Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada
Relations Couronne-Autochtones et Affaires du Nord Canada

Participant Funding Guide

Northern Participant Funding Program

Fiscal Year 2026-2027



Canada

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Overview of Participant Funding

What is participant funding?

CIRNAC's Northern Participant Funding Program supports effective public participation in impact assessments and some regulatory processes undertaken by the northern resource management boards in the territories. CIRNAC can only provide funding for projects in the three territories; projects in the provinces can be funded by the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada, the Canada Energy Regulator, or the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission.

Funding may be made available to Indigenous governments and organizations, or other Northerners interested in participating in the impact assessment process or associated regulatory processes (e.g., water licensing). The funding can cover expenses to support participation such as the costs of conducting studies and fees for experts. Please note that participant funding is limited and CIRNAC may not be able to cover all expenses associated with participation. In order to make best use of program dollars, we encourage every applicant to seek ways of collaborating with other affected parties as well as other sources of available funding.

How and when is funding available?

Participant funding can be made available to Indigenous governments or organizations and other Northerners for the review of major resource development or regional infrastructure projects. Some of the factors considered in determining the application of the program include:

- the level of public interest;
- the scale, scope and complexity of the proposed project; and
- the extent of anticipated regional and transboundary impacts.

CIRNAC will announce the availability of participant funding for a project proposal undergoing a review at the earliest possible opportunity.

Who is eligible for funding?

Participants eligible for funding are:

- Indigenous governments and organizations;
- community groups;
- incorporated not-for-profit organizations;
- experts able to contribute specialized knowledge;
- Indigenous and Northern individuals; and
- Northern residents or interested affected parties.

The applicant must demonstrate that they meet ***at least one*** of the following criteria:

- have Indigenous or Traditional Knowledge, Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ), Indigenous perspective, or community knowledge relevant to the project

review;
- have an interest in potential impacts to Indigenous claims, rights, or title;
- plan to provide expert information relevant to the anticipated impacts of the proposed development; or
- have a direct, local interest in the proposed development, such as living or owning property in the development area.

Parties ineligible for funding

Individuals and organizations are ineligible for participant funding if they:

- are the proponent of the project proposal, or are one of its subsidiaries or parent organizations, or have direct or indirect holdings in the proponent's organization;
- are a for-profit organization;
- have a direct commercial interest in the project proposal; or
- represent another level of government, other than an Indigenous government (note: municipal governments may be eligible for funding under certain circumstances).

Although parties may be ineligible for participant funding, they may still be eligible to participate in the project review, including formal registration as an intervener.

An exception to the restriction on funding groups with a direct commercial interest in a project proposal will be considered if the applicant is an organization that represents Indigenous rights holders or an organization that has been designated any responsibility, power, function or authority under a historical treaty or modern land claim or self-government agreement.

If you have questions about eligibility please contact CIRNAC staff at aidefinancierereparticipants-participantfunding@rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca.

What activities may be funded?

The following activities may be considered for funding:
- technical reviews of information;
- community meetings;
- honoraria;
- collection, translation, documentation or transmission of Indigenous knowledge or Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ);
- preparation of submissions and presentations;
- preparation of witnesses; and
- retention of experts, including legal representation.

This list is non-exhaustive and subject to change

Activities ineligible for funding

Funding will not be provided for activities that duplicate services, studies, or written materials being funded by other public or private sources. This includes information prepared by responsible authorities, the proponent, or, in the case of the review, by the Board itself. Similarly, participant funding cannot pay multiple recipients for substantially identical products or services (for instance, the same report or Indigenous Knowledge study).

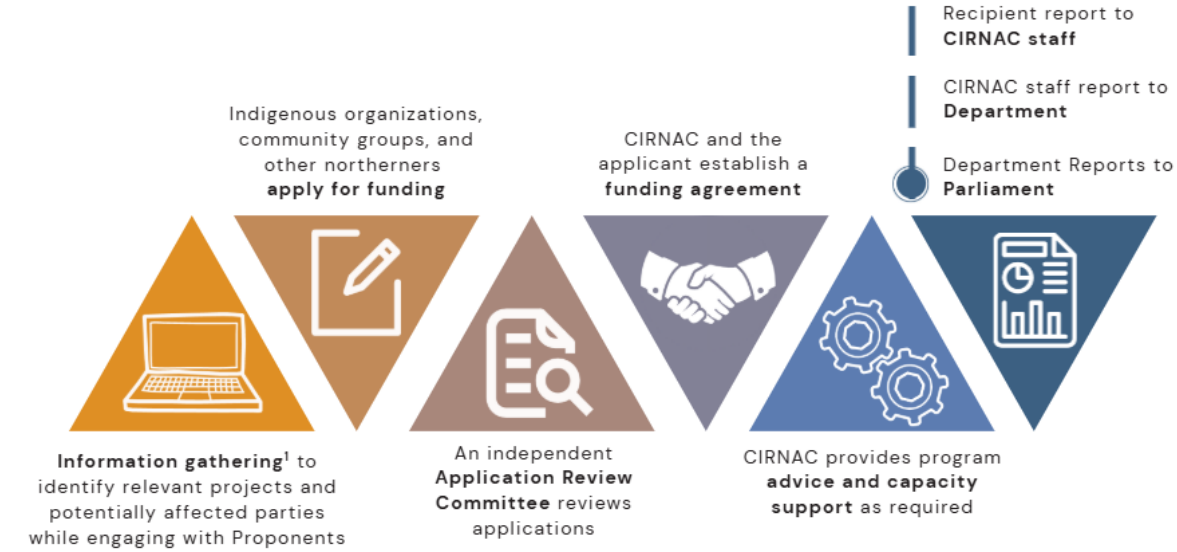
What expenses may be funded?

Eligible expenses include:

- travel costs;
- professional fees (e.g., consultants, lawyers, honoraria);
- non-core staff salaries;
- office supplies or telephone charges;
- media advertising, and promotion; and
- administrative expenses (up to 15%).

Please note that core operations and maintenance expenses are not eligible for funding under participant funding.

What is the funding process?



1 To identify relevant projects, NPFP engages with CIRNAC Regional Offices and impact assessment teams, the Northern Projects Management Office, Indigenous governments and organizations, territorial governments and co-management boards.

Establishment of Application Review Committee

An Application Review Committee (the Committee) will be established by CIRNAC to review applications for participant funding. The Committee will consist of individuals who have a reasonable knowledge of the project, are aware of the needs

of interveners, and have no interests or stake in the project. The Committee will then work independently to review funding applications, identify groups whose contribution is important for the project review, and recommend a level of funding required to facilitate their participation.

The Committee will consider all applications and recommend funding allocations to CIRNAC, with a justification for their recommendations.

Funding Limit

Funding limits are determined by the number of board-led impact assessments/regulatory reviews occurring across the territories, the number of applicants, and the funding available within the fiscal year. Due to program demand, applicants may receive less than the amount requested.

Allocation of Funding and Announcement of Awards

The Application Review Committee forwards its determinations and recommendations to CIRNAC, which then makes the final funding decisions and provides the Board with the list of recipients and approved amounts. Subject to available funding and due diligence—primarily confirming that all proposed activities and expenses are eligible—CIRNAC generally bases its decisions on the Committee's recommendations regarding which applicants should be funded. Any departure from the Committee's recommendations is documented with a justification.

Because funding is limited, some applicants may not receive funding, or may receive less than the amount requested.

Once the funding decision is received, the Board posts and distributes the list of successful applicants and the amounts awarded on the public registry.

****Please note that expenses cannot be incurred prior to funding agreement signature date.****

Administration of Funding Agreement

Funding is provided by way of a funding agreement, which:

- identifies the nature of the work to be funded;
- specifies conditions for payment;
- indicates what reporting the recipient is to submit; and
- includes CIRNAC's standard terms and conditions for contribution agreements.

Recipients are strongly encouraged to discuss with CIRNAC before making any changes to the original budget submitted with their applications, in order to ensure the changes are eligible and to reduce the administrative burden during the reporting stage.

As part of the funding agreement, recipients are required to submit an activity report

and a financial report, which may include an audited financial statement, and should circumstances necessitate, potentially an agreement to carry forward unused funds.

Funding Approaches (Carry Over and Retaining Unexpended Funds)

There are three funding approaches available for Indigenous recipients: Set, Fixed and Flexible.

An explanation of the funding approaches used by CIRNAC can be found at: https://sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1322746046651/1618142957561.

Annex A: Application Reference Guide

This section of the guide presents step-by-step instructions for completing and submitting the Application Form:

- Pre-submission checklist
- **Part A**: Eligibility Checklist
- **Part B**: Applicant Information
- **Part C**: Work Plan
- **Part D**: Budget Plan
    - •Travel Expenses
    - •Professional Fees
    - •Staff Salaries
    - •Office Supplies and Telephone Charges
    - •Media, Advertising, and Promotion
    - •Other Expenses
- **Part E**: Other Funding Sources
- How to submit your application
- Funding Requests Exceeding Project Funding Cap (For Data-Collection Purposes Only)

We will make our best efforts to announce our funding decisions within 2-3 weeks of the deadline for proposals.

Part A: Eligibility Checklist

The checklist found in the Application Form helps identify if your organization is eligible to receive participant funding.

If you meet the eligibility for funding requirements in the checklist, please proceed to the next section.

Part B: Applicant Information

If you are seeking funding on behalf of an organization, complete the information for "Organization Applicants" only.

If you are an individual seeking funding, complete the information for "Individual Applicants" only.

As part of this section, we ask that you please describe the unique and important perspective or role that you or your organization bring to this review.

Applicants should also demonstrate that they have *at least one* of the following:

- a direct, local interest in the development, such as living or owning property in the development area;
- an interest in potential impacts to related claims and rights;
- Indigenous or Traditional Knowledge, Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, Indigenous perspective, or community knowledge, relevant to Board's assessment; or
- expert information relevant to the anticipated environmental impacts of the development.

Part C: Work Plan

Provide a clear statement of your proposed funding for the assessment, including:

- the objectives of your participation;
- your proposed activities for each phase of the assessment; and
- how these objectives and activities may contribute to the Board's understanding of the project's anticipated effects.

Part D: Expenses

Travel Expenses

This includes expenses related to traveling to attend public participation events held as part of the assessment, including transportation, meals, lodging, and incidentals.

Under "Description", provide itemized details on the transportation, accommodation, per diems (daily allowances for meals and incidentals while on travel status, subject to the maximum rates set out by the National Joint Council Travel Directive) and any other travel-related expense

In the last two rows of this section, summarize the objective of travel and the number of travelers.

Please keep in mind that travel expenses should be reasonable and in accordance with federal government travel directives.

Professional Fees (including legal experts and Honoraria)

This covers expenses for legal advice, and expert advice or assistance on environmental, technical, or social issues relevant to the objectives of the assessment/review.

This includes per diem fees, Honoraria, or fees for experts providing Indigenous Traditional Knowledge, or community knowledge relevant to the assessment/review.

Professional services directly related to your participation, such as accounting, translation, or interpretation, are also covered.

For each expert, provide:

- the type of professional;;
- professional's fees (including rates and number of days, or the like);

- other expenses (including per diems, travel, and accommodations for the professional, and number of days); and
- the total cost.

*Please note that the Northern Participant Funding Program **does not** subject Honoraria to a $200 limit.*

Staff Salaries

This includes the salaries of individuals employed for the purpose of researching and preparing materials related to your participation (e.g., research staff and secretarial services). Note that we can only fund salaries for an individual who is not currently receiving a salary, or to temporarily cover the costs of replacing an individual who is receiving salary. Please provide the position title and the total cost for each individual.

Office and Telephone Expenses

This covers the cost of office expenses such as photocopying and postage, and communication charges such as telephone, teleconferencing, and information technology expenses.

Any office expenses that do not support your participation in the assessment/review (e.g., normal supplies and overhead) are not eligible for funding under the program.

Please provide the name of each expense, a brief description of how it relates to your participation, and the total cost of the expenses.

Media, Advertising and Promotion

This covers advertising for the purpose of publicizing meetings and activities related to the assessment (e.g., posters, newspaper advertisements, radio announcements, etc.).

The advertising should have a specific purpose that has not already been addressed by other parties with the responsibility to promote awareness of the assessment/review or public participation opportunities.

Please specify what type of media, describe how it contributes to the objectives of the assessment/review, and the total cost.

Other Expenses

Any other expense that is needed to support your participation may be covered by this category. This includes community meetings, childcare, catering, hospitality, and participation incentives (e.g., door prizes). Administrative costs are eligible up to a maximum of 15% of the total funding request.

For each expense item, provide a clear explanation of how this item will contribute to the objectives of the assessment/review, and display the total cost breakdown associated with the expense.

Funding Payment Schedule

The Funding Payment Schedule chart should reflect when you anticipate needing funds throughout the fiscal year. Indicate the month(s) in which you require payment—whether as a lump sum or in multiple installments—and ensure this aligns with your quarterly work plan and budget. Providing accurate timing helps CIRNAC plan cash flow, avoid delays, and ensure payments are issued when they are most needed for your project.

Part E: Other Funding Sources

Please indicate whether you have applied for financial support from any other source to assist with your participation in the assessment/review. If applicable, provide details about the funding source and the amount or level of support requested or received.

How to submit your application

To be considered for funding, applications must be received by the stated deadlines indicated in the Funding Application provided.

Completed applications should be sent to the NPFP team at aidefinanciereparticipants-participantfunding@rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca

Thank you for applying to the Northern Participant Funding Program

Thank you | Merci | Mársı | Kinanāskomitin | Hąį' | Quana | Qujannamiik | Quyanainni | Máhsı | Máhsı | Mahsì