National Conservation Plan: Gulf of Maine Initiative

Application Guidelines
2016-2019

Canada

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Application Guidelines

This document provides applicants with the information required to develop a funding proposal for the Gulf of Maine Initiative. The guidelines include general program information including eligibility requirements and how to complete the application form and submit the full application package.

Enquiries related to the Gulf of Maine Initiative should be directed to GMI-IGM@ec.gc.ca or by phone: 902-426-8521 or 1-800-663-5755 (toll-free).

Program Information

The Gulf of Maine is a highly productive ecosystem that is culturally significant and economically important to Canada. It is characterized by powerful tides which mix ocean with fresh water from 60 rivers draining large watersheds from the provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick and the states of Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts. Over 3,000 marine species and birds are found in the Gulf of Maine, as well as more than 30 species at risk, including the roseate tern and the endangered North Atlantic right whale. The level of current use and the demand for new development is leading to conflicting use of land, resources, and natural goods and services, which is exerting pressure on the health of the Gulf of Maine ecosystem.

The Gulf of Maine Initiative aims to maintain a healthy ecosystem that supports long term sustainability and economic growth. This initiative funds projects that improve the understanding and monitoring of the ecosystem health, define and reduce the stressors specific to the Gulf of Maine ecosystem and implement activities that promote a healthy ecosystem. For 2016-2019, funding will be provided for collaborative projects that increase knowledge of the ecosystem, as well as identify and/or address ecosystem stressors and their impacts. Projects should provide a strong science foundation to inform decisions and actions that will allow for land use and coastal development in the Gulf of Maine to be carried out responsibly allowing the ecosystem to remain healthy, diverse and productive.

Program Objectives

The Gulf of Maine Initiative will fund projects that support decision making and/or actions that encourage responsible development by:

- increasing the understanding and monitoring of ecosystem health;
- identifying and reducing key stressors to ecosystem health;
- implementing activities that contribute to a healthy ecosystem.

Program Priorities

Funding is available through the Gulf of Maine Initiative for projects that consider and/or address the impacts of human activities on:

- Water Quality – Increased understanding, assessment, and reduction of stressors and their cumulative effects on water quality.

- Habitat / Biodiversity – Enhanced habitat conservation that maintains ecological function and supports natural ecological goods and services.

Responsible Development

Responsible development is a process where human development goals and the protection and conservation of the environment are mutually supportive and align to maintain a healthy and productive ecosystem.

Eligible Activities

Eligible types of project activities may include:

Science, Research and Monitoring

- building on existing science and data projects;
- updating existing information on state of the ecosystem and stressors;
- addressing priority science, data and research gaps and needs;
- habitat and land use mapping (ie: types, descriptions, distribution, abundance, connectedness, historic change);
- ecosystem quality monitoring;
- identification and assessment of ecosystem stressors and their impacts;
- research on linkages between stressors and cumulative impacts;
- monitoring and trend analysis on key ecosystem stressors/impacts.

Addressing Ecosystem Stressors

- mitigation/reduction of stressors;
- restoration of area damaged by stressors;
- increasing the ecosystem's resilience to stressors.

Ineligible Activities

- Monitoring and data collection as stand-alone projects. These activities must be part of an overall ecosystem health initiative;
- Projects that have a single issue 'action' focus such as stream clean-ups or tree planting;
- Education and outreach as stand-alone projects. These activities can be incorporated into projects that meet the eligibility criteria outlined above;

- Projects focused on economic growth in marine and fisheries sectors such as aquaculture;
- Projects focused on a single species.

Geographic Location

Projects must be focused in the Canadian portion of the Gulf of Maine ecosystem. The Gulf of Maine ecosystem refers to the watershed and marine environments, which include landscapes and seascapes, as well as fresh, brackish or salt water environments.

Recipient organizations need not be located there, but the work must take place within the Canadian side of the geographic boundary.

Eligible Recipients

Only Canadian organizations are eligible and include:

- Non-profit organizations;
- Aboriginal governments and organizations;
- Universities/Academic institutions.

The following groups are not eligible for funding, but are encouraged to partner with an eligible applicant to support a project proposal:

- Businesses;
- Individuals;
- Municipal, provincial and federal governments.

Collaborations

Partnerships are highly encouraged and can enhance the competitiveness of a proposal. Collaboration among non-government organizations as well as research and academic institutions will build capacity to maintain a healthy ecosystem that supports long-term sustainability and economic growth. Partnerships with federal, provincial, municipal and Aboriginal governments as well as business/industry may contribute expertise and resources which could enhance the outcomes of a project. Although eligible recipient organizations must be located in Canada, international partnerships may also enhance the quality of a proposal.

Collaborations will be defined in one of three categories:

Partner - A partner is a person or organization that shares in both the risks and rewards of the project. A partner contributes to the project (knowledge, skills, and/or resources), stands to benefit in some way from the success of the project, and is assigned a specific role in accomplishing the project.

<u>Funder / Contributor</u> - Individual or organization that is contributing towards part or all of a project's cost with cash or in-kind contributions.

<u>Stakeholder</u> - A person, group or organization that has an interest in the outcome of the project. Stakeholders are vested in how a project is designed and whether it is successful, but they may not have direct responsibilities and tasks that influence project completion.

Eligible Project Costs

The following project costs are eligible:

- human resource costs, including salaries and benefits;
- contract and professional service costs (e.g., accounting, liability insurance costs that are directly attributed to carrying out the project, monitoring, legal or other professional fees);
- travel and field costs;
- material and supply costs;
- printing and production costs;
- communication and distribution costs;
- equipment purchase or rental costs;
- vehicle rental and operation costs;
- translation costs;
- a reasonable share of overhead and/or administrative costs that are directly attributed to project (no more than 15% of the funds requested from Environment Canada).

Amount of Funding Available

Projects are eligible for funding up to a maximum of $200,000 and up to 3 years in duration. Projects may begin in April 2016 and end no later than March 31, 2019.

At least 30% of the total value of the project must come from sources other than the Government of Canada. Employment support programs within Service Canada and programs for people within Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada are exempt from this requirement. Other contributions may be in the form of cash or in-kind contributions, 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;
- any other donated goods or services that contribute to covering the costs of the project.

Overlap with Other Federal Funding Programs

Any proposal submitted to other Environment Canada funding programs must be for activities that differ from those listed in this proposal. Organizations should review information from other Environment Canada funding programs and submit proposals to the one that represents the best fit for their project. For more information on Environment Canada's funding programs, see the following website: http://www.ec.gc.ca/financement-funding/default.asp?lang=En&n=923047A0-1 Applications that have overlapping activities with another proposal submitted by the applicant may be found ineligible and not considered for funding. It is the responsibility of the applicant to clearly explain how activities from this proposal differ from other proposals submitted to Environment Canada for funding.

Application Deadline

The deadline to submit an application is November 6, 2015.

All applications must be received in the Environment Canada office by midnight Atlantic Standard Time November 6, 2015. Email your completed forms to GMI-IGM@ec.gc.ca.

If you are unable to email, contact us for information on alternative ways to submit your application.

How to Apply

Complete and submit the Application Package.

The application package must include the following:

- Completed application form (including budget forecast and performance indicators);
- Signed confirmation of support forms for each individual or organization that is a partner, funder, or stakeholder;
- Other supplementary information (ie: maps, reference documents, supporting data, etc.).

An **application checklist** can be found at the end of the application form. Use this to ensure you have included all components of the application.

With the exception of confirmation of support forms from other funding sources, all information and supporting documentation must be included with the application package. **No additional information received after the application deadline will be taken into consideration.**

Please see *Appendix 1: How to Complete the Application Form* for details on preparing the application.

Review and Evaluation Process

Funding decisions will be based on a competitive process. Completed proposals will undergo a three-stage review process:

1) Administrative review by program staff to confirm eligibility (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;
3) Proposal review to ensure that program priorities and criteria are considered in the project evaluation and approval process.

The proposal will be assessed against, but not limited to, the following criteria:
- scientifically and/or technically sound;
- demonstrates management capability to successfully undertake the project;
- sound and realistic budget and work plan;
- amount of funding leveraged/confirmed (cash and in-kind) from other sources;
- builds partnerships through collaboration with other organizations and individuals;
- commitment to disseminate results and knowledge;
- achieves or leads to measurable outcomes that enhance ecosystem sustainability.

A strong application is one that:
- addresses the priorities of the Gulf of Maine Initiative;
- ties into or builds on existing work in the Gulf of Maine;
- includes objectives that are realistic, achievable and measurable;
- has a well-developed work plan and evaluation plan to measure project results;
- demonstrates how project activities will lead to more strategically informed decisions and actions on habitat conservation, responsible development and sustainable ecosystem health;
- demonstrates a high degree of local and regional support from a variety of partners including other levels of government and industry.

Notification
Applicants will receive an email confirming receipt of application by Environment Canada within 10 business days of the deadline.

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.

Appendix 1: Gulf of Maine Map
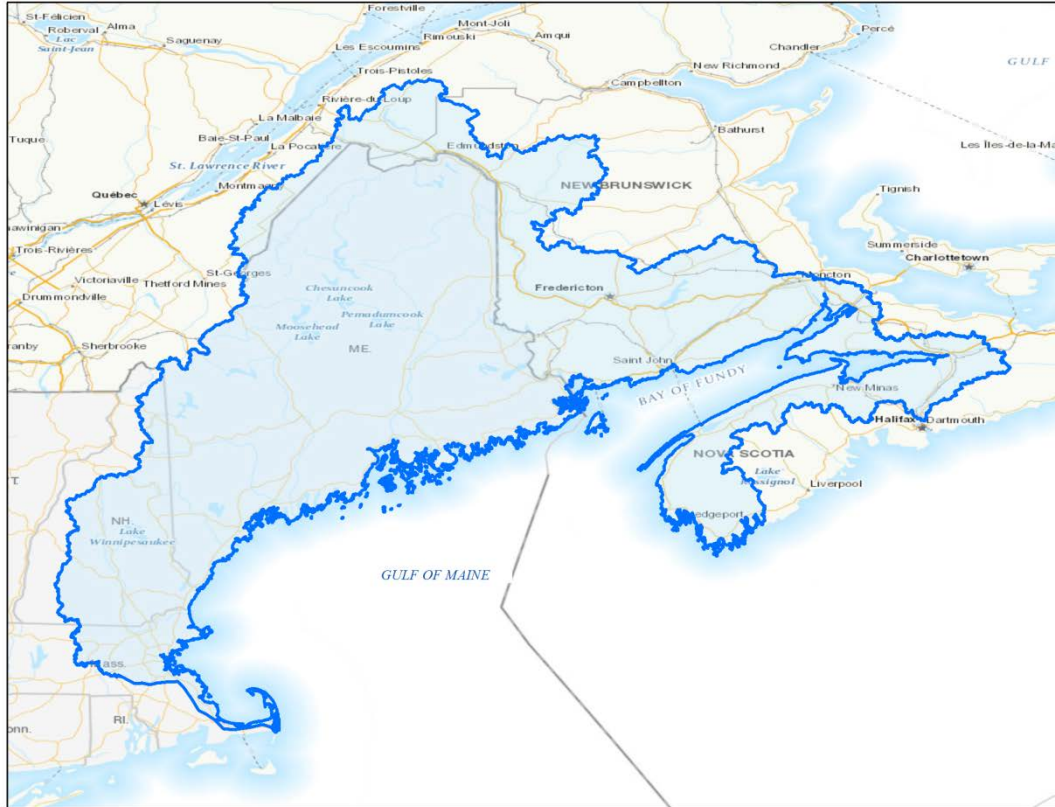
Projects must be focused in the Canadian portion of the Gulf of Maine ecosystem and work must take place within the Canadian side of the geographic boundary.

Appendix 1: How to Complete the Application Form

1- Organization Information and Project Contacts

Provide the full legal name and address of the organization and include a brief description of the mandate, years of operation, governance structure, and management team. Provide charitable registration number if applicable. In addition, contact information for two individuals responsible for the project is required. Contacts must be knowledgeable about the contents of the project proposal. One of the contacts should be the individual who would sign the agreement on behalf of the organization.

2- Project Summary

Indicate the title, location, and expected start and end dates of the project. As well, indicate the amount of funding requested and prior history of funding from Environment Canada. Project title and description will be used in all communications by Environment Canada related to the project, and the description may be made available to the public if the proposal is approved for funding. Provide the amount of funding requested from the Gulf of Maine Initiative by fiscal year, and total request.

3- Project Description

This section requires details about the project, including: project priority and type, project purpose, project goals and objectives, key activities/work plan, project team experience, and project partners.

a. **Program Objective** - Indicate the objectives that best fit with the proposal. Select all priorities that apply. Also, select one or more of the types of project to be undertaken.
b. **Program Priority -**Indicate the priorities that best fits with the proposal. Select all priorities that apply.
c. Project Activities – Indicate which of the eligible activities the project will undertake.
d. **Project Purpose -** In a few sentences, explain the purpose of this project. Describe the priority/priorities being addressed, how they will be addressed through this project and why the project is important to Gulf of Maine ecosystem. The use of action words such as increase, reduce, improve, enhance, prevent, etc. is encouraged.
e. **Project Goals and Objectives -** Identify project goals and objectives that will be achieved within the timeframe of the project and the expected results. Use SMART objectives (Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Realistic and Time Bound). Clearly explain how the project will benefit the Gulf of Maine ecosystem.
f. **Long-term impact and commitment**- Clearly identify how this project, or information generated from this project, will be used to improve ecosystem health after the project is complete. Indicate what follow-up activities you commit to carrying out following the completion of this project.

g. **Key Activities/ Work Plan -** Provide details for each activity to be undertaken in the proposed project. Describe techniques involved, the expected results, and timelines for each activity. Include a description of what information will be provided to Environment Canada to demonstrate that the activity was accomplished. Provide a start and end date for each activity to be undertaken.

h. **Project Team Experience -** Provide details about the duties and responsibilities of the position(s) involved in project delivery. 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 organization's experience and capacity to carry out the project.

i. **Project Partners -** List each of the project partners, and explain their role in the project. (Do not include financial details here).

4- Evaluation

a. **Evaluation Plan -** Provide an evaluation plan that clearly demonstrates how you will assess whether the project goals and objectives have been met. The plan should include the methodology and any calculations/formulas used to measure the project's results. The evaluation plan should answer the question "how will you know that your project has been successful?".

b. **Performance indicators -** Performance indicators measure the results achieved by the project. Choose at least one (1) indicator from the list of performance indicators, assign an appropriate target for each and include the sheet with the application package. You will be expected to report on the targets in the project progress reports. Use the text box at the bottom of the chart to explain the rationale used to calculate the estimates for each indicator.

Indicator	Descriptor	Unit (measure)
Frameworks to assess key stressors	Area (in hectares) in the Gulf of Maine that was assessed for key stressors through the development of frameworks, plans or strategies.	Hectares
Geo-referenced map(s) that support health assessment	Area (in hectares) in the Gulf of Maine that was included in geo-referenced map(s).	Hectares
Monitoring plans implemented	Area (in hectares) in the Gulf of Maine that was monitored.	Hectares
Number of data sharing plans/mechanisms created	Total number of plans and mechanisms for data sharing that were created.	Mechanisms
Number of recommendations incorporated into decisions and actions to enhance habitat conservation and responsible development	Total number recommendations that have been incorporated into decisions and actions to enhance habitat conservation and responsible development.	Recommendations
Number of collaborative activities	Total number of collaborative activities that have been undertaken during the project.	Activities

Number of partners or organizations involved	Total number of partners engaged and organizations involved in the project.	Partnerships
Number of recipients of shared information	Total number of individuals that received information that was generated through project activities.	Recipients
Number of jobs created	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.	Jobs
Number of reports on state of ecosystem health created and shared	Total number of reports that increase knowledge and understanding of the state of ecosystem health that are created as a result of project activities.	Reports
Number of threats, stressors, or risks identified	Total number of threats, stressors, or risks to the ecosystem that are identified.	Number
Number of threats, stressors, or risks reduced	Total number of threats, stressors or risks that are reduced as a result of project activities.	Number
Number of recommendations to minimize threats to ecosystem health generated.	Total number of recommendations to minimize threats to ecosystem health generated.	Recommendations
Number of reports on stressors and/or impacts made publically available	Total number of reports on stressors and/or impacts made publically available.	Number
Area of habitat conserved or restored	Total area of habitat conserved or restored.	Hectares
Area where activities were undertaken to improve Water Quality	Area (in hectares) in the Gulf of Maine where activities are undertaken to improve water quality.	Hectares
Percentage of reduction of toxic chemical levels in water	Overall percentage of reduction of toxic chemical levels in water as a result of the project.	Percentage

5- Project Budget and Cash flow

5.1 Total Project Funding

In column 1, enter the names of the organizations providing cash or in-kind contributions to the project (including the proposed amount from Environment Canada). This includes all government and non-government sources.

In column 2, indicate the contributor type as one of the following:

- Environment Canada
- Other Federal Department
- Provincial Government
- Municipal Government
- Other

A cash contribution is income received to support project activities. In-kind contributions can come in the form of cash-equivalent goods or services, which, if not donated, would have to be purchased with project funds. In-kind contributions could also include the time of individuals within partner organizations (e.g., experts in a specific area) spent in providing direction and participating in the project. In some cases, the partners may provide specialized skills and advice or access to special equipment, space, etc. Note, the in-kind amount must be reflective of reasonable costs for the service, product, equipment, etc., that your organization will receive.

Standard rates for in-kind contributions:

Professional Volunteers: $75/hour	Highly skilled volunteer who brings specific professional skills, experience or education to the project. Examples: lawyer, elders, academics, financial specialist, government employee.
Technical Volunteers: $35/hour	A skilled volunteer who brings specific technical skills, experience or education to the project. Examples: scientist, engineer, administrative worker, computer programmer.
Labour Volunteers: $15 per hour	Individuals filling a particular role in a project that does not require specific skills or training, although training may be required. Examples: participants taking water quality samples or planting trees in a riparian zone.
Equipment, materials, supplies, travel, and facility space.	Environment Canada will recognize in-kind contributions at fair market value that are based on the standard rate for a product or service in the project's geographical location.

5.2 Total Project Expenditures

This table describes the use of cash and in-kind contributions from all project partners.

In column 1, describe project costs in detail (including specific rates, salaries, fees, costs etc.). For example, if there are costs under the Materials and Supplies, write, "Office supplies and personal safety equipment for 2 summer students" under "Expenditure Detail".

In column 2, use the chart below to categorize costs by expenditure type. There can be multiple rows for the same Expenditure Type. All costs must be directly related to carrying out the activities identified in the work plan or directly related to the project administration. Travel and related expenses funded by the Gulf of Maine Initiative must not exceed those set out in the Treasury Board Travel Directive:

If there are costs that do not fit under any of the categories listed, please contact Environment Canada for support.

Project Expenditures

Expenditure Type	Expenditure Description
Salaries and Wages	Salaries and wages of employees, including mandatory employment related costs required by law (Canada Pension Plan (CPP) Employment Insurance (EI), etc.)
Management and professional services	Costs such as accounting, monitoring, and translation.
Contractors	Costs to hire contractors or consultants to undertake project activities such as general labourers or researchers.
Travel	Includes mileage, meals and accommodation; mileage/kilometer rates must be consistent with Treasury Board rates or lower.
Material and supplies	Includes materials and supplies related to undertaking project activity such as personal safety equipment, tools, equipment (items greater than $10,000 are not eligible expenses).
Equipment rentals	Includes rental fees and insurance of equipment used to undertake project activities.
Overhead	A reasonable share of overhead and/or administrative costs (no more than15% of the funds requested from Environment Canada). These costs must be directly attributable to the project. This includes rent, bookkeeping, telephone, Internet, etc.
Communication and printing, production and distribution costs	Includes production and distribution of brochures, fact sheets, news releases, public reports and other promotional material.
Vehicle rental and operation costs	Includes vehicle rental and insurance fees, fuel, etc.
Other costs	Please be sure to indicate in the description what the expenditure is.

5.3 Use of Environment Canada Funding

Use this table to outline how Environment Canada funding will be used towards project expenditures. Note: The expenditures in this table should also be listed in table 5.2, but only include costs that will be supported by Environment Canada funds (i.e. which costs in table 5.2 will be paid with Environment Canada funds). Use the chart above to categorize Expenditure Types in column 2.

6- Submitting the Application Package

The completed application package should include:

- Application form (including budget and performance indicators);
- Confirmation of support forms;
- Other supplementary information (ie: maps, reference documents, supporting data etc).

An **application checklist** can be found at the end of the application form. Use this to ensure you have included all components of the application.

The application package should be emailed to GMI-IGM@ec.gc.ca on or before November 6, 2015.

Contact information

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Environment Canada office:

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45 Alderney Drive
16th Floor, Queen Square
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia B2Y 2N6
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