Research and Knowledge Initiative

Applicant Guide

2023 Call for Proposals: Research and solutions for Canadian housing and infrastructure needs

Infrastructure Canada

Canada

Contents

Research and Knowledge Initiative

The Research and Knowledge Initiative (RKI) is a national merit-based contributions funding program from Infrastructure Canada that funds projects focused on key Government of Canada research and data priorities related to housing, infrastructure and communities.

Improving our understanding of housing and infrastructure, how they intersect and the dynamics that will drive effective and responsive solutions in Canada, will be essential to build and maintain livable, resilient communities. More and better research and data on housing and infrastructure can facilitate innovative approaches, empower citizens, and further community resilience and sustainability. Improved research and data can also inform national, regional and local decision-making and governance.

Phase Two: Research and Solutions for Canadian Housing and Infrastructure Needs

The call for proposals for the second phase of the Research and Knowledge Initiative is focused on applied research that includes or examines specific interventions and that contributes to solutions for addressing Canadian housing and infrastructure needs. Infrastructure Canada is particularly seeking proposals for research projects that investigate innovative and practical solutions – especially related to housing but may also address other infrastructure issues for communities – that respond to key concerns such as affordability, equity in access, and/or adaptability to changing needs, including climate change and demographic change. Priorities for this phase of research will focus on projects that:

- Test or evaluate solutions on a pilot basis, or undertake proof of concept analysis to study solutions in action, with robust methodology;
- Investigate replication or scalability of solutions in different provinces, municipalities, communities or regions;
- Develop and assess the application of new science, data, or technology; or
- Extract and evaluate lessons and uptake feasibilities from practical innovations including outside of Canada.

Proposals will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Broad relevance from a local or place-based perspective, as well as how they relate to the priority areas outlined above;
- Incorporation of appropriate and robust research methodologies for the proposed project scope;
- Involvement of the relevant expertise, stakeholders and partners, with an approach that includes knowledge-sharing and demonstrates the research is usable and replicable for various infrastructure actors or stakeholders in Canada; and
- Project is designed to deliver intended results and ensure strong stewardship of resources.

Requirements

Who can apply?

Applications are welcome from:

- Legal entities incorporated or registered in Canada such as:
    - Non-governmental (not for profit) organizations, including:
        - Industry, research, and professional associations
        - National Indigenous organizations and Indigenous communities
        - Community and regional organizations
        - Other non-profit organizations
    - Canadian academic institutions
    - Provincial, territorial, regional municipal or Indigenous governments
    - Private (for profit) organizations
- International not-for-profit legal entities validly incorporated or registered abroad, including:
    - Industry, research and professional associations
    - International organizations (e.g., Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development)
    - Academic institutions
    - Other non-profit organizations

Multiple organizations that come together to advance a project must identify a clear lead and explain the roles of each partner.

Eligible activities

Contributions under this call for proposals will be provided in support of the following activities:

- Development of research or data-driven papers, reports or other products (e.g., local public needs assessments, "smart" solutions to improve understanding of community infrastructure needs or trends);
- Original research including study design, data collection, piloting or testing, validation and analytics;
- Development of tools, techniques and guides that promote the use of research and knowledge related to the project's objectives;
- Conferences, workshops, seminars, appathons, hackathons, or other similar activities to share findings and results with key decision-makers, stakeholders, and the general public;
- Translation of research findings/outcomes into policy-relevant analysis and recommendations (e.g., identification of best practices, analysis of case studies);
- Development of virtual platforms or sites or delivery of events to promote the dissemination of research and knowledge related to the project's objectives (e.g., open data portals and hubs, apps, virtual communities);
- Dissemination of research findings/outcomes to key decision-makers, policymakers and key stakeholders (e.g., civil society/academia/think-tanks), as well as the general public.

Available funding

Infrastructure Canada has allocated a maximum of $10 million in total contributions for this call for proposals under Research and Knowledge Initiative. Funded projects and their activities must be scoped for completion between Summer 2024 and March 31, 2026. As no funding is confirmed for the Research and Knowledge Initiative after March 2026, project extensions are unlikely to be considered.

Eligible costs

Total proposed project costs for Research and Knowledge Initiative funding should be a minimum of $200,000 across the full period of the proposed project to be considered under this call for proposals.

The following costs are eligible:

- Costs considered by Infrastructure Canada to be direct and necessary for the successful implementation of the project, including salaries and benefits, professional and contracting services, materials, supplies, equipment, as well as travel and hospitality as per the Treasury Board's Directive on Travel, Hospitality, Conference and Event Expenditures;
- Costs incurred after project approval and before the project end date.

Eligible expenditures will be specified in individual projects' funding agreements.

Contributions made to private (for profit) organizations and intended to allow them to generate profits or to increase the value of the organization, will be repayable.

Ineligible Costs

Ineligible costs under the Research and Knowledge Initiative include costs related to the following items:

- Capital acquisitions, real estate fees and related costs, financing charges and loan interest payments;
- Legal fees;
- Costs incurred before the approval of the project or after the project completion date;
- Services or works normally provided by the recipient incurred in the course of its usual business, except those that are deemed to be incremental and necessary to the successful implementation of eligible activities;
- Any hospitality and travel expenses that are not paid in accordance with the Treasury Board Secretariat's Directive on Travel, Hospitality, Conference, and Event Expenditures;
- Any goods and services that are received through donation or in-kind;
- Provincial sales tax and Goods and Services Tax for which the recipient is eligible for a rebate, and any other costs eligible for rebates;
- Leasing of office space, furniture and equipment that are not required for the project; and,
- Cost of developing a proposal or negotiating a funding agreement.

Maximum contribution, stacking and cost-sharing

The maximum amount of Research and Knowledge Initiative funding that can be provided to a recipient in one fiscal year is $1,000,000.

The maximum level of total government funding (municipal, provincial, territorial, regional and federal) to be provided under the Initiative will not exceed 100% of eligible expenditures.

The Research and Knowledge Initiative is intended to build and share knowledge across the many stakeholders and actors involved in housing and infrastructure decisions and interventions in Canada. For this reason, partnerships are important to the program. The maximum level of total federal funding for any eligible activity shall not exceed 70% of total eligible expenditures. For projects led by Indigenous organizations and/or the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut governments, the maximum level of federal government funding may be up to 100% of total eligible expenditures; however, partnerships are still highly encouraged for Indigenous and northern projects.

In-kind contributions by the applicant are considered real contributions to the total expenditures of the proposed project but are not reimbursable. To be considered under the Research and Knowledge Initiative, in-kind contributions must be:

- provided by the applicant and not a third party;
- essential to the project's success;
- eligible and would otherwise have to be purchased or paid for by the applicant; and
- able to be measured using an established costing methodology.

Confirmation of all anticipated sources of funding for the proposed project will be required to be presented before funding agreements are finalized with Infrastructure Canada.

Process

Submitting an application

Applicants are invited to visit the application portal to access the online application form and applicant support services.

Please note that Chapter M-30 of the Act *respecting the Ministère du Conseil exécutif* may apply to Quebec-based recipients and Infrastructure Canada encourages such applicants to obtain applicable third-party approvals as early as possible in the application/funding process..

Deadline for submission of applications

The submission deadline is February 9, 2024, at 11:59 p.m. PDT.

Assessment of applications

Applications will first go through an eligibility check to ensure that they contain all the information required in the application form and meet the requirements outlined above, under "Who can apply" and "Eligible Activities". Applications that are incomplete or fail to meet the eligibility criteria will not be given further consideration.

Infrastructure Canada will then evaluate eligible applications based on the selection criteria found in **Table 1**. Projects should:

- **Be relevant** to the Canadian context for housing and infrastructure needs and challenges, and aligned to the priorities identified for this call as well as the mandate of Infrastructure Canada;
- **Conduct robust, quality research** employing appropriate expertise and evidence-based methodologies;
- **Engage stakeholders and share knowledge,** building partnerships, reinforcing uptake and conducting knowledge-sharing activities; and,
- **Deliver results** and demonstrate sound stewardship of resources.

Other considerations (such as regional balance and diversity of projects or approaches) may also be applied when selecting projects.

Assessment criteria also align with Indigenous priorities for research, including emphasizing partnerships and community-led research practices. Consideration will also be given to the integration and valorization of traditional knowledge in the assessment process. Projects that involve collecting and/or making use of First Nations data are encouraged to describe how they will respect ownership, control, access and possession (OCAP) principles.

All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application assessment.

Roles and responsibilities

Applicants are responsible for submitting applications containing accurate and reliable information based on professional knowledge. Inaccurate and/or false information may result in the application being disqualified from the assessment process.

The successful applicant will be responsible for delivering the required activities in accordance with a signed contribution agreement between the applicant and Infrastructure Canada.

Infrastructure Canada may propose that applicants with similar projects and complementary goals collaborate and share knowledge related to delivering project activities.

Privacy

The information you provide as part of the funding process is collected under the authority of Order in Council P.C. 2004-0325 for the purpose of registering to have access to the funding portal used to administer funding programs at Infrastructure Canada. It will be saved in the funding portal and will be used to evaluate, select and review applications, monitor the progress of approved projects, and coordinate administrative decisions with other federal departments and agencies, provincial/territorial governments, and/or municipal governments when you proceed to submit a funding application. The information may be shared with other federal departments and agencies, provincial/territorial governments, municipal governments and/or other organizations, for the purpose of assisting Infrastructure Canada with project review, evaluation and selection, determining eligibility for other

Government of Canada programs, and verifying past federal funding sought by an applicant. The information may be used by and disclosed to other external experts (e.g., scientific, technical, financial, or marketing) contracted by the Government of Canada (with confidentiality obligations) for the purpose of assisting the Department with project review, evaluation and selection, program analysis, results and determining eligibility under other programs. General information about approved projects including the name of the successful applicant, date of approval, the funding amount, project description and the location is proactively disclosed to the public once a funding agreement is signed. Failure to consent to the collection, use and disclosure of this information will result in the application not being further considered.

Other possible uses and sharing of personal information are described in the Infrastructure Canada Grants and Contributions Initiatives personal information bank. Under the *Privacy Act*, you have the right to the protection of, access to, and correction of your personal information. You also have the right to file a complaint with the Privacy Commissioner of Canada regarding Infrastructure Canada's handling of your personal information.

Contact information

Applicants are invited to visit the application portal to access the online application form.

Applicants are encouraged to contact Infrastructure Canada at RKI-IRC@infc.gc.ca with any questions related to this call for proposals.

For more information on Research and Knowledge Initiative, visit Infrastructure Canada Research and Knowledge Initiative.

For more information about Infrastructure Canada and its other programs, visit Infrastructure Canada.

Table 1: Application Assessment Criteria

Requirements	Assessment Criteria	Weight
Relevance	- Addresses a current or emerging issue of broad relevance related to housing, infrastructure and communities, aligned with the priorities identified for this Call and Infrastructure Canada's mandate. - Makes a new or innovative contribution to knowledge or the use of knowledge (e.g., supports decision-making) related to housing or public infrastructure in cities, rural and remote areas, or Indigenous communities. - Is supported by existing data, research, and evidence.	25%
Quality	- Provides a full and detailed description of the intended methodological approach for the research project with some rationale and context for why this methodology is preferred. - The proposed methodology builds on existing best practices, demonstrates methodological rigour, and use of evidenced based methodologies. Research methodologies proposed are robust and suited to the needs and overall scope of the intended aim of the project. - The research adds value to existing research on the topic or supplements existing research without replicating previous work in the area. - The lead researcher(s) and partners have the relevant expertise and qualifications necessary for the project.	25%
Knowledge-Sharing and Engagement	- Facilitates consultations, ethical partnerships and shared learning among relevant stakeholders, such as community members, decision-makers, thought-leaders, technical experts, non-profits and industry members. - Demonstrates an ability to mobilize other partners around the research (including with participation or funding) and conduct appropriate outreach to involve key public infrastructure actors. - Outlines an effective strategy for sharing generated knowledge and project results publicly and with key stakeholders (e.g., infrastructure decision-makers). - Supports longer-term knowledge-sharing and knowledge-use beyond the timelines of the proposed project (e.g., projects that are scalable and replicable).	25%

Delivery	• Provides a plan that is detailed and complete, including a clear description of roles, responsibilities and expertise of project participants, major activities, research methodology, any previous related work or research, project deliverables, expected results, intended outcomes, and clear project timelines. • Demonstrates the proposed plan is feasible and will meet the key project objectives. • Has appropriate tools, systems, processes and technologies in place, or a procurement plan in place to acquire them. • Demonstrates the existence and effective use of financial controls and risk mitigation. • Evidence of other credible funding sources and their respective amounts, or demonstration of the applicant's ability to raise funds from sources other than Infrastructure Canada. • Includes a detailed and complete budget that appears appropriate to the scope and objectives of the project.	25%