Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada
Logement, Infrastructures et Collectivités Canada

ZERO EMISSION TRANSIT FUND

Zero Emission Bus Planning Support

Applicant Guide

Canada

Aussi disponible en français sous le titre : Fonds pour le transport en commun à zéro émission. Soutient à la planification d'autobus à zéro émission – Guide de demande.

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Purpose

The Zero Emission Transit Fund (ZETF), delivered through the Canada Public Transit Fund (CPTF), supports the adoption of zero emission bus (ZEB) technologies in communities across Canada to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help transit operators lower operational costs.

As part of this initiative, Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada (HICC) is seeking applications from not-for-profit organizations and academic institutions well-positioned to provide planning and advisory services to transit operators in preparing for the transition to zero emission fleets.

> **Important:** This intake does not fund capital activities. Costs related to the purchase of buses, charging or refueling infrastructure, buildings, construction, land acquisition or other capital assets are not eligible for funding under this stream.

Objective

Successful ZEB deployments require strategic planning and a clear understanding of the technology, operational, infrastructure, organizational, and lifecycle cost considerations associated with fleet transitions.

The objective of this intake is to select one or more organization(s) with expertise, capacity and experience to provide ZEB planning support to transit operators across Canada. The selected organization(s) will work directly with municipalities, transit authorities, regional governments, and other transit operators to carry out planning projects that improve readiness for future ZEB deployments.

As a result of this call for applications, HICC will enter into funding agreements of up to $15 million for a period of up to five years (2027-28 to 2032-33) with the selected organization(s).

Role of selected organization(s)

The selected organization(s) will provide independent, neutral, evidence-based planning and advisory services to transit operators across Canada and offer them the knowledge, expertise and guidance they need to plan the electrification of their transit bus fleets.

The selected organization(s) will be responsible for managing the intake and the delivery of planning projects, including the selection of eligible projects, in accordance with the terms and conditions set out in the funding agreement.

> **Important:** Planning support for school transportation is not included in this intake.

Transitioning to ZEBs often requires long-term substantial financial investment. The selected organization must be able to prepare bus operators for this investment. Planning must consider community-specific operational requirements, charging or refueling infrastructure, facility upgrades, utility requirements, and long-term maintenance and operational needs.

The selected organization(s) will undertake the following activities, as appropriate:

1. **Assess fleet transition feasibility and technology options**

- Complete feasibility, technology, infrastructure, and utility analyses. These may include route and fleet analyses, feasibility studies that inform technology selection, fleet management considerations such as charging, refueling and maintenance schedules, as well as infrastructure and utility integration assessments.
- Assess facility, utility and infrastructure requirements, including energy supply needs, grid capacity and fuel supply considerations.
- Identify locally relevant barriers to ZEB deployment, considering the utility network and operating conditions of the specific regions or municipalities, and recommend practical solutions to address them.

2. **Assess and quantify ZEB deployment costs, benefits, and risks**
   - Analyze lifecycle costs and potential savings associated with ZEB deployments, including fuel, energy, maintenance, and anticipated operating costs.
   - Develop preliminary cost estimates to help transit operators assess other financial considerations to help transit operators assess financial feasibility, and inform future investments in ZEB deployments.
   - Assess operational, financial, infrastructure, technology, and implementation risks of ZEB deployments and recommend mitigation strategies.
   - Assess climate-related risks to zero emission transit infrastructure and recommend mitigation measures to increase resilience to current and future natural hazards. For more information on applicable climate requirements, please consult the CPTF Climate Fact Sheet.

3. **Develop deployment strategies and implementation plans:**
   - Develop practical fleet transition roadmaps and implementation plans tailored to each transit operator's needs and readiness.
   - Develop route and service plans, procurement strategies, infrastructure project timelines, ZEB deployment schedules, and proposed phasing.
   - Identify resource, workforce, skills, training, and organizational change requirements associated with future ZEB deployment.
   - Identify measures to support service reliability, improve energy efficiency, and cost optimization, and minimize service disruptions.
   - Provide planning and actionable recommendations that transit operators can use to inform future capital investment and implementation decisions.

4. **Support performance measurement and knowledge-sharing:**
   - Develop performance measurement, data collection, and evaluation frameworks.
   - Develop and share best practices, guidance materials, tools, research, and other resources through open and accessible forums.

Environmental Assessment and Indigenous Consultation

Most planning projects do not give rise to environmental assessment requirements or obligations to consult with Indigenous peoples. However, these requirements may apply if the planning activities themselves involve physical works, such as archeological or environmental site assessments, excavation, vegetation removal, or soil sampling. Planning activities that involve physical works should be discussed with HICC to determine any potential environmental assessment (EA) or Indigenous consultation (IC) implications, before the activities begin.

Who can apply?

To be eligible, applicants must be either:

- a not-for-profit organization; or
- an academic institution.

Applicants must also demonstrate that they:

- Have experience supporting municipalities, transit operators, or local communities;
- Have the expertise, resources, and capacity to deliver the proposed activities;
- Can provide services in both official languages; and
- Have a mandate that aligns with advancing zero emission transportation in Canada.

Organizations may apply individually or as part of a consortium.

Applicants are encouraged to contact the ZETF team at ZETF-FTCZE@infc.gc.ca with questions regarding eligibility or application requirements before the submission deadline.

Available funding

Successful organization(s) may enter into funding agreements of up to five years, subject to negotiation and approval with HICC. Funding decisions will be based on the quality of the applications received, demonstrated organization capacity, and available program funding.

Maximum contribution

The maximum level of total government funding provided under the CPTF for planning activities will not exceed 80% of eligible expenditures.

Selected organization(s) will be reimbursed for eligible project costs incurred through a funding agreement with HICC. Eligible costs can only be claimed after they have been incurred.

The basis of payment will be negotiated with successful applicants prior to the signing of a contribution agreement.

Eligible expenditures

Eligible expenditures include costs that are:

- Directly related to approved planning activities;
- Reasonable and necessary for project delivery;
- Approved by Housing, Infrastructure, and Communities Canada; and
- Incurred during the period identified in the contribution agreement.

Eligible expenditures may include incremental employee costs **directly** related to the delivering approved activities. Regular operating costs are not eligible.

Ineligible expenditures

Ineligible expenditures include:

- Capital project costs (e.g., procurement or lease of buses, charging or reglueing infrastructure, buildings, facilities, and land acquisition, construction activities, equipment purchases not required for approved planning activities);
- Associated real estate;
- Legal fees;
- Provincial sales tax, goods and services tax, and harmonized sales tax for which the recipient is eligible for a rebate, and any other costs eligible for rebates; and
- Employee costs with the exception of incremental costs which pertain solely to the implementation of the project and training costs related to new equipment, software and analysis tools.

Submitting an application

Please download the application form from the ZETF website. Submit the complete application by email to ZETF-FTCZE@infc.gc.ca in either official language.

Applications may be submitted by a single organization or a consortium. All applicants must provide the required supporting documentation. Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada may request additional information or clarification during the assessment process.

Deadline for submission of applications

Applicants are encouraged to contact the Zero Emission transit Team at ZETF-FTCZE@infc.gc.ca with questions about eligibility and other application requirements prior to the deadline.

The deadline for receipt of applications is January 14, 2027 23:59 PDT.

How applications will be assessed

Applications will be assessed against the eligibility requirements and the assessment criteria. Applications that do not meet the eligibility requirements will not be considered further. All applicants will be notified of the outcome of the assessment process.

Eligibility requirements

- Non-profit organization
- Academic institution

Assessment criteria

Applications will be assessed based on the applicant's:

- Organizational experience and demonstrated results;
- Capacity and expertise to deliver planning services;
- Approach and methodology;
- Ability to support multiple recipients and jurisdictions across Canada;
- Quality assurance processes;
- Knowledge transfer and recipient support;
- Performance measurement and reporting;
- Financial and organizational capacity; and

- Overall alignment with program objectives.

Requirement	Description	Application assessment criteria
Relevant experience and demonstrated results	The applicant demonstrates experience delivering planning and advisory services that support zero emission transit projects.	• Demonstrates experience delivering planning, analysis, modelling, feasibility studies, advisory services, or related activities that support zero-emission transit projects. • Provides examples of projects of similar scope, complexity, or scale. • Demonstrates experience working with transit operators, municipalities, Indigenous communities, or other relevant stakeholders. • Demonstrates the ability to translate technical information into practical and actionable recommendations. • Provides evidence of successful outcomes and lessons learned from previous projects. • Demonstrates alignment between the organization's mandate and the objectives of the ZETF.
Organizational capacity and service delivery	The applicant demonstrates the organizational capacity, resources, governance, and expertise required to successfully deliver planning and advisory services across Canada.	• Demonstrates access to qualified staff with relevant expertise and experience. • Demonstrates sufficient organizational capacity and governance to deliver the proposed services. • Demonstrates the ability to manage multiple recipients, jurisdictions, or projects simultaneously. • Demonstrates the ability to secure or leverage additional resources, if required. • Demonstrates the ability to provide services in both official languages. • Demonstrates a track record of successful project delivery and resource management.
Approach and methodology	The applicant demonstrates a clear, practical, and recipient-focused approach to delivering planning services.	• Demonstrates a clear methodology for assessing recipient needs and existing planning work. • Demonstrates an approach for engaging transit operators, municipalities, Indigenous communities, and other stakeholders. • Demonstrates the ability to tailor services to different community contexts and planning needs. • Demonstrates a practical approach to delivering planning services and achieving project objectives.
Achieving results	The applicant demonstrates how it will measure success, ensure quality, and support recipients in applying project outcomes.	• Demonstrates a clear approach to measuring, tracking, and reporting project results. • Identifies meaningful performance indicators and data collection methods. • Demonstrates quality assurance processes to ensure deliverables are accurate, consistent, and responsive to recipient needs. • Demonstrates how planning products, analyses, tools, and recommendations will support recipient decision-making and implementation. • Demonstrates a commitment to knowledge sharing and capacity building.
Financial and organizational management	The applicant demonstrates the systems, controls, and organizational practices required to manage public funding responsibly.	• Demonstrates appropriate financial management systems and controls. • Demonstrates the capacity to manage reporting, compliance, and contribution agreement requirements. • Demonstrates effective oversight of partners, subcontractors, or third-party organizations, where applicable.

Roles and responsibilities

Applicants must provide accurate and complete information. Applications containing false or misleading information may be disqualified. Successful applicants will be responsible for delivering approved activities in accordance with their contribution agreement with Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada.

Contact information

Applicants are encouraged to contact Housing, Infrastructure, and Communities ZETF-FTCZE@infc.gc.ca with any questions regarding the process.

For more information on the Zero Emission Transit Fund, visit the Fund's website.

For more information about Housing, Infrastructure, and Communities Canada and its other programs, visit the Housing, Infrastructure, and Communities Canada website. (https://housing-infrastructure.canada.ca)

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