



Environment
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EcoAction

Community Funding Program

Applicant's Guide

2011

About the Applicant's Guide

The *Applicant's Guide* is designed to assist not-for-profit organizations in applying to the EcoAction Community Funding Program. Please contact your **Environment Canada Regional Office to discuss project ideas before beginning the application process** (see back of this guide for contact information).

Contact us today! A program officer would be pleased to discuss the eligibility of your group and project, to answer your questions or to provide general guidance.

Submit an outline of your project idea or draft application for additional feedback at least *one month* before the application deadline. A completed application package must be submitted on or before the annual November 1 application deadline.

EcoAction Community Funding Program

Environment Canada's EcoAction Community Funding Program provides financial support to community groups for projects that have measurable, positive impacts on the environment. Projects must address one of Environment Canada's environmental priorities: clean air, climate change, clean water and nature. Funding support may be requested for projects that have an action focus to improve the environment and increase environmental awareness and capacity in the community.

Program requirements

1) Core requirements

All projects must clearly demonstrate that activities are measurable, provide opportunities for community members to take action and will result in a positive environmental impact. All projects and activities **must include**:

- at least one (1) key environmental indicator as per the list of performance indicators listed in the Annex;
- actions that will lead to tangible environmental results within the timeframe of the project;
- an indication of the potential for self-sustaining continuity after the termination of EcoAction support; and
- requirements for alignment with provincial, territorial and/or municipal by-laws.

Projects that have a strong community engagement and education component **must also include** the methodology to measure the extent to which behavioural change will be achieved within the timeframe of the project, e.g. pre- and post-project surveys.

2) Funding requirements

At least 50% of the total value of your project must come from sources other than the Government of Canada. Employment support programs within Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC) and programs for Aboriginal people within Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) are exempt from this requirement. Please contact us for more information.

Contributions to your project from sources other than the Government of Canada may be in the form of cash, in-kind support, or a combination of both. In-kind support may include donations of:

- equipment, materials and/or office space;
- volunteer time for project activities, coordination or professional services;
- expertise from consultants, elders or academics;

- incentives, e.g. discounts offered on purchased items and services; and
- any other donated goods or services that contribute to covering the costs of the project.

For example, a company may donate \$500 worth of native tree seedlings, or members of a local community group may volunteer 400 hours of their time to work on your project. These are considered in-kind contributions toward your project and are attributed a fair market monetary value.

3) Community support and involvement requirements

Project proposals need to demonstrate support and involvement of community members. The EcoAction Community Funding Program is designed to provide Canadians with a way to become involved in the creation of more sustainable communities through the development of action-based projects that yield measurable results. Through funded projects, Canadians are equipped with the tools they need to act on their knowledge and values as individuals and members of communities in support of environmental sustainability.

For example, a community project aiming to improve watershed health and water quality by engaging landowners and volunteers needs to submit, along with its application, letters demonstrating cash and/or in-kind support from the community and its project partners.

Who may apply?

Non-profit groups and organizations are **eligible** to receive funding through the EcoAction Community Funding Program. Examples of **eligible** groups include:

- environmental groups;
- community groups;
- youth and seniors groups;
- community-based associations;
- service clubs; and
- Aboriginal organizations.

The following groups are **not eligible** but are encouraged to partner with non-profit organizations to support a project proposal:

- businesses;
- educational institutions;
- individuals; and
- municipal, provincial, territorial and federal governments.

Groups that are non-incorporated may apply to the EcoAction Community Funding Program. A group may be made up of a few people who get together with a project idea. Within this group, at least two people must take financial and legal responsibility for the project.

Note: Government of Canada employees who participate in an EcoAction Community Funding Program project are subject to the Values and Ethics Code for the Public Service.

What projects may be funded?

Funding is available through the EcoAction Community Funding Program for projects that address one of Environment Canada's environmental priority issues:

- **Clean air:** to reduce emissions that contribute to air pollutants;
- **Clean water:** to divert and reduce substances that negatively affect water quality or to focus on water conservation and efficiency;
- **Climate change:** to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change or to deal with the impacts of climate change; and
- **Nature:** to reduce biodiversity loss, protect wildlife and plants, and protect and improve the habitat where they live.

EcoAction Community Funding Program accepts applications for projects with a local, regional and national scope.

What project costs are eligible?

The following project costs are **eligible** under the Program:

- human resource costs, including salaries and benefits;
- contract and professional service costs (e.g., accounting, audit, liability insurance costs that are directly attributed to carrying out the project, monitoring, legal or other professional fees);
- travel and field costs (based on Government of Canada rates: www.njc-cnm.gc.ca);
- material and supply costs;
- printing and production costs;
- communication and distribution costs;
- equipment purchase or rental costs;
- vehicle rental and operation costs;
- translation costs; and
- a reasonable share of overhead and/or administrative costs and rent that is directly attributed to program delivery.

What projects and activities may not be funded?

The following activities are **not eligible** for funding:

- projects already under way;
- continuation of projects previously funded by EcoAction;
- ongoing programs and activities;
- activities required by law and/or mandated by all levels of government;
- projects in relation to the enforcement of or compliance with by-laws in effect;
- projects focused primarily on the purchase of capital assets;
- activities focused primarily on research and monitoring activities;
- activities focused primarily on planning;
- projects designed only to beautify an area;
- preparation of formal curriculum materials;
- core organizational functions (e.g., meetings, maintenance and administration);
- annual or regular organizational events/campaigns;
- expenses to attend general conferences;
- projects focused on recreational activities;

- purchase or construction of infrastructure (e.g., land, buildings, roads and bridges);
- purchase of a vehicle;
- incentives and rebates (but can be used as matching);
- project activities that fall under the mandate of other government funding programs, including other Environment Canada funding programs (however, may support activities that complement such programs);
- lobbying, advocacy or fundraising activities (or that can be perceived as such);
- decontamination of sites;
- further disbursement of funds to a third party recipient (i.e. micro grants); and
- projects outside of Canada.

Note: Projects related to Species at Risk and Invasive Alien Species are supported by Environment Canada's Habitat Stewardship Program and/or Invasive Alien Species Partnership Program. For more information on these programs, visit www.ec.gc.ca/pace-cape.

If you are unsure about the eligibility of your project and related costs, please contact your Environment Canada regional office. See back of this guide for contact information.

What amount of funding is available?

Funding is available up to a maximum of \$100,000 per project.

For every dollar you receive from the Government of Canada, including the EcoAction Community Funding Program, you must obtain at least the same amount from non-federal government partners. This includes cash contributions and in-kind support.

What is the maximum length of a project?

The maximum length of a project is 36 consecutive months.

What is the application deadline?

The annual application deadline is November 1.

What makes for a strong application?

A strong application includes the following elements:

- addresses Environment Canada's environmental priorities of clean air, clean water, climate change or nature;
- enhances, restores, conserves and/or protects the environment;
- includes objectives that are realistic, achievable and measurable;
- demonstrates direct and measurable environmental benefit;
- provides an opportunity for community members to become actively engaged in the project activities and educates them on environmental issues;
- involves individuals and communities with local knowledge and experience;
- secures 50% matching funds from non-federal sources;
- clearly demonstrates that the group has the ability to carry out the project;

- demonstrates good value for money;
- includes all necessary permits and technical information to ensure reviewers are able to evaluate the feasibility of the project, its technical merit, environmental benefits, and compliance with other jurisdictions;
- includes a completed and signed application form with a detailed budget, work plan, communications plan and evaluation plan with measurable performance indicators;
- has an indication of sustainability of activities and/or environmental benefit beyond the funding relationship; and
- if applicable, includes supporting documentation to adequately evaluate project activities or information to conduct an environmental screening.

How do you apply?

✓ **STEP 1** *Contact your Environment Canada Regional Office at least one month ahead of the November 1 application deadline*

A program officer will provide support to help with the application process, including:

- determining the eligibility of your group and project activities;
- reviewing a draft proposal;
- providing up-to-date program information;
- suggesting other potential sources of funding; and
- providing examples of previously funded projects.

To help you identify other potential sources of funding, consult Environment Canada's Green Source Funding Database. The searchable database lists available sources of funding for environmental projects. The Green Source Database is available online at www.ec.gc.ca/financement-funding.

✓ **STEP 2** *Prepare your application package*

The application form can be downloaded at www.ec.gc.ca/ecoaction. To obtain a hardcopy, contact your Environment Canada regional office. See the back of this guide for contact information.

For details on what information is required to complete the Application Form, read Annex A – How to Complete the Application Form, located at the end of this guide.

✓ **STEP 3** *Submit your completed application*

Applications will be accepted by your Environment Canada regional office on or before the November 1 application deadline. Your application may be submitted by hand but must be signed for by an Environment Canada employee via a scheduled appointment; by fax; by email; or by mail postmarked on or before the application deadline. See the back of this guide for contact information.

Note:

- Packages will **not** be accepted at any time by building security.
- Hard-copy applications should be printed double-sided on 8½" x 11" paper, unbound and numbered.

- If the application deadline date falls on a weekend or holiday (when postal services may be unavailable), you will need to submit the Application Form earlier and/or ensure it is postmarked before the November 1 application deadline.
- With the exception of letters confirming cash and in-kind support from other funding sources, which may follow at a later date, all other information and supporting documentation must be included with the Application Form. **No additional information received after the November 1 application deadline will be taken into consideration.**

If you have not received an acknowledgement letter within 15 working days of the November 1 application deadline, please contact your Environment Canada regional office to confirm the receipt of your application package.

What will happen next?

Review

EcoAction project funding decisions are based on an annual competitive process. Your completed application goes through a three-stage review process: 1) administrative review by program staff to confirm eligibility (note that projects considered **not eligible** will be notified at the end of this stage); 2) technical review by subject-matter experts to confirm scientific and technical feasibility; and 3) regional review to ensure that environmental and departmental priorities are considered in the project approval process.

Projects are assessed against, but are not limited to, the following criteria:

- completeness of application;
- satisfaction of eligibility requirements (recipients, activities);
- applicability to program goals and objectives;
- indication of positive environmental impact (e.g., demonstrates clear environmental benefits and, where applicable, social, economic and health benefits);
- response to clearly defined and demonstrable environmental needs and benefits;
- indication of community involvement and support;
- feasibility and quality of the work plan and budget for the proposed activities including a description of the issues or problems, approach to be taken, attainable expected result(s) and scope;
- how evaluation and performance measures will be implemented (e.g., a clear set of expected, measurable results);
- indication of the potential for self-sustaining continuity of the project and that benefits to the environment and community will be sustained after the project is completed.

Notification

Once departmental approvals have been confirmed, all applicants (both successful and unsuccessful) will be notified in writing. If your project is approved, you will be contacted to negotiate a Contribution Agreement, which outlines the terms and conditions of funding. The contribution agreement must be negotiated to the satisfaction of Environment Canada within 40 calendar days of the notification date.

Please call us to discuss your project idea or submit a draft application for feedback. We will advise you on the eligibility of your organization and project and answer any questions you may have on the application process.

Best of luck to everyone!

Annex A – How to Complete the Application Form

Group Information and Project Contacts

Provide the group contact information, including a brief description of the group's mandate, years of operation, governance structure, management capacity, etc. In addition, contact information for two individuals responsible for the project is required. Contacts must be knowledgeable about the contents of the project proposal.

Project and Funding Summary

Indicate the project title, location, and expected start and end dates. As well, indicate the amount of funding requested from the Program, and other funding sources, and the total value of the project.

When determining your project start date, please take into account that no project can start before April 1 of the following year and the length of time to negotiate a Contribution Agreement with the Government of Canada.

If your project is approved for funding, the summary description you provide in your application may be made available to the public (i.e. posted on Environment Canada's website). Please be concise and include key measurable results you expect to achieve.

Budget

The Application Form includes the following three budget tables: 1) Human Resources; 2) Materials, Supplies and Equipment; and 3) Other Expenditures. This section requires budget details including:

- an itemized budget of the number of unit(s), unit cost, total cost and distribution of costs among the various funding sources (EcoAction Community Funding Program and other funding sources, including cash and in-kind contributions);
- an estimate of all expenses and in-kind donations at fair market value (the standard rate for a product or service in your area);
- a calculation of all volunteer time at fair market value as in-kind contribution;
- costs of employer contributions made on behalf of employees such as employment insurance contributions;
- an indication of whether or not the project is expected to generate revenue, through the sale of items, tax reimbursement, etc. Include an approximate value of the expected revenue and any eligible reimbursement for taxes with the total cash and total project value sums. Any revenue generated by the project is expected to be used toward project activities;
- breakdown of the amount of funding requested by the Program for the fiscal year; and
- details of other funding sources including cash and in-kind contributions (this section must identify sources of funding and include a minimum of 50% matching funding).

Please indicate "yes" or "no" in the appropriate box to identify whether a letter from other funding sources is included with the Application Form.

If letter(s) are not available at the time a completed application is submitted, they may be sent at a later date. However, if your project is accepted, the agreement will not be signed until all letters are received.

Project Description

This section requires details about the project, including: 1) environmental priorities, 2) project goal, 3) objectives, 4) human resources and project team experience, 5) work plan, and 6) communications plan.

Environmental Priorities

Identify the Environment Canada environmental priority issue (clean air, clean water, climate change or nature) the project primarily addresses.

Project Purpose

Identify the purpose of the project by describing the environmental issue it primarily addresses and why it is important for the community.

Project Goals and Objectives

Identify project goals and objectives that will be achieved within the timeframe of the project and the expected measurable results. Clearly explain how the project will benefit both the environment and the community.

Human Resources and Project Team Experience

Provide details about the duties and responsibilities of the position(s) identified in the Human Resources section of the budget. Who will work on the project (project coordinator, volunteers, consultants, technical experts, etc.)? Identify relevant qualifications and experiences of the project team members to demonstrate the group's experience and capacity to carry out the project.

Project Work Plan

Provide details of the activities to be undertaken, techniques involved, and the goals and timelines for each activity. What activities are involved and when will they take place? What methods or techniques will be used? The work plan must include site-specific details, such as event schedules and seasonal timelines. You may consider organizing activities and targets into fiscal year quarters according to the following breakdown: April to June, July to September, October to December, and January to March.

Communications Plan

Identify communications products and activities to explain how the community will be informed about the project and its results (e.g., public events, news releases, publications and websites).

Depending on your target audience and in accordance with the Official Languages Act of Canada, you may need to offer services to the public in both official languages. The EcoAction Community Funding Program may assist with the translation costs associated with this requirement as long as they are included in your project's budget. For more information, please contact your Environment Canada regional office.

Evaluation

- a) **Evaluation plan:** Provide an evaluation plan that clearly demonstrates how the project goals and objectives will be met. The plan should include the methodology and any calculations/formulas used to measure your project's results. Projects that have strong community engagement and education component **must include** methodology to measure the extent in which behavioural change will be achieved, e.g. before and after surveys.

- b) **Performance indicators:** Performance indicators are measurable results that demonstrate how your project objectives are met. All projects **must include** at least one (1) environmental indicator as per the list of performance indicators below. Once you have identified which performance indicators to track, assign an appropriate target for each.

Performance Indicators List

ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS		
Performance Indicator	Description	Unit Measure
Climate change and clean air		
Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (GHG)	Includes: Carbon Dioxide (CO ₂); Methane (CH ₄); Nitrous Oxide (N ₂ O); HFCs, PFCs and SF ₆ .	# of tonnes (CO ₂ eq.)
Reduction of emissions of Criteria Air Contaminants (CAC)	Includes: Sulphur Oxides (SO _x); Nitrogen Oxides (NO _x); Particulate Matter (PM); Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC); Carbon Monoxide (CO); and, Ammonia (NH ₃).	# of tonnes
Amount of energy conserved	Amount of energy calculated using GJ, kWh, m ³ , litres, kg (as relevant). Calculated using usage rates.	# kilowatt hour
Amount of organics composted/diverted from landfill	Total kilograms of organics composted/diverted. May be converted to GHGs using the EC GHG Calculator for Waste Management ¹ . Includes recycling, composting, and anaerobic digestion (a treatment that digests organic waste in the absence of oxygen).	# of kilograms
Clean Water		
Reduction or diversion of kilograms of toxic or harmful waste (per year)	Measured by weight (kilograms) of material sent to hazardous waste collection, items not used, items properly disposed of.	# of kilograms per year
Reduction of water consumption (per year)	Measured as number of litres of water reduced, re-used, conserved. May be assessed via water metering (pre/post) or using standard estimates.	# of litres per year
Area of shoreline protected, stabilized or improved	Converting linear kilometres to area by capturing the depth of work and not just the shoreline.	# of hectares
Percentage of recommendations from environmental management plans implemented	Only implemented recommendations will be captured.	% of recommendations
Nature		
Area of habitat protected	Protected: to maintain the status or integrity of habitat (e.g. land secured through stewardship agreements). Protection noted if done within the timeframe of the project or if firm commitments provided.	# of hectares
Area of habitat in which management or restoration actions have been implemented through project activities	Includes improvement or restoration actions. Examples of types of actions taken: debris removal, vegetation plantings, erosion control. May include aquatic/terrestrial habitat. Converting linear kilometres to area.	# of hectares
Amount of indigenous plants, trees and shrubs planted	Projects will have built-in conditions to help ensure survival of plantings.	# of plants/trees/shrubs

¹ Greenhouse Gases (GHG) Calculator for Waste Management: <http://www.ec.gc.ca/gdd-mw/default.asp?lang=En&n=D6A8B05A-1>

ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS		
Performance Indicator	Description	Unit Measure
Percentage of indigenous plants, trees and shrubs planted that survived	Number of total plantings / Number of plants surviving over at least one winter.	% of plants/trees/shrubs
Amount of installed structures used by wildlife	Total number of structures installed.	# of structures

CAPACITY BUILDING INDICATORS		
Performance Indicator	Description	Unit Measure
Participants in activity(ies)	Total number of individuals reached via project activities.	# of participants
Jobs created (person/year)	Paid employment generated directly by funded projects. Jobs created include full-time, part-time, temporary, and contract employment generated by the project. Calculated annually and reported in person/year.	# of jobs created
Volunteers participating directly in project	Volunteers are individuals with a role in implementing the project. Calculated annually and reported in person/year.	# of volunteers
People reached who indicated they would modify their behaviour as a result of project activities	Assessed via pre- and post-project surveys as part of project. Calculated annually and reported in person/year.	# of people

Additional information

Environmental sustainability

Explain how benefits to the environment and your community will be maintained after the project is completed.

Environmental responsibility

Groups must conduct activities in a manner that is not harmful to the environment. Explain what measures will be undertaken to ensure the environment will not be negatively affected by the project.

Prior to the start of your project, an environmental assessment may be required under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*, in which case you may be contacted to provide additional information. This requirement is in addition to any other environmental screening conducted by other levels of government. Typical activities which **may** require an environmental screening include: installation of habitat structures; creation of a wetland; and in-stream work. Furthermore, it is your responsibility to verify requirements and obtain any permits and/or approvals from other federal, provincial/territorial and/or municipal governments prior to the commencement of activities. Copies of all permits and approvals must be provided to your EcoAction regional office.

Below are some questions that might help you determine the need for an environmental assessment prior to the start of your project. If any of these apply to your project, please provide the relevant information in the Application Form. Will your project require:

- the use of heavy machinery;
- the use of machinery within 30 metres of a water body (heavy or hand);
- the application of herbicide (if so what method will be used to apply?);
- digging, soil displacement, or soil transported to the site;
- bio-engineering activities;

- installation, operation, modification, or decommissioning of a culvert, weir, or dam;
- in-water or near water works, including in-water planting;
- installation of permanent fencing; or
- work where species at risk or migratory birds are present on site or on adjacent land.

It is important to discuss the activities of your project with a program officer to determine whether additional information is required with your application. Additional information may be required even if an environmental screening is not necessary. For example: maps to identify sites (no larger than 8 1/2" x 14"); species list identifying the variety and number of plant species to be planted or animal species targeted; details on the construction, installation and maintenance of habitat structures such as bird boxes; details on construction and installation of in-stream structures; seasonal timelines of restoration activities.

Other Relevant Information

The following information is highly recommended but is **not required**:

- landowner support letter(s) where restoration activities will occur on private property, confirming that the group has permission to undertake activities on the property;
- community support letter(s) endorsing the project; and
- any additional information that will enhance a proposal (e.g., photos, sketches, maps)

The level of detail required should be consistent with the funding requested and the complexity of your project. For example, a group requesting \$10,000 for a project may need to provide less detail than a group asking for \$80,000 for a more complex project. If you have any questions about the level of detail required, please contact your regional office.

Environment Canada's EcoAction Regional Offices

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