



Forest Innovation Program– Canadian Wood Fibre Centre

Contribution Agreement Program – Application Guide – Research and development projects

2020–2021

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1. Context

Supported by the [Forest Innovation Program](#) (FIP) of the Canadian Forest Service (CFS) of Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), the [Canadian Wood Fibre Centre](#) (CWFC) sustains research, development and technology transfer activities in the forest sector and the emerging bioeconomy to advance the sector and Government of Canada priorities.

In addition to managing CFS's internal scientific program *Developing Sustainable Fibre Solutions*, the CWFC supports complementary external activities through the FIP contribution agreement program. A contribution is a transfer payment subject to performance conditions for specific activities such as research and tech development and is subject to audit. For more information on contributions, please consult the Government of Canada's [Policy on Transfer Payments](#).

As the CWFC enters a new three-year program cycle (2020 – 2023), the internal research program and the contribution program have undergone changes, based in part on consultation with forest sector stakeholders. This guide reflects those changes. Consequently, the CWFC will now support larger projects for a period of 1 to 3-years, with a preference, as appropriate, on 3-year projects requiring annual funding levels of approximately \$ 100 000 per year. **Targeted research priorities are outlined in section 1.3 of this Guide.**

All project applications will be reviewed for completeness, eligibility and relevance. See section 3 and 4 of this Guide, for more information on evaluation criteria that will be used to assess proposals and guide the overall allocation of funds.

1.1 About the Canadian Wood Fibre Centre

The CWFC is a research centre within the CFS with employees located at all five CFS Research Centres, at the National Capital Region as well as at the Petawawa Research Forest. Part of the CWFC's mandate is to work closely with FPIInnovations and other stakeholders in the development and uptake of end-user relevant wood fibre research. This collaborative model aligns federal research with high priority research needs of the forest sector facilitating rapid uptake of government research.

The mission of the CWFC is to develop knowledge, tools and approaches aimed at reducing the risks to the forest fibre supply of Canada. By developing and deploying innovative, sustainable, evidence-based solutions that directly meet the needs of end users, CWFC supports economic development, Canada's transition to a low-carbon economy, effective stewardship of forest resources, and the resiliency of forests to the impacts of climate change.

In support of its research portfolio, the CWFC also operates the [Petawawa Research Forest](#), which is available to scientists and collaborators from across federal and provincial departments, academia and industry.

1.2 CWFC Research areas

The activities supported by the CWFC are divided into three research areas:

1. Characterization of forest biomass and enhancement of fibre production for the bioeconomy
2. Modeling of growth and yield of trees under global change and adaptive silviculture
3. Development of innovative solutions for forest management 4.0

Refer to Annex II for a description of each research area.

1.3 2020 – 2023 Contribution Program Research Priorities

Within the context of the foregoing CWFC research areas, the Contribution Program will focus on the following research priorities:

- A. Broadly applicable approaches aimed at deploying operational Enhanced Forest Inventory (EFI) methods at tree- and plot-level using remote sensing data, targeted to forest practitioners. For instance, suitable projects could aim to provide practical support in estimating forest attributes from mobile LiDAR, predicting species at tree-level with airborne LiDAR, forecasting growth and yield, or operational methods for efficiently assessing regeneration and vigour (health) using emerging remote sensing technologies.
- B. Data analytics and integration applications for unleashing the full value of forest resource information (e.g. EFI) to de-risk and optimize forest value chains.
- C. Improved understanding of the factors underpinning social acceptability of research applications in tree improvement, adaptive silviculture, or use of forest biomass for bioenergy production.

Please note that only projects addressing one or more of these research priorities will be considered in this call for proposals.

2. Application Form

The application form is available in French and English. Please request the application package in the language of your choice.

2.1. Applicant information

2.1.1 Type of organization/Legal entity (section 2.1.4 in the application form)

Eligible recipients for contributions under this allocation include:

- Universities, colleges, and other academic institutions;
- Provinces, territorial, regional, and municipal governments and their departments and agencies where applicable;
- For-profit enterprises that produce forest products and that have existing forest product manufacturing facilities (for examples, pulp, paper, or lumber mills) located in Canada;
- For-profit enterprises that supply materials, products, or services to forest products enterprises defined above;
- Not-for-profit forest sector organizations; and
- Not-for-profit research institutions.

2.2 Authorities and Contacts

2.2.1 Project lead and authority (section 2.2 in the application form)

This is the official contact for notices in the agreement and should be someone of sufficient level that can receive any notices of Amendment or Default as well as route requests for claim information, etc.

2.2.2 Authorized signatory (section 2.3 in the application form)

This is the individual(s) authorized to sign on behalf of the Legal Entity to enter into agreements to legally bind that organization.

2.2.3 Other key contacts (section 2.4 in the application form)

If applicable, please provide the contact information of your organization's specialist who might assist you with managing a contribution agreement (e.g., finance staff who will help you submit an invoice, contract specialist who will help you understand the terms of the agreement, etc.).

2.3 Research and development project information

2.3.1 Overview (section 3.1 in the application form)

Research and development projects will respond to the priorities provided in section 1.3 with clear statements of purpose and objectives. An overview of the geographic distribution of project activities is also required. The applicant is encouraged to use federal lands for project activities and, if applicable, must highlight this in the section 3.1.5 of the form.

2.3.2 Statement of needs and end-users (section 3.2 in the application form)

For a proposed research project to be eligible, the applicant must clearly describe 1) the forest sector need that is being addressed, 2) how this need is being targeted, and 3) the end-user partner(s) (e.g., industry, provincial government, etc.) directly involved in the project. Needs shall respond to the priorities provided in section 1.3.

The applicant must provide a letter of support from the partner(s). Letters from NRCAN employees are not eligible. To be considered in project evaluations, letters of support must be submitted before the submission deadline, must clearly demonstrate the involvement of the end-user in the delivery of the project. The collaboration of end-user partners (in-kind support, cash) must also be described at the section 4.4 of the application form.

2.3.3 Approach (section 3.3 in the application form)

Research project proposals must include a description of the general approach and methodology used at the section 3.3 in the application form.

Proposals should also clearly describe how the results and tools will be disseminated in section 3.3.2 in the application form. Applicants are encouraged to disseminate results and products as soon as they are produced. Only dissemination activities carried out **during the effective period of the project** will be considered in project evaluations.

2.3.4 Statement of benefits (section 3.4 in the application form)

Research project proposals must describe the expected benefits to stakeholders and to Canadians. They must also describe the method(s) of measuring performance against project outcomes. The proposed performance indicators must be quantifiable and measurable.

2.3.5 Detailed work plan (section 3.5.1 in the application form)

Research project proposals must describe the activities and/or tasks to be undertaken to achieve the project objectives, including the title of the activity and/or task, the location where it takes place, the expected results (deliverables), and the anticipated completion date.

Eligible activities include fieldwork, technical and laboratory work, computer modelling, social and economic data gathering and analyses. The description of each activity should include:

- The experimental design, sampling design, statistical analysis techniques and procedures, and specifications for tools, instruments and laboratory facilities that will be used;

- If a subcontractor will be hired to complete the activity, please provide adequate information describing the scope of the work that will be provided and the percentage of the work they will perform.
- If external collaborators will be involved in the activity, please describe this.

2.4 Budget information

2.4.1 Financial management capacity (section 4.1 in the application form)

The applicant is required to demonstrate the financial management capacity of the organization/institution. The description of the capacity may include the source of revenue, internal financial controls, financial stability, financial situation, financial experience, etc.

2.4.2 Project management capacity (section 4.2 in the application form)

The applicant is required to demonstrate the project management capacity of the organization or team. The description of the capacity may include the experience, the expertise, and the managerial qualifications of the organization or team.

2.4.3 Funding requested (section 4.3 in the application form)

Eligible expenditures will be directly related to the project and will include the following:

- Salaries and benefits, including full time, term and contract employees of the recipient engaged in the execution of projects;
- Professional and technical services such as, but not limited to research, consulting, engineering, trades, and laboratory services;
- University research services (for example, non-salary related costs associated with laboratory analysis, storage, etc.);
- Material and supplies up to \$10,000 per item;
- Capital equipment that is depreciable with a purchase price of \$10,000 or more (any capital equipment purchased through the contribution funding will not become an asset of Canada at the end of the project);
- Travel, including meals and accommodation;
- Publication, printing, and other media services;
- PST, HST and GST net of any rebate to which the recipient is entitled;
- Patent fees and other costs related to registering intellectual property; and
- Overhead : Eligible overhead costs will be a percentage of eligible costs reimbursed per project not to exceed 15%.

Overhead costs shall be directly related to the Conduct of the Project and be negotiated and agreed to on an individual basis with project proponents before signing a contribution agreement. **Any overhead**

claimed must be fully substantiated and must not exceed 15% of Eligible Expenditures. They may include:

- administrative support provided directly to the project by the proponent's employee(s), valued on the same basis as professional staff time;
- routine laboratory and field equipment maintenance, based on the actual cost to the proponent that is directly related to the project;
- heat, hydro, and office operating costs (e.g. faxes, telephone), provided that they are directly related to the project.

Please note that this contribution program does not advance funds but does reimburse eligible expenditures, upon submission of a claim, and that it is possible to do so quarterly.

Expenditures incurred prior to the execution of a contribution agreement will not be eligible for reimbursement. The eligible expenditure period will begin on the date of signature by Canada (i.e. the date when the contribution agreement is signed by both the recipient and NRCan), and ends at the date specify in the contribution agreement, usually March 31 of the fiscal year.

Funds allocated in a fiscal year must be spent in that same fiscal year. The budget cannot be transferred from one fiscal year to another in cases where there are unspent funds remaining at the end of the fiscal year.

The applicant may request funds for the monitoring and management of the project as well as the dissemination of results by 31 March. The cost associated with preparing the application is not an eligible expense.

2.4.4 Leveraging of partner contributions (section 4.4 in the application form)

Leveraging is defined as cash and in-kind contributions provided by partners. Project proposals will list other contributors (including the applicant) along with the type of organizations and activities that they will conduct as well as the amount of their contributions both in cash and in-kind by eligible expenditures.

In-kind contributions are non-cash items of support (e.g. buildings, equipment, use of facilities, datasets, labour, goods, and secretarial services) that are provided to the funded project by interested parties such as recipients, private or corporate donors, departments, or other government bodies. The value of the in-kind contributions should be supported by a basis of valuation, be verifiable and should be tracked by the proponent.

Please note that contributions (in kind or cash) by NRCan employees are not permitted.

If the project proposal is part of a larger project, cash and in-kind contributions should refer only to the **specific scope** of the proposal that the applicant are submitting now.

3. Proposal evaluation

NRCan will assess each proposal for completeness, eligibility, financial and project management capacity, relevance, collaborations and extent of leveraging of partner contributions.

3.1 Completeness

All sections of the application form must be completed, including the signature block and date. Failure to provide all the necessary information in the form may lead to the rejection of the proposal. With the exception of letters of support, additional attachments may not be considered. Letters of support must be submitted by the deadline for submission of projects.

3.2 Eligibility

Proposals must meet the eligibility requirements including type of recipient, type of activities, and amount requested.

3.3 Financial Management Capacity

Project proposals will be assessed based on evidence that the organization making the request has the financial management capacity required for the project. Past performance, assessment and reporting on other Government of Canada funds could be used to evaluate the financial management capacity.

3.4 Project Management Capacity

Proposals will be assessed based on evidence that the project team has the necessary capabilities, experience and qualifications to deliver the project. Past performance, assessment and reporting on other Government of Canada funds could be used to evaluate the project management capacity.

3.5 Relevance

Proposals must demonstrate that the project 1) targets an important need of the forest sector, 2) includes direct involvement of a final end user partner, 3) responds to one or more of the three research priorities outlined in section 1.3, and 4) generate significant benefits to forest sector stakeholders and to Canadians in general.

The evaluation of the relevance of the project will also be based on the following criteria:

- A letter of support from the partner(s) accompanies the request;

- Knowledge transfer / technology transfer activities will take place during the course of the project.

3.6 Collaboration and leveraging of partner contributions

The strength of proposals will be assessed based in part on the extent of the involvement of external partners and collaborators, including external resources available to support the project, such as financial support.

4. Funding allocation

Priority will be given to proposals that:

- Demonstrate clearly that the proposed project activities can be realistically achieved based on the proposed schedule and budget;
- Draw on additional funds from other sources;
- Clearly demonstrate that they can provide benefits to external stakeholders and ensure value for money for the Government of Canada.

Other factors may be taken into consideration such as:

- Regional and representative distribution of funding across Canada;
- Strong demonstration of collaborative work;
- Multiple partnerships;
- Knowledge transfer/technology transfer activities;
- Projects/activities carried out on federal lands, including at the Petawawa Research Forest.

CWFC reserves the right to negotiate amounts requested by applicants based on the criteria above.

5. Stacking provisions

Approved projects will be eligible for total government assistance not to exceed 100 percent of total eligible expenditures. The total federal government portion of this assistance can also not exceed 100 percent.

Applicants will be required to identify all sources of funding, including contributions from other federal, provincial/territorial, municipal and industry sources at the beginning and end of the project.

6. Subcontracts

A recipient must accept the following under any Contribution Agreement signed with NRCan:

- It shall not subcontract all or any part of the project except as described in the proposal; and
- It shall notify and obtain written consent of NRCan for any other new contract not originally included in the proposal that it enters into with a third party to undertake work on the project

where the estimate of the cost of the work to be performed exceeds **twenty percent (20%)** of the contribution, and the notice shall include a description of the extent and nature of the contracted work, the identity of the contractor, and the estimated cost of the contracted work.

7. Basis of payment and reporting

Payments will be made based on a reimbursement of eligible expenditures incurred and measurable, pre-defined project milestones documented in signed progress reports.

NRCan may withhold a percentage from each payment until all reporting and financial conditions are met (end of project).

A recipient will be required to provide the following standard reports for the duration of the project:

- Progress reports at mid-year and year-end (each fiscal year) including updated budgets;
- Financial reports outlining eligible expenditures incurred with every claim for payment;
- Reports against performance measures established in the contribution agreement at mid-year and year-end; and
- A final narrative report of results when the project is complete that describes how the project has contributed to the achievement of the objectives, the benefits and the key performance indicators established in the agreement.

Regular communication between CWFC and recipients will be implemented to monitor progress.

7.1 New Program Element and Information Requirements – Diversity and Inclusion

With the recent renewal of the “Forest Sector Competitiveness “ programs for 2020 - 2023, the Government of Canada highlighted its desire to increase workforce diversity in the forest sector.

Specifically, it called on Natural Resources Canada - Canadian Forest Service (CFS) to “*revise the project selection criteria and results tracking for this suite of programming to include requirements to address gender and other representation gaps within the forest [sector].*”

To meet this requirement, the CFS conducted research and analysis to better understand the issue and identify representation gaps in the forest sector workforce. Based on these results and to address the representation gaps in the forest sector workforce, Contribution Programs include new information gathering and diversity and inclusion planning requirements from applicants.

To gain a better understanding of existing diversity and inclusion within the forest industry, and to work to increase it, **all applicants** are required to provide the following information as **part of their application**:

Requirement #1:

- A diversity and inclusion plan specific to the proposed project.

If your larger organization has a global Diversity and Inclusion Plan, please refer to that for the project-specific plan.

If not, please refer to the Diversity and Inclusion Plan template (available on demand).

The Plan should describe the recipient's approach to achieving gender balance and increasing diversity within their project. Examples could include efforts to increase the proportion of designated groups as defined in the Employment Equity Act (e.g., women, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities) in the development and operational phases of the project, potentially including:

- how diversity and inclusion is factored into the project's hiring processes; and,
- other activities by the proponents that seek to increase or support diversity in Canada's forest sector.

Requirement #2:

- Completion of a "Diversity and Inclusion Questionnaire" (questionnaire available on demand).

Further, projects with **10 or fewer employees are not required** to Requirement #2.

The information above (Requirements #1 and 2) will not be considered as part of the final funding decision.

Note that at a future time, the FIP program reserves the right to rate Diversity and Inclusion Plans as part of the evaluation process. This element may be included in the rated evaluation criteria once a baseline understanding is established for the measures that can be implemented by the forest sector to achieve gender balance and increase diversity.

Successful (funded) applicants must also provide the following information at a **later date**:

Requirement #3:

- For 1-year projects, a report on implementation is required at the end of the project.
- For 2-year and 3-year projects, a report on implementation is required at the mid-point of the project and at the end of the project.
- As relevant, report on any updates to the Plan.

Note that all information on gender and diversity will be confidential.

8. Recipient audit

NRCan may be requested to undertake a financial audit of eligible expenditures incurred by a recipient. As a result, recipients will be required to keep all financial records regarding any funded project for a minimum of three years after the project completion date.

Annex I. Important information, dates and links

a. Background information

For more information on the Forest Innovation Program (FIP) or any of the organizations referenced in this request for proposals, please visit the following web sites:

- Natural Resources Canada (NRCan): <http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/home>
- Canadian Forest Service (CFS): <http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/forests>
- Forest Innovation Program (FIP): <http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/forests/federal-programs/13137>
- Canadian Wood Fibre Centre: <http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/forests/research-centres/cwfc/13457>

The list of previously funded projects over the past two fiscal years can be found on the [Forest Innovation Program](#) web page.

b. Application form

- To request an application form, please email nrcan.cwfc-ccfb.nrcan@canada.ca
- Submit a completed proposal and letter of support from the partner(s) to CWFC's mailbox: nrcan.cwfc-ccfb.nrcan@canada.ca

c. Application schedule

The following is the schedule for the application process:

- Request for project proposals Issued: June 1, 2020
- Final date for submission of project proposals: 11:59 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time, Friday, July 14, 2020
- Initial eligibility assessment and acknowledgment of receipt: July 21, 2020
- Funding decisions will be communicated on September 10, 2020

Applicants being given further consideration will be contacted for negotiation of funding. Note: contribution agreements cannot begin before the signature of the agreement nor continue beyond March 31, 2023.

The above schedule is subject to change. Any changes will be communicated via the [FIP](#) and [CWFC](#) website.

d. Service standards

In the administration of funding contributions under the FIP, NRCan is committed to the following service standards:

- Reviewing applications and informing applicants of funding decisions within 40 business days after application deadline;
- Sending a Contribution Agreement to applicant for signature within 60 business days of advising applicants of funding decisions;
- Having signed amendments in place within 60 calendar days of receiving an acceptable request; and
- Issuing payments within 30 calendar days of receiving a complete invoice.

e. Contact us

Please direct all applications and questions to the [CWFC's mailbox](#).

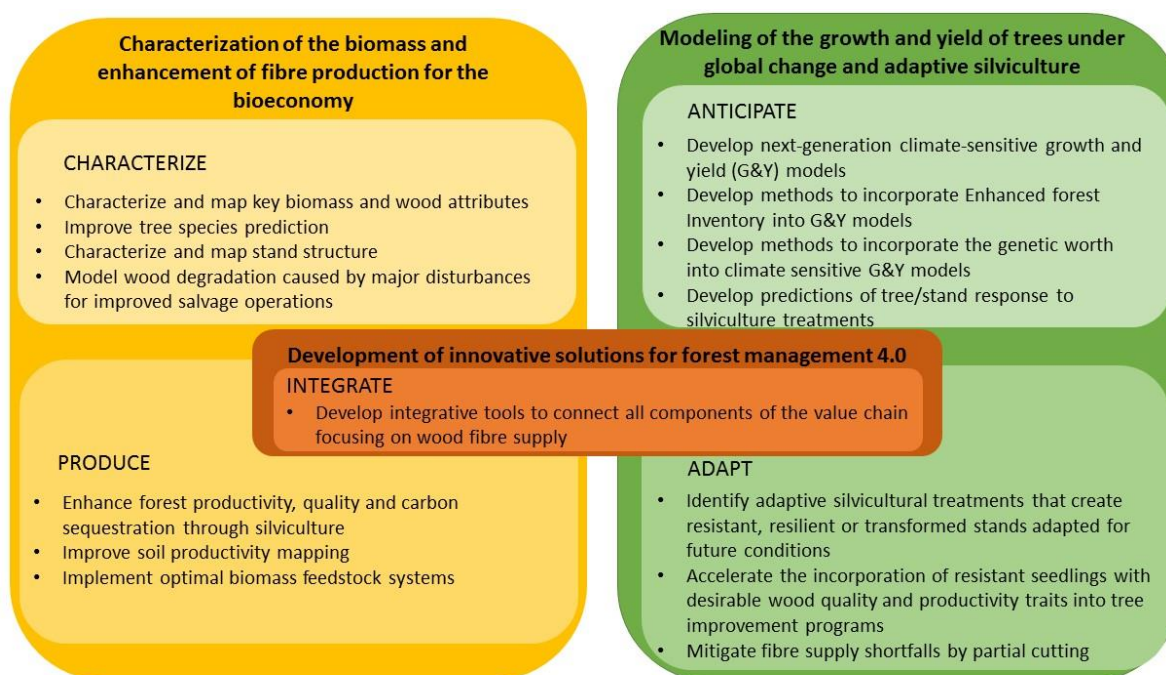
Annex II. Detailed description of the CWFC research areas

The CWFC's *Developing Sustainable Fibre Solutions* program maintains a strong focus on outreach activities to ensure rapid uptake of the processes and products that are developed.

1. Characterization of forest biomass and enhancement of fibre production for the bioeconomy
2. Modeling of growth and yield of trees under global change and adaptive silviculture
3. Development of innovative solutions for forest management 4.0

Research Areas

The *Developing Sustainable Fibre Solutions* program



1. Characterization of the forest biomass and enhancement of fibre production for the bioeconomy

This research area includes the sub-components “Characterize (1.1)” which provides end users with tools and approaches to help them characterize the current state of forest biomass in terms of quantity and quality. Research area “Produce (1.2)” is aimed at development of

methods to increase fibre production by improving trees and the silvicultural methods to support the forest sector and the emerging bioeconomy.

Sub-component 1.1 Characterize – Provide tools and approaches to characterize forest biomass and wood attributes in order to optimize the value chain

- a) Characterize and map key biomass and wood attributes
- b) Improve tree species prediction
- c) Characterize and map stand structure
- d) Model wood degradation caused by major disturbances for improved salvage operations

Sub-component 1.2 Produce – Fibre production to support the forest sector and the emerging bioeconomy

- a) Enhance forest productivity, quality and carbon sequestration through silviculture
- b) Improve soil productivity mapping
- c) Implement optimal biomass feedstock systems

2. Modeling of growth and yield of trees under global change and adaptive silviculture

This research area includes the sub-components “Anticipate (2.1)” for the development and deployment of new technologies to improve the accuracy of growth and productivity models to anticipate risks and future changes in the fibre supply. Sub-component “Adapt (2.2)” includes research to make forest stands more resistant and resilient.

Sub-component 2.1 Anticipate – High resolution tree and stand projections leveraging new technologies to increase precision and anticipate changes in future wood supply

- a) Develop next-generation climate-sensitive growth and yield (G&Y) models
- b) Develop methods to incorporate Enhanced forest Inventory into G&Y models
- c) Develop methods to incorporate the genetic worth into climate sensitive G&Y models
- d) Develop predictions of tree/stand response to silviculture treatments

Sub-component 2.2 Adapt – Operational-scale silviculture research to improve resistance, resilience or transform forest stands, and to secure fibre production

- a) Identify adaptive silvicultural treatments that create resistant, resilient or transformed stands adapted for future conditions
- b) Accelerate the incorporation of resistant seedlings with desirable wood quality and productivity traits into tree improvement programs

- c) Mitigate fibre supply shortfalls by partial cutting

3. Development of innovative solutions for forest management 4.0

This research area is focused on how big data and artificial intelligence techniques are being incorporated with enhanced forest inventory (EFI) information and methods.

Sub-component 3.1 Integrate – Digitalization of the value chain to advance the digital transformation of the forest sector and support the emerging bioeconomy

- a) Develop integrative tools to connect all components of the value chain focusing on wood fibre supply

Annex III. Questions and Answers

a. What are the intellectual property considerations?

All intellectual property that arises in the course of the project shall vest in, or be licensed to the recipient. The recipient will grant Canada a non-exclusive, irrevocable, world-wide royalty-free license in perpetuity to use the data and information contained in reports and modify such reports and documents for non-commercial government purposes.

b. Are there environmental assessment considerations?

Projects under the FIP will be assessed as per the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act and other applicable legislation prior to funding being released to a proponent.

c. Are there Indigenous consultations?

NRCan will undertake Indigenous consultations for projects under the FIP as needed on a case-by-case basis. In determining the need to undertake Indigenous consultations for a project, NRCan will consider both the duty to consult as well as good governance practices and will do so based on available Departmental and Federal guidance, and in consultation with departmental advisors and legal services. Any Indigenous consultations required for a particular project will be completed prior to funding being released to a proponent.

d. What if I have other questions?

Please contact us at nrcan.cwfc-ccfb.nrcan@canada.ca if you have additional questions. This section of the guide will be updated each year to include new frequently asked questions.