



# Participant Funding Program

## National Program Guidelines

**Disclaimer** These Guidelines are intended for information purposes only. They are not a substitute for the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012* (CEAA 2012) or any of its regulations. In the event of any inconsistency between these Guidelines and CEAA 2012 or its regulations, the CEAA 2012 or regulations would prevail.

To ensure that you have the most up-to-date versions of CEAA 2012 and its regulations, please consult the [Department of Justice website](#).

**Updates** This document may be reviewed and updated periodically. To ensure that you have the most up-to-date version, please consult the [Policy and Guidance](#) page of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency's website.

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**Table of Contents**

Introduction .....1

Objective .....1

Program Process .....2

    Client Service Standards .....2

    Determination of Funding .....2

        Environmental Assessment by the Agency .....2

        Environmental Assessment by a Review Panel / Joint Review Panel.....3

        Regular Funding Level .....3

        Aboriginal Funding Level.....3

Notification of Availability of Funding .....4

    Notification of Regular Funding Availability.....4

    Notification of Aboriginal Funding Availability .....4

Eligibility .....4

    Eligible Recipients.....4

    Ineligible Recipients .....4

Expenses.....5

    Eligible Expenses .....5

    Ineligible Expenses .....5

Application Submission.....6

Application Assessment .....6

Funding.....6

Contribution Agreement .....6

Direct Deposit .....7

Payments .....7

    Interim.....8

    Final .....8

## Introduction

The Participant Funding Program (PFP) supports public and Aboriginal participation in environmental assessments conducted by the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (the Agency), by review panels and joint review panels pursuant to the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012* (CEAA 2012). The PFP is administered by the Agency.

CEAA 2012 sets out the roles and responsibilities and procedures for environmental assessments. Sections 57 and 58 of CEAA 2012 require the Agency to establish a participant funding program to facilitate the participation of the public in the environmental assessments it conducts and environmental assessments that have been referred to review panels.

The purpose of this document is to describe the PFP components and process, and the roles and responsibilities of successful applicants.

Individuals, incorporated not-for-profit organizations and Aboriginal groups interested in participating in a federal environmental assessment are eligible to apply for participant funding in one of two funding components:

- **Regular Funding:** provides limited financial assistance to individuals, incorporated not-for-profit organizations, and Aboriginal groups to help prepare for and participate in key public participation opportunities provided during environmental assessments by the Agency, review panels or joint review panels.
- **Aboriginal Funding:** provides limited funding to Aboriginal groups to assist them to prepare for and participate in Aboriginal consultation activities and key participation opportunities associated with environmental assessments by the Agency, review panels or joint review panels. Aboriginal groups in receipt of funding from this component for a specific environmental assessment process are not eligible for participant funding under the Regular Funding for the same process.

The funding made available by the Agency's PFP supports [public participation opportunities](#) posted on the Agency's website and Aboriginal consultation opportunities described in specific Aboriginal consultation plans established for a project.

The Agency receives a fixed annual budget for the PFP and administers it to provide limited financial contributions to eligible applicants in a fair and transparent manner. The Agency is not able to cover all expenses incurred and participants are encouraged to investigate other sources of funding or in-kind support.

## Objective

The overall objective of the PFP is to encourage effective participation by helping to ensure that concerns about the potential effects of a project on the environment, Aboriginal groups and on existing or potential Aboriginal or Treaty rights are taken into consideration during the environmental assessment process.

Effective participation can:

- provide individuals and organizations with an opportunity to contribute to the planning of projects that may affect them;
- allow proponents and the Agency to better understand and address public interest and concerns regarding the potential environmental effects of a project;

- assist in identifying and preventing or mitigating potential adverse environmental effects by contributing community knowledge and Aboriginal traditional knowledge that may be applied in the environmental assessment; and
- inform the environmental assessment process and the decisions that come out of that process.

Funding is made available by way of the PFP in support of achieving these benefits.

## Program Process

### Client Service Standards

The Agency's PFP client service standards for an environmental assessment by the Agency or by review panel are outlined below:

**Table 1 - Client Service Standards**

Process Phases	Standard	Notes/Comments
Application period	30 days	In calendar days. May vary in some exceptional circumstances
Review Applications	1 to 3 days	
Conducting Funding Review Committee and obtaining client revisions/additional documents as required	1 to 5 days	May vary depending on client's response time
Allocations Decision process	5 to 15 days	
Signing of Agreement by the Agency once received from recipient	1 to 3 days	
Payments processing (once complete expense claim is received)	10 to 20 days	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>48 to 76 days*</b>	

\*In working days, except for the Application period.

### Determination of Funding

Participant funding is available when a project is undergoing an environmental assessment by:

- the Agency; or
- a review panel/joint review panel.

There is no amount of funding determined per assessment, but rather per affected group and for the public. The Agency has pre-established maximum funding levels for each recipient so that the same amount is available to all applicants for all projects and in any region.

### Environmental Assessment by the Agency

An environmental assessment may be required for projects described in the [Regulations Designating Physical Activities](#). Once the Agency has posted a notice on its [Canadian Environmental Assessment Registry](#) website that an adequate project description has been received from a proponent, the Agency must determine within 45 days whether an

environmental assessment is required. If an environmental assessment is required, it is initiated as an environmental assessment by the Agency.

The environmental assessment process begins with a comment period on the draft Environmental Impact Statement Guidelines. The availability of participant funding is announced approximately 30 days after the close of the comment period on the draft Environmental Impact Statement Guidelines.

Participant funding during an environmental assessment by the Agency is available to support the participant in:

- reviewing and providing written comments to the Agency on the Environmental Impact Statement Summary or Environmental Impact Statement produced by the proponent; and
- reviewing and providing written comments on the draft Environmental Assessment Report prepared by the Agency.

### **Environmental Assessment by a Review Panel / Joint Review Panel**

The Minister of the Environment may refer the environmental assessment of a project to a review panel within the first 60 days of the environmental assessment. During this period, the environmental assessment is commenced by the Agency as described in the previous section.

The availability of participant funding is announced at the beginning of the review panel process.

Participant funding in an environmental assessment by a review panel/joint review panel is available to support the participant in:

- reviewing and providing written comments to the Agency on the draft terms of reference;
- reviewing and providing written comments to the Agency and/or review panel on the Environmental Impact Statement Summary or Environmental Impact Statement produced by the proponent; and
- preparing for and participating in the hearings held by the review panel.

In the Aboriginal Funding component only, funding can be made available to support Aboriginal consultation on the review panel's report.

### **Regular Funding Level**

The maximum funding available for public participation in environmental assessments undertaken by the Agency is \$10,500. And the maximum funding available for public participation in environmental assessments undertaken by a review panel/joint review panel is \$20,000.

### **Aboriginal Funding Level**

In considering what constitutes a reasonable contribution to Aboriginal groups to support their input to an environmental assessment and/or to support their engagement in consultation activities with the federal government, the Agency recognizes three categories in which activities may need to be undertaken by Aboriginal groups:

- **Community consultation:** discussions within the Aboriginal community on a project and its potential effects on the environment and Aboriginal or Treaty rights, so views and

information can be gathered and brought forward during the environmental assessment process and consultation activities;

- Technical review and input: review of the technical documents prepared during the environmental assessment process and input on those documents; and
- Consultation with federal government: presentation of the views of the Aboriginal group to the federal government.

Based on the opportunities for participation and consultation during the environmental assessment process identified in the consultation work plan, the funding to be offered in support of the activities described above is identified by the Agency using pre-established maximum funding levels.

## **Notification of Availability of Funding**

### **Notification of Regular Funding Availability**

To notify the public that participant funding is available, the Agency places public notices in local media and distributes a news release to provincial media outlets. The news release and public notice are also made available on the Agency's [Canadian Environmental Assessment Registry](#) website.

### **Notification of Aboriginal Funding Availability**

Aboriginal Funding is directly linked to the Agency's Aboriginal consultation activities associated with the environmental assessment of a project. Aboriginal Funding availability is communicated by the Agency directly to those Aboriginal groups involved. This is done at the same time as the announcement for Regular Funding.

## **Eligibility**

### **Eligible Recipients**

Individuals, incorporated not-for-profit organizations and Aboriginal groups may apply for participant funding.

To be eligible to apply, participants must demonstrate the value they will add by their participation in the environmental assessment and that they meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Have a direct, local interest in the project, such as living or owning property in the project area;
- Have community knowledge or Aboriginal traditional knowledge relevant to the environmental assessment;
- Plan to provide expert information relevant to the anticipated environmental effects of the project; and/or
- Have an interest in the potential impacts of the project on treaty lands, settlement lands or traditional territories and/or related claims and rights.

### **Ineligible Recipients**

Governmental organizations, other than Aboriginal governments, are not eligible to receive participant funding.

Any individuals, organizations or groups with views regarding the potential environmental effects of a project **may still participate** in the environmental assessment process, regardless of funding decisions.

## Expenses

### Eligible Expenses

The following expenses are eligible for funding under the PFP (for more detailed guidance see Appendix B - *Content and Expense Category Description* of the [Application Form](#)):

- Reporting Costs<sup>1</sup>
- Professional Services<sup>2</sup>
- Travel Expenses (including travel kilometers/flights, meals, incidentals and accommodation)
- Honoraria for Elders and ceremonial offerings (including costs associated with providing Aboriginal traditional or community knowledge relevant to the environmental assessment. **The Elder cannot be in receipt of a salary or any other direct income for the activity for which an honorarium is claimed.** Ceremonial offerings include relevant costs associated with providing gifts, such as tobacco offered to the Elder(s), in recognition for provided Aboriginal or community knowledge relevant to the environmental assessment.)

To qualify for reimbursement, all costs must be attributed to these expense categories and must directly contribute to activities described in the approved work plan (Appendix B of a Contribution Agreement).

### Ineligible Expenses

The PFP will not fund activities that duplicate services, studies or written materials that are funded by other public or private sources. This includes information prepared by the Agency, the proponent or, in the case of an assessment by a review panel, the review panel.

Applicants must identify, in their application, any other sources of funding assistance provided by any level of Government for the specific project. If it is determined that expenses were already covered by another source of funding, then the Agency might ask for reimbursement of those funds.

Participant funding is not available to support review and comment on the draft Environmental Impact Statement Guidelines.

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<sup>1</sup> Includes: staff salaries, administrative/reporting costs (such as: bookkeeping, accounting, reporting on the deliverables specific to the project for which the funding is provided) and office supplies, telephone charges, rental of office space, meeting rooms, local collection/distribution of information, general media advertising, promotion and other expenses.

<sup>2</sup> Includes: professional fees (expert advice or assistance on environmental, technical, or social issues relevant to the objectives of the Environmental Assessment) and legal fees (expert legal advice or assistance directly related to the recipient's participation).



## Application Submission

A completed funding application form must be submitted by the deadline to be considered for funding. The [application forms](#) are available on the Agency's website.

The deadline for submitting a funding application is generally 30 days from the notification of Regular and Aboriginal Funding availability, and is clearly identified in the [Public Notices and News Releases](#).

Only completed application forms received by the deadline will be considered.

Completed applications and supporting documentation are to be submitted to the Agency by one of the following ways:

- Email to: [PFP.PAFP@ceaa-acee.gc.ca](mailto:PFP.PAFP@ceaa-acee.gc.ca)
- Mail to: Participant Funding Program  
Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency  
160 Elgin Street, 22nd Floor  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0H3

## Application Assessment

A Funding Review Committee reviews all applications received to determine whether the proposed activities align with the public participation and Aboriginal consultation opportunities set out by the Agency and determines if the associated expenses reflect the effort and resources required to support those activities. Based on that analysis, the Funding Review Committee recommends whether funding should be approved, and if so, recommends an appropriate amount for each applicant to the President of the Agency, who makes the final decision on each funding request.

## Funding

The President of the Agency makes the final decision on the funding allocations based on the Funding Review Committee's report and recommendations, and any additional considerations identified by the Agency.

Some applicants may not receive funding. Others may be approved for less than the amount they requested. Regardless of the decision, applicants may still participate in the environmental assessment.

The Agency notifies applicants of the President's funding decision. The successful applicants' names and approved funding allocation amounts are made public on the Agency's [Media Room](#) and on the Agency's website for any [funding allocations of over \\$25,000](#) as part of the Government of Canada's efforts of transparency.

## Contribution Agreement

When funding is approved, the applicant will be contacted by the Agency to finalize a Contribution Agreement. A Contribution Agreement is a type of contract between the Agency and a recipient of the funds. A sample Contribution Agreement is available on the [PFP](#) webpage.

The Contribution Agreement, signed by the applicant (referred to in the Contribution Agreement as the "Recipient") and the Agency, will identify the conditions of the funding and the obligations of all signatories.

Only expenses incurred after a Contribution Agreement has been signed by both the Recipient and the Agency can be reimbursed.

The Contribution Agreement also:

- identifies the eligible costs;
- specifies the eligible activities in the approved work plan;
- specifies conditions for payment;
- specifies the effective date and duration of the Contribution Agreement; and
- requires the Recipient to be accountable for the public funds received.

Due to the estimated nature of funding requests, an adjustment of up to 20 percent within expense categories may be allowed. The Recipient must submit a written request with justification to modify the original eligible expenditures approved as part of Appendix A of the Contribution Agreement. The request must be approved by the Agency and the total amount claimed must remain within the level of funding originally approved.

The Agency reserves the right to undertake, or have undertaken, a financial audit of the accounts and resources of the recipient to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Contribution Agreement.

## Direct Deposit

The Government of Canada is switching from cheques to direct deposit, an electronic transfer of funds deposited directly into your bank account. The direct deposit will be faster than cheques. For more information on direct deposit, visit your bank or financial institution, or call toll-free at 1-800-O-Canada (1-800-622-6232). You can also find more information, including a short informative video, at [Public Works and Government Services Canada's](#) website.

If you currently have a bank account or qualify to open a bank account, you are encouraged to enroll by completing the [Recipient Registration and Electronic Payment Request Form](#) and returning it to the Agency by one of the following ways:

- Email to: [PFP.PAFP@ceaa-acee.gc.ca](mailto:PFP.PAFP@ceaa-acee.gc.ca)
- Facsimile: 613-948-9172
- Mail to: Participant Funding Program  
Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency  
160 Elgin Street, 22nd Floor  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0H3

## Payments

The Contribution Agreement includes conditions of payment. There are two ways that funds can be provided to the Recipient: as interim payments or a final payment. A [Detailed Financial Report form](#) can be downloaded from the Agency's website.

### Interim

An interim payment can be made after some eligible expenses have been incurred by the Recipient for participation activities set out in the approved work plan, but before all activities relating to the final participation opportunity have been completed.

### Final

A final payment claim can be submitted once all of the eligible expenses related to the final participation opportunity have been incurred by the Recipient and when there are no more opportunities to participate in the environmental assessment.

### Contact Information

Visit the Agency's website for further information on the PFP at <http://www.ceaa-acee.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=en&n=E33AE9FB-1>.

You can also write to:

Participant Funding Program  
Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency  
Place Bell Canada  
160 Elgin Street, 22nd Floor  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0H3

Tel.: 1-866-582-1884  
[PF.PAFP@ceaa-acee.gc.ca](mailto:PF.PAFP@ceaa-acee.gc.ca)

These [National Program Guidelines](#) can be downloaded from the Agency's website.