities having a population in excess of 100,000 as determined by Statistics Canada's Final 2006 census.
- Departments, ministries and agencies of Canada or British Columbia.
- Federal or provincial departmental corporations or Crown Corporations.

Infrastructure projects of First Nations communities are funded separately and administered by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). For more information, please call INAC at 604-775-5100.

3. PROJECTS

3.1 Eligible Projects

To be eligible for funding, a Project must:

- a) be submitted by an eligible applicant who demonstrates that it will be able to operate and maintain the resulting infrastructure over the long term;
- b) fall within one of the applicable project categories (see 3.3), be consistent with the objectives of the category and directly related to one of its subcategories, meet one or more of the project outcomes of the category and meet the specific project criteria of the category;
- c) be for the construction, renewal, expansion, upgrade, or material enhancement of infrastructure, however excluding normal maintenance or operation;
- d) be supported by a project justification & business case, to be part of the application, that is comprehensive, credible and feasible;
- e) stipulate a construction completion date of no later than March 31, 2016;
- f) be implemented in communities served by Local Governments with a population of less than 100,000 people, as set out in the Statistics Canada Final 2006 Census;

- g) be duly authorized or endorsed by, as applicable:
 - in the case of a local government applicant, a resolution of its council/board; or
 - in the case of a non-governmental, not-for-profit or private sector body applicant, a resolution of its board of directors and also by a resolution of the local government where the infrastructure is proposed to be located;
- h) meet all the program criteria identified in Section 5 of this Guide.

3.2 Ineligible Projects

A project will be deemed ineligible if:

- a) the tender has been awarded, or construction has already begun or is completed prior to approval;
- b) the project will be completed after March 31, 2016;
- c) the project deals with assets owned by the Government of Canada or the Province of British Columbia. Exception may be made by the Oversight Committee where the assets are of a type normally owned or operated by local government for community use and benefit as determined by the Oversight Committee.

3.3 Project Categories:

- **Eligible project categories for this intake are:**
Drinking Water, Wastewater, Local Road, Tourism, Shortline Railways, Short Sea Shipping, Public Transit, National Highway System, Green Energy, Solid Waste Management, Brownfield Redevelopment, Culture, Sport, Connectivity & Broadband, Local & Regional Airports, Collaborative Projects, Disaster Mitigation, and Recreation.

For more information on these categories, refer to the BCF-CC On-line Program Guide. This Guide and updated information regarding future intakes and project categories can be found at:

www.bcbuildingcanadafundcommunities.ca

3.4 Phasing Projects

For large, long-term improvements to infrastructure projects that require significant funding support, proponents may consider implementing the project in distinct stand alone phases. While applicants can apply for a larger project, they may instead focus on a single component of the phased project that best meets program objectives. If applying for a larger project, identify how the project could be phased. This should be clearly demonstrated in accompanying cost estimates, and the project descriptions should be organized to easily understand each of the distinct phases of the project.

It is important to note that the approval of one phase of a project does not guarantee that other phases will receive BCF-CC funding.

4. COSTS

4.1 Eligible Costs

Eligible costs are all direct capital costs that are:

- a) in Canada and British Columbia's opinion, properly and reasonably incurred;
- b) paid by a Recipient and no other person; and
- c) paid under a Contract for goods or services necessary for the implementation of a project.

Eligible costs will include:

- a) the capital costs of acquiring, constructing or renovating a tangible capital asset, as defined and determined according to generally accepted accounting principles in Canada;
- b) all planning (including plans and specifications) and assessment costs such as the costs of environmental planning, surveying, engineering, architectural supervision, testing and management consulting services, to a maximum of 15% of total eligible costs;
- c) the costs of engineering and environmental reviews, including environmental assessments and follow-up programs as defined in the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* and the costs of remedial activities, mitigation measures and follow-up identified in any environmental assessment;
- d) the costs of project-related signage, lighting, project markings, construction insurance and utility adjustments;
- e) the costs of aboriginal consultation;
- f) the costs of developing and implementing innovative techniques to carry out the project; and
- g) other costs, that in the opinion of Canada, are considered to be direct and necessary for the successful implementation of the Project and have been approved in writing prior to being incurred.

4.2 Ineligible Costs

Ineligible costs include:

- a) costs incurred before approval of the project;
- b) costs incurred after the project completion date;
- c) the cost of developing a business case or proposal for funding;
- d) the cost of purchasing land and associated real estate and other fees;
- e) financing charges and interest payments on loans;
- f) leasing land, buildings, equipment and other facilities;
- g) general repairs and maintenance of a project work and related structures, unless they are part of a larger capital expansion project tied to capital expansion;
- h) services or works normally provided by the recipient, incurred in the course of implementation of the project, except those specified as eligible costs;
- i) the cost of any goods and services which are received through donations or in kind;
- j) employee wages and benefits, overhead costs as well as other direct or indirect operating, maintenance and administrative costs incurred by the recipient, and more specifically costs relating to services delivered directly by permanent employees of the recipient, or of a crown corporation or corporation owned and controlled by the recipient (except for Collaborative Projects as outlined in Schedule A of the BCF-CC Agreement) or in cases where the recipient can demonstrate value for money and that the costs are incremental;
- k) provincial sales tax and Goods and Services Tax, for which the recipient is eligible for a rebate, and any other costs eligible for rebates; and
- l) legal fees.

4.3 Examples of Eligible and Ineligible Costs

The following tables are to assist applicants in understanding what is and is not an eligible cost. **** Please note if a cost is not listed in this Appendix, contact program staff prior to undertaking the cost, as it may require Oversight Committee approval to be considered as an eligible cost. (see Section 9.3 for contact information).***

A. General

ELIGIBLE	INELIGIBLE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs paid under contract for goods or services necessary to implement the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any unpaid costs including invoices or holdbacks Accrued costs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs paid by Recipient only after project approved by Oversight Committee and deemed properly and reasonably incurred 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs incurred prior to Oversight Committee approving the project and/or after the project completion date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital costs as defined by Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (except capital costs included in INELIGIBLE COSTS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services or works normally provided by the Recipient, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> overhead costs salaries and other employment benefits of any employees of the Recipient leasing of equipment by Recipient accounting fees incurred in the normal course of operation auditing fees incurred in the normal course of operation casual labour
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GST Taxes (Any portion that the Recipient is eligible for tax rebate)

B. Environmental Assessment Costs

ELIGIBLE	INELIGIBLE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental reviews Environmental costs Remedial activities Mitigation measures Aboriginal consultation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs incurred prior to Oversight Committee approving the project and/or after the project completion date

C. Construction/Materials Costs

ELIGIBLE	INELIGIBLE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs incurred prior to Oversight Committee approving the project and/or after the project completion date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tenure fee – Ministry of Agriculture and Lands & Plan of Statutory Right of Way. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost of purchasing land and associated real estate and other fees Value of donated land Interim financing and interest costs Appraisal fees Land title fees Leasing of land or buildings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> License fees approved by Oversight Committee 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permit fees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building permit charged by proponent to itself Development cost charges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insurance related to construction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liability insurance for directors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project management fees 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Material testing necessary to prove suitability of soils and specified structural elements 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fencing for the construction site Permanent fencing 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Towing heavy equipment to and from the construction site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Towing vehicles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Security guard & First Aid attendant (contracted for construction project) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ambulance for workplace accidents First aid courses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Software specific to the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General software programs (MS Office, Access, MS Project)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Furniture, equipment, necessary for operation of the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tools (e.g. hammer, broom, shovel, rakes, hoses, hose nozzles, measuring tapes, garbage cans, leather gloves) Administration furniture and equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repair of property damage done during construction 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Furniture, equipment, blinds and drapes necessary for operation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repair and maintenance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safety equipment to be kept at the project site (e.g. safety goggles, beakers, eye wash bottles, latex gloves, UV lamp, vacuum hand pump, forceps, etc.) 	

ELIGIBLE	INELIGIBLE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire protection equipment as required by the fire department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subcontracting another local government
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third party (contractor) rental of a trailer/site office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structures attached to a facility which carry out ineligible activities (e.g. retail sales)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanently installed 2 way radios, phone system for facility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly bills for utilities and phone/internet
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributions in kind
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fuel costs for rental equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicle maintenance and fuel costs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary signage/permanent signage, specific to the project • Street signage (during construction) if specific to the project (e.g. 1st Street Closed) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General construction signs (e.g. detour, street closed)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relocation/renovation kiosk signs for public information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary “Hours of Business” signs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys necessary to determine the site’s suitability for the intended purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any other surveys except to determine the site’s suitability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demolition of unwanted structures from the site 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscaping to recover to original state before construction • Installation of landscaping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining landscaping
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertisements for contract tendering 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printing costs for preparing contract documents or tenders, blue prints, plans/drawings 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courier services, specific to project e.g. delivering drawings/designs 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paving of access and curb cuts 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utility, electrical, sanitary sewer, and storm sewer services to the site property line 	

ELIGIBLE	INELIGIBLE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs incurred for communication activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - printing invitations; - printed materials regarding the project; - newspaper/radio ads - A/V equipment rental; - cost of mailing the invitations; - tables/chairs/podium rentals; - tent rentals; and - room/hall rental. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refreshments • Food/beverages • Catering • Liquor • Balloons • Ribbons • Event planners • Entertainment • Coach rental • Flowers • Banners • Communication plans • Media consultant

D. Design / Engineering Costs

ELIGIBLE	INELIGIBLE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs incurred prior to Oversight Committee approving the project and/or after the project completion date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fees paid to professionals, technical personnel, consultants and contractors specifically engaged to undertake the surveying, design, and engineering of a project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any legal fees including those for land transfers (easements, Right of Way) • Feasibility studies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultant disbursements 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodation costs included in consulting fees or disbursement for out of town/province professionals 	

E. Other Costs

ELIGIBLE	INELIGIBLE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other costs that have been approved in advance, in writing, by the Oversight Committee 	

5. PROGRAM CRITERIA

The BCF-CC is designed to increase investment in public infrastructure and contribute to the following broad federal and provincial objectives: economic growth; a cleaner environment; and, strong and prosperous communities. The eligible categories and criteria set out in this program will ensure that infrastructure investments are consistent with these objectives.

5.1 Common Program Criteria

Each application must demonstrate the following:

- The project is supported by a comprehensive, credible and feasible business case that outlines the costs and benefits of the proposed project.
- How the project is consistent with applicable provincial, regional, or municipal plans (e.g., land-use, integrated watershed management plan, municipal official plans, Integrated Community Sustainability Plans).
- The project will meet all applicable legislative or regulatory requirements, including the requirement for a federal Environmental Assessment process that meets the requirements of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*, which may include specific requirements for aboriginal consultation.
- The contract award process will be competitive, fair and transparent (e.g., no sole-source contracts, no union-only processes).
- Major risks related to extreme natural events and/or climate change risks with a potential impact on the project during construction or once completed have been considered, and, where applicable, a mitigation plan developed.
- Infrastructure intended for use by the public ensures appropriate access for persons with disabilities.
- Opportunities regarding a regional service area or other cooperative arrangements, particularly with First Nations communities, have been considered, as appropriate, in respect of the project.

5.2 Additional Program Leveraging Criteria

Project applications will also be assessed on the basis of how they meet the following additional program leveraging criteria:

- Newly constructed or materially rehabilitated buildings exceed the energy efficiency requirements of the Model National Energy Code for Buildings, or (preferred) will obtain a LEED certification (Gold or equivalent standard is recommended)
- Newly constructed buildings meet the requirements of the Canadian Standards Association Technical Standard Accessible Design for the Built Environment (CAN/CSA B651-04).
- How greenhouse gas emission impacts through the construction and operation of the infrastructure have been considered and, where applicable, will be reduced.

Projects will also be assessed on how they work towards supporting Provincial goals and strategies in regards to supporting a sustainable environment and building sustainable infrastructure. Some provincial plans and strategies to consider are:

- Living Water Smart – BC’s Water Plan - www.livingwatersmart.ca
- Water Conservation Strategy - www.env.gov.bc.ca/wsd/plan_protect_sustain/water_conservation/wtr_cons_strategy/toc.html
- The BC Energy Plan - www.energyplan.gov.bc.ca/default.htm
- The BC Climate Action Plan - http://www.livesmartbc.ca/attachments/climateaction_plan_web.pdf
- BC Climate Action Charter - www.cserv.gov.bc.ca/ministry/whatsnew/climate_action_charter.htm
- Weather, Climate and the Future - www.env.gov.bc.ca/air/climate/cc_plan/pdfs/bc_climatechange_plan.pdf
- Greening the Building Code - www.housing.gov.bc.ca/building/green/index.htm
- Air Action Plan - <http://www.bcairsmart.ca/docs/bcairactionplan.pdf>
- BC Brownfield Renewal Strategy - www.aqf.gov.bc.ca/clad/ccs/brownfields/renewal_strategy.html
- Integrated Resource Management Study - www.cserv.gov.bc.ca/ministry/whatsnew/IRM.htm
- BC Bioenergy Strategy - www.energyplan.gov.bc.ca/bioenergy

5.3 Category Specific Criteria

Individual category specific criteria and documentation is outlined in the Category Specific Supplements located at www.bcbuildingcanadafundcommunities.ca.

Please ensure that your application addresses both the common program criteria, as well as the project specific criteria and questions.

6. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

6.1 Funding

Applicants must demonstrate that their share of funding has been, or is being secured. Further, they must demonstrate, where applicable, that funds have been committed to operate, maintain and plan for replacement of the capital assets resulting from the project during its life cycle. The evidence necessary to demonstrate these commitments may include:

- A council/board approved resolution or by-law, or minutes committing the proponent to contribute its share of the eligible project costs and all the ineligible costs. The resolution/bylaw/minute must identify the source of the proponent's share of the projects costs.
- A council/board approved resolution or by-law committing to complete an Alternate Approval Process (AAP), or hold a referendum to borrow the funds necessary to implement the project. The AAP or referendum must be completed within 6 months of receiving BCF-CC approval for the project.

6.2 Sources of Funding

Generally this program offers funding equal to a maximum of two-thirds of eligible costs. One-third is contributed by the Government of Canada and one-third by the Province of British Columbia. The remaining one-third of eligible project costs, plus all ineligible projects costs are the responsibility of the applicant. Where applicants plan to use funds from other federal or provincial programs, the source of these funds must be indicated on the on-line SIMSI application form.

Generally, the combined total of all funds from federal sources cannot exceed 50% of the total eligible costs of the project, nor can the combined total of all funds from provincial sources exceed 50% of the total project eligible costs, except in the case of Recipients that are private sector bodies, in which case the combined total contribution from federal sources or provincial sources to the Project may not exceed 25% of its total Eligible Costs.

For the Regional and Local Airport category, federal funding on a project by project basis, will be allocated as follows:

- i. For private sector assets, the maximum federal share, from all sources, of the total eligible costs for each project will be one-quarter (25 percent);
- ii. The Province's contribution will be no less than the federal Government contribution; and
- iii. For Local Government assets, Local Government interests must furnish at least one-third (33.33 percent) of the total Project eligible costs.

6.3 Detailed Cost Estimates

Detailed costs estimates must include an itemized description, cost per unit of measure, number of units, as well as engineering and contingency costs. Applicants are to identify which costs are eligible and which are ineligible and to state what class or confidence level the estimates are (e.g., class B or the level of confidence of the proposed cost). If a project can be broken into phases, each phase should be clearly identified separately in the detailed cost estimate.

It is important to note that projects will be reviewed in the context of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* (CEAA) and regulations as discussed in Section 7. Where applicable, project cost estimates should include costs to conduct a CEAA study.

IMPORTANT: It is necessary to provide **up-to-date cost estimates** and identify and account for inflation, increasing construction costs and possible delays in start and completion dates. Factors that may delay construction include: the timing of the grant announcement date, fisheries window, public consent, weather and construction seasons, delays in the CEAA process, right of way negotiations, regulatory applications, etc.

6.4 Project Justification & Business Case Guidelines

INTRODUCTION

The business case is an essential document that complements your application for funding. Its purpose is to elaborate on elements contained in the application and to provide any further details or relevant information that was not captured on the application form. It is a requirement that applicants complete a business case. The information contained in this document is intended to help you develop a sound rationale which may help you in obtaining funding under the BCF-CC program.

ASSESSMENT

The assessment of proposals is a criteria-based process for evaluating proposals submitted by applicants for funding. The assessment determines the merits of the proposal and informs the decision for recommending proposals to the appropriate decision-making bodies and parties.

Below are a few examples of factors that impact the assessment of your proposal and will be considered in determining if it is eligible for funding.

- How your project responds to an identified Infrastructure need within the community?
- How realistic are the objectives and are the expected results achievable? Will the activities identified be completed within your proposed timeframe?
- How does your proposed project fit with local, regional and national priorities?
- How you, as the applicant have the capacity to see the project through from

- beginning to end?
- How do you plan to mitigate the risks associated with your project?
- How realistic is the budget and breakdown of costs?
- How will you manage the asset over its life cycle? Do you have operating funds?

ELEMENTS OF A GOOD BUSINESS CASE

A good business should give the reader a clear understanding of the “Who, What, Where, Why, When and How” of the project. The business case should be able to be extracted as a stand-alone document for the purposes of describing the entire project. Additionally, it should not depend on future funding in order to achieve its desired project outcomes.

The business case should include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Problem statement
- Identification and analysis of options (relevance, feasibility)
- Rationale for chosen option
- Project objective
- Description of activities
- Timelines and milestones
- Expected benefits
- Performance and progress measures
- Project risks
- Rationale
- Budget

WRITING THE BUSINESS CASE

Before you begin to write your business case, you are encouraged to visit the BCF-CC Program website at www.bcbuildingcanadafundcommunities.ca. This website will provide you with an understanding of the BCF-CC program and other relevant program information.

Project Objective
This is one of the most important sections of the business case. The objective should respond to your problem statement and be clear, concise and easy for you to achieve. The objective must also be measurable. A clear statement of your project objective makes the assessment easier.

Proposed activities
<p>Provide a description of proposed activities that addresses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The scope of the project (local, regional, national)• The location• How the project responds to the goals, objectives and priorities of the program• Who will most benefit and how.

Project Rationale
<p>This section should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide a synopsis of what is happening currently within the municipality or region and what might happen if no action is taken at this time, if your project is not approved. It should also give the reader a sense that your project is important and thus demonstrate the need for funding.• Make sure you clearly define the project. If statistical information is available to support your project make sure you include the data and state where it can be found.

Expected Benefits
<p>Expected benefits must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify the project outcomes according to the program (sub) categories that apply to the project being proposed.• Indicate all the project benefits and how the benefits were obtained.

Timelines and Milestones
<p>It is important to indicate the duration of your project, how long you expect it to take from start to finish. In addition, you should highlight how your project is broken down by project activities, phases and/or stages. This can be done on a quarterly basis. (i.e. 1st quarter - list of activities to be accomplished (planning, studies, etc.); 2nd quarter – additional activities (construction to commence).</p>

Performance and Progress Measures
<p>In this section, you should clearly identify how the project will meet expected benefits; and, how these will be measured and monitored throughout the course of your project duration. (i.e. phase development, planning phase, regular site visits, construction start/end-dates, etc.</p>

Project Risks
<p>What are the significant project risks and what is your strategy to mitigate those risks? Risks are uncertainties or constraints that may prevent the project from being completed on time, on budget, or in its original scope. Few projects are completely without risk; however, most successful projects manage or mitigate their risks through good planning and ongoing management.</p> <p>This section should indicate any known risks (such as short construction season, possible uncertainties in building site that might influence cost, etc.) and specify how those uncertainties may impact the performance of the project (either in duration, cost, or meeting the requirements). Then, indicate what actions could possibly be taken in advance, or during the project lifecycle, to reduce the effect of the risk (mitigation).</p>

Project Budget
<p>A comprehensive budget must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An anticipated start and end date of expenditures (funding period). No expenditures can be incurred outside the start and end dates of the contribution agreement. • A detailed breakdown of expenses such as overhead operating costs, salaries, capital costs, phases of construction etc if applicable. • A listing of other funding sources and those amounts. • Cash flow projections throughout project lifecycle. • A capital cost estimate for the infrastructure that includes an amount for contingency costs, and an amount for inflation. • A comprehensive budget summary indicating the sources of financing for the construction, operation and replacement of the infrastructure. • The sources should include, as applicable, grants, property taxes, fees, debt, Integrated Resource Management (IRM)* strategies and other sources. • The financing should be matched by expenditures for the construction and subsequent operation and maintenance of the infrastructure <u>as well as a contribution to a reserve fund for the replacement of the infrastructure.</u> • A description of how rate structures (if applicable) will encourage conservation of resources, reduce operating costs, and defer the need to expand infrastructure. • Where the potential for revenue from IRM exists, a brief description of the proposed strategy. • A discussion of the method by which the infrastructure will be amortized to meet the new requirements for financial reporting under Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. • An indication that information in the five year budget provided is or will be incorporated into the financial plan required under s.165 of the <i>Community Charter</i> or s.815 of the <i>Local Government Act</i>. • Grant per person served: the total Federal/Provincial request divided

by the number of individuals served by the infrastructure.

- **For Regional Districts**, the number, type and assessed value of properties served by the infrastructure and a description of the area that will be served by the infrastructure and how the costs of the service will be allocated among participants in the service.

*Revenue from Integrated Resource Management (IRM) –utilizes solid and liquid waste to create energy, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, conserve and re-use water, and recover nutrients.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- **If this information is contained within the Engineering Feasibility Study of Options (Section 3.1) the Proponent is not required to submit a business case with their application for funding.**
- For project categories under the responsibility of the Ministry of Community and Rural Development, there will be a **financial analysis** of each application. This will contain a review of the periodic financial information submitted to the Ministry of Community and Rural Development (the Ministry). This required financial reporting is available on Ministry files, and thus does not need to be submitted with an application. However; the applicant should recognize that the ranking of applications may reflect the extent to which applicants have met financial criteria such as:
 - Did the applicant meet the deadlines for legislated financial reporting, including the financial plan, audited financial statements, Local Government Data Entry (LGDE) forms and Statement of Financial Information (SOFI)?
 - For municipalities, did the financial plan submitted to the Ministry meet the 2008 transitional requirements for amended s 165 of the Community Charter found in Financial Circulars 08:10 (Financial Plan: New Revenue Policy Disclosure Requirements) and 08:15 (Guide to the Amortization of Tangible Capital Assets)?
 - Measures of financial stability and sustainability which include property tax structures, and development costs charge structure.

Project Justification/Business Case Checklist

To ensure that you have addressed all aspects of the Project justification/business case, the below checklist is meant to be use by you as a tool.

- Is there a Problem Statement
- Does your business case include a rationale for decision on chosen option
- Did you state your project's objective
- Is there a description of activities included
- Have timelines and milestones been addressed
- Did you list the expected benefits of your project
- Performance and progress measures
- Have you indicated the risks associated with the project
- Is there a rationale on file
- Has the budget been included
- Is there a breakdown of expenses
- Location
- Who will benefit
- Any statistical information to include
- Is there any relevant documentation that that details the issues addressed by the project, i.e. copies of studies, reports, letters from agencies, etc.

6.5 Engineering Feasibility Study of Options

It is vital that applicants conduct feasibility studies to ensure that they have considered the options and chosen the best engineering solution for a particular issue. A feasibility study should identify what the solution is and why it is being recommended and should address capital and life cycle expenditures; annual operating costs, emerging technologies, environmental considerations and societal impacts.

6.6 List of Required Licenses, Permits and Approvals

All applicants are required to investigate and submit a list of licenses, permits and approvals which are required for their project to proceed and they must advise on the status of any that have been applied for. This is important as it demonstrates that a project is on track or that the proponent has considered and commenced applications for these required items.

6.7 Certification/Authorization Page

To complete the application process, all applicants must sign and mail an original copy of the certification/authorization page to the lead provincial Ministry. This is found on the last page of the SIMSI application.

7. FEDERAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The Federal Environmental Assessment is a process to evaluate the environmental effects and identify measures to mitigate potential adverse effects of a proposed project before funding decisions are finalized. The need for an Environmental Assessment will be determined in part using information in the applicant's project description (ie: project scope). The project description should clearly identify the main components of the project to be funded by BCF-CC and include the associated works and activities, the location of the project including land uses on the site and adjacent areas. A drawing or map of the location of the project should be provided. **Please note: projects may not start until an Environmental Assessment review of your project has been determined and/or completed with a satisfactory outcome.**

7.1 The Canadian Environmental Assessment Act and Regulations

The *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* (the Act) and its regulations are the legislative basis for the federal practice of environmental assessment. The Act ensures that the environmental effects of a project are carefully reviewed before a federal department/agency makes a decision to allow the proposed project to proceed. **Under the Act, any federal authority that provides funding to a project is required to assess the potential environmental effects of the proposed works and ensure that these effects are not significant before a project can proceed.** All projects that are being considered for funding under the BCF-CC Agreement must be reviewed to ensure that the project or related physical activities do not result in unacceptable environmental effects.

Detailed information on the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* and regulations can be found at the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency's website: www.ceaa-acee.gc.ca/.

7.2 Environmental Assessment under the Act

All projects that receive funding through the BCF-CC Agreement have to comply with the Act. However, since not all projects affect the environment in a significant way, certain types of projects may be excluded from an environmental assessment under the Act. Projects that do not require an Environmental Assessment are described in the Exclusion List Regulations (2007) under the Act. The Exclusion List Regulations are available at the following link: <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/c-15.2/sor-2007-108/index.html>. These projects are routine and relatively small-scale, and can be expected to result in only insignificant environmental effects. Examples include:

- Construction, installation, operation, expansion or modification of buildings, on serviced building lots not within 30m of a water body, if they are to be used for certain specific purposes, including recreational, educational, medical and institutional uses; and
- Construction, installation, operation, modification, abandonment or replacement of a pipeline or telecommunication/electrical line underneath a railway or road.

Projects that are not excluded from a review under the Act will require the development of an **Environmental Assessment Document (EAD)** that identifies environmental impacts associated with the proposed project and mitigation measures to address the impacts. This document forms the basis for Western Diversification Canada (WD) to consult with other stakeholders (e.g.: federal government departments). During the course of the review, the EAD may need to be revised based on feedback received from federal departments and/or agencies taking part in the review process.

WD determines, on a project-by-project basis, whether a proposed project needs an environmental assessment under the Act. In the event that an EAD is required, you will be provided with additional information outlining the structure and content for the document. The level of detail required in the EAD will depend on the nature and complexity of the project, as well as the environmental setting, and public interest (including First Nations).

Please do not complete an EAD until after you receive a project-specific Environmental Assessment request letter from WD.

7.3 Levels of Review Under the Act

There are four different types/levels of environmental assessment that may be required under the Act, depending on the nature and complexity of projects: screenings, comprehensive studies, mediations and review panels. Mediations and review panels are uncommon and the projects that are likely to be funded under the BCF-CC Agreements are not expected to fall under these categories.

Screenings: The majority of projects that require a review under the Act are assessed through a screening. Screenings will vary in terms of the length of the review period and depth of analysis, depending on the circumstances of the proposed project, the existing environment, and the likely environmental effects. Some screenings may require only a brief analysis of the available information and a short report; others may need new background studies and will be more thorough and rigorous.

Comprehensive Studies: Some large projects that have the potential for significant adverse environmental effects, or could generate public concerns, may require a comprehensive study. Such projects are described in the Comprehensive Study List Regulations (CSR). For example, the following types of water projects would be included in the CSR:

- The proposed construction, decommissioning or abandonment of a facility for the extraction of 200,000 m³/year or more of ground water or an expansion of such a facility that would result in an increase in production capacity of more than 35 percent.

7.4 Canadian Environmental Assessment Act Review: Time and Cost Considerations

Length of review under the Act will depend on several factors, including: the nature and complexity of the project, environmental setting, the level of public/First Nations interest and involvement of other government departments/agencies in the review.

Once WD has received an acceptable EAD, the time involved in completing a Screening level review could range from 3 months for a simple project to 12-18 months for a more complicated/environmentally sensitive project. Comprehensive Study reviews could take between 18 and 24 months to complete. **Note: These time frames are estimates only.**

Costs involved in completing the EAD and associated studies will depend on site accessibility and the availability of local expertise, the nature and complexity of the project, potential environmental implications and the level of public/First Nations interest. When developing the project cost estimates, please consider the potential expenses involved in preparing an EAD.

7.5 Dialogue with Environmental Agencies

For projects that require an EAD, proponents are encouraged to contact relevant federal departments or provincial ministries (e.g., Fisheries & Oceans Canada, Environment Canada - Canadian Wildlife Service or BC Ministry of Environment). A proactive discussion with such agencies during the project-planning phase will

assist in identifying potential environmental impacts and necessary mitigation measures.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

- Approval of BCF-CC funding is conditional upon completion of an environmental assessment review of the project under the Act with a satisfactory outcome.
- Successful applicants must agree to adhere to mitigation requirements as may be specified in the EAD and/or recommended by federal departments and agencies participating in the review process.
- **Commencement of construction prior to completion of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* review process may result in the project being ineligible for funding under the Program Agreement.**
- Any significant change to the scope of the project while it is underway could re-open the EA review and cause the project to have construction delays. In addition, project scope changes need to be brought to the BCF-CC program staff immediately as they need the Oversight Committee's approval prior to going forward with any changes to the original approved scope.

7.6 Other Regulatory Considerations

Projects must meet all applicable federal and provincial environmental legislation and standards. Even though a project is excluded from a review under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*, it may require permits or approvals from local, regional or provincial government agencies. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that any additional approvals and permits are obtained.

7.7 B.C. Environmental Assessment Process

Proposed projects that are subject to the *British Columbia Environmental Assessment Act* (BCEAA) are specified in the Environmental Assessment Reviewable Project Regulations by both category and minimum-size threshold. All applicants should review a copy of the regulations for information on projects that may be subject to the BCEAA.

Refer to the provincial Environmental Assessment Office's website at www.eao.gov.bc.ca or contact their office at:

1st Floor 836 Yates Street
PO Box 9426 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9V1
Phone: 250-356-7441

8. SELECTION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

8.1 Screening Criteria

Applications that meet the following screening criteria as well as the program criteria and project specific criteria will be considered for funding:

- Application must be submitted by an "eligible applicant" (defined in Section 2).
- Application must be for an "eligible project" (defined in Section 3).
- Application must be complete and include details on how the proposed project:
 - is situated within, and advances, the sponsoring local government's development and financial plans;
 - exhibits long-term sustainability, including operational viability, asset management (maintenance), and environmental sensitivity;
 - contributes to environmental, economic, community and innovation objectives;
 - requires the federal and provincial governments' financial support to enable the proposed project to be implemented, its scope enhanced (increase in size - expressed in the form of a percentage) or its timing accelerated (by number of years);
 - complies with all applicable environmental assessment requirements. Note: all projects must ultimately conform to all applicable environmental legislation of the federal and provincial governments to receive funding;
 - (if applicable) uses new approaches, best practices and the best available and economically feasible (where applicable) technology; and
 - demonstrates clear, measurable outputs and milestones.
- Application includes an authorization to proceed with the project from all appropriate approval authorities.
- Application includes a commitment to pay the local share of the eligible costs and ongoing (operating and other) costs associated with the project.

8.2 Project Benefits

It is vital that all projects demonstrate that they will achieve measurable project benefits as detailed in the on-line application. Accurate measurement of these benefits is very important and achievement of these benefits will ensure the project meets the program's objectives.

8.3 Project Ranking

Project applications will be evaluated based on how well they meet the program objectives and the degree to which they meet the following criteria:

- represents good value for money;
- enhances and protects public health;
- enhances and protects environmental health;
- supports sustainability principles;
- consistent with integrated long-term planning and management;
- utilizes best technologies and practices;
- demonstrates efficient use of resources;
- uses new and innovative approaches; and
- supports sustainable long-term economic growth.

9. APPLICATION PROCESS

The Provincial Program Guide and the Category Specific Supplements include important information not contained in the BCF-CC On-Line Program Guide and should be followed during project planning prior to submitting the on-line SIMSI application.

9.1 How to Apply

All applications must be submitted electronically using the **ON-LINE APPLICATION** in the “Shared Information Management System for Infrastructure” (SIMSI) which can be accessed at:

<https://bcfcc-fccvc.infrastructure.gc.ca/>

In addition, please sign and mail an original copy of the certification/authorization page to the lead provincial Ministry.

There are supporting documents that will need to be included with your application. These can be attached to your SIMSI on-line application by uploading these documents to the Document Upload page. The choices for document types are:

- Detailed Cost Estimates
- Business Plan
- Cost Benefit Analysis or Other Study
- Site Plan / Map
- Local Government Resolution
- Other.

You will be able to submit more than 1 document under each document type, and if you are unsure what document type to use, please submit your document as an “other” document type.

For more information on completing the on-line SIMSI application, refer to pages 7-35 of the BCF-CC On-Line Program Guide found at:

www.bcbuildingcanadafundcommunities.ca

Prior to applying, a user identification and password must be obtained to access SIMSI. To be assigned a username and password, please forward a request to Ministry of Community and Rural Development by email: Infra@gov.bc.ca or telephone: 250-387-4060.

In addition to this Guide, applicants must read the **Category Specific Supplements** to ensure that they are submitting the required documents needed for each project category. For example, Drinking Water and Wastewater applications have an additional application to the online SIMSI application. Any additional supporting information should be uploaded to SIMSI. Category Specific Supplements for each project type are available at www.bcbuildingcanadafundcommunities.ca. If you have problems uploading documents, please e-mail or mail them to the lead provincial Ministry (see Section 9.3 for contact information).

Applicants are responsible for ensuring full and accurate information is submitted. Applications will not be considered for funding until all necessary information has been submitted.

9.2 Limit on Number of Applications per Applicant During This Intake:

Municipalities may submit **two** applications during this intake.

Regional districts may submit **one** application for each community* in its area during this intake.

Applications not approved from first intake may be rolled over into this intake per applicants' request in writing. This will count towards the limit on number of applications submitted during this intake.

**A community, for the purpose of application to the program, is considered to be a clustered settlement within a regional district electoral area. A community's boundaries may also coincide with a service area boundary (existing or proposed).*

Non-governmental organizations may submit an application, but before doing so, must obtain a resolution from the local government council or board in support of their application. This resolution must be submitted prior to requesting a user ID and password to SIMSI. If a non-governmental organization is applying on behalf of a local government, the limit on number of applications still applies.

Applications from non-governmental organizations, such as improvement districts or water utilities, for water and wastewater projects must be made by the local government in which the project is located. If the application is successful in obtaining program funding, the ownership of the infrastructure and associated assets must be transferred to the sponsoring local government. If a local government is applying on behalf of a non-governmental organization, the limit on number of applications still applies.

9.3 Contact Information

Local Road, Shortline Rail, Short Sea Shipping, Tourism, Public Transit, National Highway System, Brownfield Redevelopment, Culture, Sport, Connectivity & Broadband, Regional & Local Airport, Disaster Mitigation, and Recreation:

Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
PO Box 9850 Stn Prov Govt
5C - 940 Blanshard St.
Victoria, BC V8W 9T5
Phone: 250-952-0675
Fax: 250-356-0897
Email: infrastructure@gov.bc.ca

Drinking Water, Wastewater, Green Energy, Solid Waste Management, and Collaborative Projects:

Ministry of Community and Rural Development
PO Box 9838 Stn Prov Govt
4th Floor 800 Johnson St.
Victoria, BC V8W 9T1
Phone: 250-387-4060
Fax: 250-356-1873
Email: infra@gov.bc.ca

10. APPROVED APPLICATIONS

10.1 Contribution Agreement

Once applications have been approved, all contributions under the BCF-CC are conditional until a signed contribution agreement is in place.

“Contribution Agreement” means an agreement between the Province of British Columbia and a Recipient whereby the Province agrees to contribute financially to an approved project.

The Oversight Committee will advise applicants in writing if their program application has been successful.

A package of information will be forwarded that will include:

- a contribution agreement between the applicant and the Province which sets out the terms and conditions attached to the program’s financial contribution,
- instructions regarding the submission of claims to the Province for the reimbursement of eligible costs,
- details of the required quarterly progress reports,
- the requirements for certification by external auditors, if applicable, and
- a complete communications procedure manual on such topics as public announcements, signage, logos, etc.

10.2 Contract Procedures and Provisions

“Contract” means a Contract between a Recipient and a Third Party whereby the latter agrees to contribute a product or service to a project in return for financial consideration which may be claimed as an Eligible Cost.

All contracts will be awarded in a way that is transparent, competitive and consistent with value for money principles.

The following objectives for procurement activity for goods, services and construction are based on the principles of fair and open public sector procurement: competition, demand aggregation, value for money, transparency and accountability.

- acquisitions are managed consistent with the policy of the Province of British Columbia (The Province of British Columbia Policies can be accessed at: www.fin.gov.bc.ca/ocg/fmb/manuals/CPM/06_Procurement.htm);
- proponents receive the best value for money spent on contracts;
- vendors have fair access to information on procurement opportunities, processes and results;

- acquisition opportunities are competed, wherever practical;
- proponents only engage in a competitive process with the full intent to award a contract at the end of that process;
- proponents are accountable for the results of their procurement decisions and the appropriateness of the processes followed; and
- the cost of the procurement process, to both vendors and proponents, is appropriate in relation to the value and complexity of each procurement.

Proponents are responsible for:

- planning, managing and fully documenting the process to acquire goods, services and construction;
- managing solicitation and contract award processes in a prudent and unbiased manner that fairly treats all potential vendors and bidders;
- ensuring that contracts for goods, services and construction are designed to provide the best value to the local government; and
- ensuring that all acquisitions are consistent with policy and applicable legislation.

It is expected that all contracts for works associated with projects that are approved for BCF-CC funding will be publicly tendered. Where this is not feasible, or practicable, recipients must inform the Oversight Committee, in writing, before proceeding with the project.

The Oversight Committee reserves the right to review a Recipient's procurement and tendering policies relating to contracts for works associated with projects funded through this program at any time from project approval to a date three years after project completion.

Two resources are available to help local governments in British Columbia achieve excellence in the awarding of contracts in a way that is transparent, competitive, and consistent with value for money principles:

- The Master Municipal Construction Documents Association (MMCD) provides its members with standardized contract documents and training programs to maximize the benefits of the documents. The Province of British Columbia encourages British Columbia Municipalities to use the Master Municipal Construction Documents for the construction of municipal services. Many B.C. local governments have been, and continue to, subscribe to the MMCD documents, certification, training and procedures. For further information about MMCD access its website at: www.mmcd.net/.

- Local Governments in British Columbia are able to access and use BC Bid, the e-Procurement site of the Province of British Columbia. The BC Bid website can be accessed at: www.bcbid.gov.bc.ca/open.dll/welcome.

10.3 Changes or Variations to an Approved Project

Applicants need to advise, **in writing**, the lead provincial Ministry of any variation from the approved project (e.g. changes to cash flow, milestones, project title, completion dates) before such changes are implemented.

Significant changes in the total eligible project cost breakdown or a change in the project's scope must be approved **in advance**. Oversight Committee or ministerial approval will likely be required for such changes.

Program staff will adjust future claims and/or require the provincial government to be reimbursed if any costs that have been reimbursed are subsequently found to be ineligible.

10.4 Progress Reports

A quarterly progress report is required for all approved projects. This is a summary report that updates the lead federal and provincial agencies regarding timelines, percentage completion, milestones and other information regarding the project. A progress report is required quarterly whether or not a claim is made, or a project has begun construction. The reports are required for the period between project approval and project completion.

10.5 Claims

To receive both the federal and provincial governments' contributions for approved projects, claims must be submitted for eligible costs on a quarterly basis to the lead provincial Ministry. Only costs incurred, paid and consistent with and comparable to those identified in the approved project application are eligible for reimbursement. Where multiple projects are ongoing (e.g. through different grant funding programs or through a phased approach), please ensure that claims are specific to the approved project only.

A detailed summary of expenditures is required for each claim, including: name of payee, date paid, invoice number, invoice date, etc. An up-to-date progress report is also required with each claim. All projects are subject to site visits and audit at any time during the project and up to three years after the final settlement of accounts.

10.6 Accounting Records

Applicants must maintain acceptable accounting records that clearly disclose the nature and amounts of the different items of cost pertaining to the project. These records should include both the records of original entry and supporting documents of the applicant, divisions or related parties, and any third party, named in the application or contract, as appropriate to the project. Applicants must retain accounting records for a minimum of six years after the final settlement of accounts.

Failure to keep acceptable accounting records and tender documents may result in a cessation or interruption in funding.

The Oversight Committee can require applicants to provide details of the types and amounts of all fees for consultants and contractors.

10.7 Communications

Procedures for Communications

An important aspect of the program is to communicate, the program's impact in helping improve the quality of life in British Columbia communities. The purpose of joint communications activities is to provide information on the BCF-CC Program to the public in a well planned, appropriate, timely and consistent manner that recognizes the benefits of the initiative and the contribution of all parties.

Please contact the lead provincial Ministry for your project at least **15 working days** prior to any scheduled public events. The federal and provincial Ministers, or their designated representatives, would like the opportunity to participate in the events, thus need time to schedule for such an occasion.