

Canada/British Columbia Infrastructure Program — Status Report —

The Review Process: Due Diligence, Transparency and Fairness

The Canada/British Columbia Infrastructure Program— an investment of more than \$800 million over five years — is the result of a strong partnership: three levels of government working together with a common goal of improving the quality of life in our communities through infrastructure projects that benefit all British Columbians.

The Application Review

The Management Committee — consisting of two representatives each from the federal and provincial governments and two local government representatives nominated by the Union of British Columbia Municipalities— is in the process of carefully evaluating applications to ensure that they meet all program criteria as set out in the program guidelines. These guidelines are in the public domain, having been made available to proponents and posted on the program's Website, <http://www.cse.gov.bc.ca/InfrastructureProgram>, as well as on the UBCM's Website, http://www.civicnet.gov.bc.ca/ubcm/canbc_infra.shtml.

The Committee's main task is to evaluate the applications and determine if they support the program's objectives. This process requires a thorough assessment of all the applications received, with each assessed individually and fairly. The process requires transparency and must protect the integrity of the federal-provincial agreement on behalf of British Columbians.

The program's first priority is "green", local government infrastructure projects. Some examples of "green" projects are water and waste-water systems, water management, and capital expenditures to improve the energy efficiency of buildings and facilities owned by local governments. The three partners agreed to dedicate 75 per cent of total funding to "green" projects. The committee must also consider the program's long-term strategic objectives in its deliberations.

These objectives are enhancing the quality of the environment, support long-term economic growth, improve community infrastructure, and build 21st century infrastructure through encouraging the use of best technologies, new approaches and best practices. Defining, assessing and verifying these measurable benefits require an in-depth process.

Meeting Program Objectives

We are making progress and we are confident that we will publicly announce the first decision on project approvals this fall. However, the required assessments are still underway. While the basic screening process must weigh applications against clear program objectives, it must also be fair. One of the realities we face is that we often require more information from applicants to make a fair and just evaluation of applications.

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We are aware of construction season limitations in many areas of the province, but with the challenges mentioned earlier, combined with the high volume of applications and complexity of many proposals, we have extended the evaluation process beyond original expectations.

To ensure that applications continue through the review process without undue delay, we encourage applicants to respond as quickly and thoroughly as possible to requests from our program staff for additional information.

We must request applicants who have begun construction of their projects to immediately notify our program staff. The published program guidelines state that projects already underway are no longer eligible and must be withdrawn from the review process. We encourage these applicants to indicate their new order of priority, if they have submitted other projects for consideration. Design work will not affect project eligibility.

Looking Ahead

The intake of applications will be ongoing and we will make decisions on application approvals throughout the program's life. Applicants have several options to consider for the next intake, if their application is not selected in the first round. Applicants can:

1. strengthen the existing application(s) by providing detailed information in accordance with program objectives;
2. choose to leave their application in the system in its original form; or
3. revise the initial proposal into smaller, more manageable components that reflect the program's specific guidelines and objectives.

Proponents: 604 387-4060
250 952-0673

Media: 604 666-1318
250 952-0611

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