



DESTINATION  
BRITISH COLUMBIA®

## BC Tourism Climate Resiliency Initiative Micro-Grants Program Guidelines

January 2024



## BC Tourism Climate Resiliency Initiative

The [BC Tourism Climate Resiliency Initiative \(BCTCRI\)](#) will invest \$3 million from the [BC Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport \(TACS\)](#) over two years through Destination BC, working in close collaboration with tourism industry partners including the [six Regional Destination Management Organizations \(RDMOS\)](#), and [Indigenous Tourism BC \(ITBC\)](#). The goal of the BCTCRI is to support the tourism sector in addressing and preparing for climate change.

The Initiative will support businesses and tourism organizations with the following objectives:

- **Mitigation:** Become more environmentally sustainable in their operations to reduce their overall climate footprint.
- **Adaptation:** Plan for and invest in adaptations to increase resiliency to climate impacts thereby improving their overall climate preparedness.

Through the BCTCRI, BC's tourism industry will:

1. Build a cleaner tourism industry that is prepared to adapt to climate change.
2. Collaborate with partners to identify climate risks and develop tools to respond.
3. Encourage partners to adopt common sustainability policies and practices.
4. Support responsible travel and preservation of BC's natural spaces.
5. Establish a common set of measures to track sustainable practices and climate adaptation initiatives.

## Micro-Grants

The micro-grant program, one of four projects to be launched in 2023/2024, specifically aims to invest in projects to build a cleaner tourism industry that is prepared to adapt to climate change.

The program will provide up to a maximum of \$15,000 in one-time grants to support organizations to invest in projects that improve environmental sustainability and responsible practices in their operations and support climate change adaptation. The first stream supports project-based work that invests in infrastructure, equipment, or implementation of new systems aligned with climate mitigation and adaptation outcomes.

The second funding stream seeks to support organizations during their sustainability journey with funding certification attainment through an approved tourism sustainability accreditation.

Climate sustainability or adaptation planning is not an eligible expense. The planning phase needs to be completed and assessments and roadmaps developed prior to micro-grant application.

The one-time micro-grant is intended as a catalyst to activate your sustainability planning and reap the economic, social, and environmental benefits of taking climate action.

## How the fund works

The BCTCRI micro-grant program will invest in one-time funding to support the tourism sector in addressing and preparing for climate change.

The grant will support businesses and tourism organizations to:

- Invest in adaptations to increase resiliency to climate impacts thereby improving their overall climate preparedness.
- Become more environmentally sustainable in their operations to reduce their overall climate footprint.

## Who can apply?

### Eligible Applicants:

- For-profit business, not-for-profit organization, or Indigenous organizations.
- Located in BC (registered and headquartered).
- Provide a tourism experience (e.g. accommodation, food service, attraction, transportation, visitor service).
- Be successfully operating for a minimum of two years.
- Have completed a sustainability assessment and/or have an action plan to improve sustainability and/or climate adaptation (developed within the last two years).
- The assessment or action plan could be completed through the BCTCRI Project #1 (previously the BC Tourism Sustainability Network) or independently co-developed with accredited outside experts\*.

\*An accredited expert or consultant is a professional with extensive relevant education and experience in conducting environmental assessments and creating strategic roadmaps to help organizations drive meaningful action and continuous improvements to minimize environmental footprints or respond to climate risks. Resulting plans developed with such professionals need to be submitted as part of the application process. **Plans generated automatically from online tools are not eligible.**

### Ineligible Applicants

- Local Governments
- Federal entities
- Organizations that do not provide tourism experiences
- Organizations that have been in operation for less than two years
- Any other organization not listed under eligible organizations

**The fund will award grants across two streams.**

## Stream 1 – Sustainability and Climate Adaptation Projects

**Apply through this stream if your business has completed a sustainability assessment and has an action plan for improving sustainability and/or climate preparedness in your operation.**

### Projects that are eligible:

Your project must:

- Be located in BC.
- Directly support an action identified in your sustainability or climate adaptation assessment and/or action plan.
- Support taking action towards infrastructure upgrades, equipment purchases, or improved systems as described in the eligible expense below. Planning or strategy development is not eligible for funding.
- Be completed by March 31, 2025.
- Meet cost sharing requirements described on page 7 under Funding Guidelines.
- Not displace or duplicate government efforts or industry responsibility. Leveraging funding from applicable government rebate programs is allowable if the government rebate is expressed in the budget and applies to the applicant's portion of contributed funds.

Examples of categories include (note these are examples only, other categories may be eligible that are not listed here):

### Renewable Energy Upgrades

- Upgrades to renewable energy sources, including:
  - Solar panel installation
  - Electrification of building systems, including installation of heat pumps

### Facilitation of Sustainable Transportation Methods

- Electrification of company vehicles
- Electric vehicle charging infrastructure
- Investments in active transportation infrastructure or equipment such as bike lockers

### Waste and Water Management

- Invest in closed-loop, circular systems to reduce or eliminate single use items, especially plastics. Examples include:
  - Reusable cup or take-out container sharing programs
  - Water refill stations

- Address, reduce and divert food waste. For example:
  - Installing onsite compost system
  - Expand and improve recycling sorting stations and signage
- Digital adaptations to reduce the use of paper
- Install water collection and reuse systems so non-potable water can be used for outdoor irrigation, cleaning, and toilet flushing. This includes:
  - Rainwater harvesting
  - Greywater recycling (this requires a system for wastewater treatment)
- Install low-flow fixtures such as showerheads, faucets, and toilets to reduce water consumption.
- Purchase water-efficient appliances with labels such as EnergyStar and WaterSense to reduce water consumption.

## **Nature Based Solutions**

- Build native flower and vegetable gardens to increase food security, support pollinators, increase soil health, and green spaces to absorb CO<sub>2</sub>.
- Invest in green roofs to reduce stormwater runoff, reduce ambient temperature, save energy, encourage biodiversity, and more.

## **Energy Management**

- Upgrade building envelop to reduce energy loss and improve efficiency. Including:
  - Energy efficient windows
  - Increased insulation
- Install energy-efficient equipment and monitoring devices to reduce and regulate energy consumption, including:
  - LED lighting
  - Energy efficient appliances
  - Programmable (smart) thermostat

## **Climate Adaptation**

- Back-up sump-pump purchase and installation to prepare for flooding events
- Radio communications equipment
- Fire Smart adaptations
- Implementation of a disaster warning system

## Stream 2 – Sustainability Certification

**Apply for this stream if you are working towards a sustainability certification from one of the following bodies. Your business must have completed a sustainability assessment and/or have an action plan for improving sustainability.**

### **Certifications that are Eligible:**

- GreenStep Sustainable Tourism Certification
- Green Key Eco-Rating Program
- BC Green Business Certification
- Biosphere Certification
- Green Destinations – Good Travel Seal (GTS)
- Other accredited certification\*

\*The BCTCRI Micro-grant program is open to suggestions of other general and sector-specific sustainability certifications that are relevant to your business. Certifications not included in this list that are aligned with identified climate resiliency objectives can be included on application forms and will be evaluated and vetted for approval upon receipt of the application. Certifications must apply to the whole business (not only certain product streams).

## How to use your funds

### Stream 1 – Sustainability and Climate Action Projects

#### Eligible Expenses

Grant funds can be used for:

- Goods or services directly related to project costs
- Construction or material costs
- Leasing of equipment related to the project
- Equipment essential for operation of the project
- Instructional signage
- Digital infrastructure

#### Ineligible expenses

Grant funds can not be used for:

- Legal fees
- Planning or consultation fees
- Costs incurred before approval date and after project completion
- Gifts and hospitality costs (for example, food, beverages, liquor, entertainment etc.)

- Liability insurance
- General routine and cyclical maintenance, and other normal overhead costs.
- Salaries and other employment benefits
- Any marketing activities

## Stream 2 – Sustainability Certification

### Eligible Expenses

Funding can go towards:

- First time assessment fees from the certification body
- Environmental audit fees required for the certification
- Annual costs within the first two years of certification

### Ineligible Costs

- Annual costs or fees after the first two years of certification
- Any marketing activities
- General routine and cyclical maintenance, and other normal overhead costs
- Salaries and any other staffing related costs

## Funding Guidelines

The overall cost of the project or certification will be shared between the applicant and the funding program.

- For-profit businesses
  - Up to 50% of eligible project costs.
- Indigenous\* and not-for-profit organizations
  - Up to 75% of eligible project costs

\*Applies to businesses that have at least 51% Indigenous ownership

Financial support will not exceed \$15,000. The actual contribution amount will be based on the minimum amount required to complete the project.

The application form must present a detailed budget that is feasible and considers all costs and funding sources.

## How to apply

### Application Timeline

January 15th, 2024	Program guidelines published
January 29th, 2024	Application opens (online form)
March 8 <sup>th</sup> , 2024	Application closes
March 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2024	Selections finalized and grant letters sent
October 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2024	Interim check-in by phone or interim report
March 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2025	Project work complete
June 30 <sup>th</sup> , 2025	Final report due with all receipts

### Application process

To submit an application:

1. Review eligibility criteria to determine if your organization and project meets the criteria for funding.
2. Complete the online application form anytime following the Monday, January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024 opening date and submit with any additional supporting documents.
3. Ensure your application meets the eligibility criteria for consideration as described in this document. Direct questions to [destinationstewardship@destinationbc.ca](mailto:destinationstewardship@destinationbc.ca) for any clarifications.
4. Submit the completed application form and supporting documents online by 4:30pm PST Friday, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

**Late or incomplete submissions will not be considered.**

## Additional grant information

### Evaluation criteria

All projects must:

- Align with the [fund objectives](#);
- Meet the mandatory eligibility criteria; and
- Support the organization’s sustainability or climate adaptation plan.

Evaluators from Destination BC will review project applications for all evaluation criteria described in this document. If all criteria are deemed to have been met, projects will be accepted based on a first come first served approach.



Destination BC reserves the right to select and approve project proposals that are deemed to have fully met all eligibility criteria of the Grant and to accept projects by regional allocation of funding.

## How you will receive your funding

Successful applicants will receive a grant letter from Destination BC outlining the terms of the funding before March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024.

Successful applicants will receive 90% of their funding via Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) upon completion of a provided Shared Cost Agreement and Direct Deposit Application Form from Destination BC. The first payment will be distributed in Spring 2024. The remaining 10% of funding will be paid upon completion of a final report and submission of supporting receipts.

Applications that meet all eligibility requirements but are not selected for funding in the first round will be kept on file in the instance of additional funding becoming available.

## Reporting

Final reports must be submitted within three months of project completion. A final report template will be provided following the interim check-in and will follow the questioning format of the application form along with the gathering of a few project outcomes. Support will be provided in completion of the final report as needed.

At least one progress check-in by phone or by submission of an interim report is required to ensure the project is underway and on track as intended. A change request will be required at that time if needed.

Organizations awarded grant funds may also be subject to post-payment audits to ensure compliance with the fund guidelines. If it is determined that funds were used for fraudulent or ineligible expenses, repayment of the grant funding may be required.

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## I Need Help

If you have questions or are facing any barriers to the submission process, support is available.

Email [destinationstewardship@destinationbc.ca](mailto:destinationstewardship@destinationbc.ca) to ask questions or make an appointment to get help with your submission. Appointments are available up to one week before submissions are due and may be limited in cases of high demand.