BC First Nations Environmental Contaminants Program

Exploring the link between human health and environmental contaminants

Guidelines for Proposals
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*Cover Image Credit: Gordon Perreault*
What is the BC First Nations Environmental Contaminants Program?

The BC First Nations Environmental Contaminants Program (BCFNECP) supports First Nations research projects that explore the link between human health and chemical environmental contaminants. It is intended to help First Nation communities in BC address their environmental health concerns and to help enable research capacity at the community level.

The Program is inspired by the principles of ecosystem (community-based) research on environmental health issues. It encourages the integration of Indigenous ways of knowing, Traditional Knowledge, and empirical science.

This guide is intended for BC First Nation leaders, health directors, and health representatives interested in conducting environmental health research within their communities. The requirements in this guide have been designed to clarify expectations for BCFNECP applicants and to make the application process as simple as possible. Proposals must be written in accordance with the requirements outlined in this guide to be eligible for funding from Health Canada.
Who can Apply?

Any First Nation community, Tribal Council or registered First Nations organization located in British Columbia may submit a proposal. The research project must address human health concerns with respect to potential exposure to environmental contaminants.

The BCFNECP is unique in its design as it provides funding support directly to First Nation communities/organizations who select their own research topics (within the parameters of this guide document) and their own researchers/partners.

All proposals must include a signed Band Council Resolution from the First Nation community or organization that is to receive the funding.
Funding

- The BCFNECP provides up to a maximum of $25,000 for each project in any given fiscal year
- Only one project can be funded per community/organization per year
- The first funding instalment is expected to start in April/May and all project activities, with the exception of the final reports, are to be concluded by March 31st
- Projects that span multiple years are acceptable; however, separate proposals will need to be submitted each consecutive year for consideration
- There is no guarantee of funding for subsequent years
- Applicants are encouraged to seek supplementary sources of funding. A brief list of potential resources can be found in the Tools and Resources section of this Guide

Eligible Projects

The project must focus on human health effects and/or exposure. The current focus of the Program is to address high priority health concerns in communities where there is a possibility of exposure to chemical environmental contaminants at levels of concern. For full eligibility, BCFNECP projects must include:

a. Health concern/issue

b. Chemical Contaminant(s) of Concern (CoC)

c. Study design that explores the link between a and b above
In addition, your proposal should address one of the following four research priority areas currently supported by the Program:

1. Research on the effects of chemical environmental contaminants on human health in First Nation communities

2. Environmental trends related to human exposure to contaminants in traditional territories

3. Baseline human bio-monitoring data on First Nations exposure to persistent organic pollutants and heavy metals

4. First Nations Youth

Examples of some research ideas that would fit within the priority areas above include:

- Assessing contaminant levels through human health assessment
- Researching exposure pathways to contaminants
- Monitoring contaminant levels in fish, wild game and berries/plants with linkage to human exposure
- Assessing the extent of various environmental health concerns among First Nation communities and potential risk to health from exposure to such problems
- Assessing socio-cultural and economic effects/impacts of environmental contaminants in First Nation communities
- Development of traditional food consumption guidelines
- Development of risk management strategies related to environmental contaminants
- Assessing health effects or impacts of exposure to environmental contaminants--this could include: health surveys, eating pattern surveys, nutritional assessments, epidemiological studies, etc.
Proposal Development Process

The following diagram is a suggested framework for proposal development. You are encouraged to discuss your proposal and ideas with your local Environmental Health Officer (EHO) who may also provide assistance in preparing your submission, if required:

- Read guide and develop a list of potential team members and partners along with their roles
- Obtain support from community elders and other community leaders
- Brainstorm (use medicine wheel or other tools to organize thoughts)

Define Community Environmental Contaminants Concern(s)

Biological, physical or non-chemical contaminant(s)

Chemical contaminant(s)

Not applicable to BCFNECP

Determine possible linkage and pathways of exposure

Consult with team members and/or external resources and refine information as necessary

Define Project Objectives

Develop Activities for each objective (consider chemical-focused activities, human health-focused activities, and linkage-focused activities)

Assign tasks to each team member to accomplish each activity

Estimate time and funds required for each resource to accomplish tasks

Develop project timeline/schedule

Review proposal with team and send to community leadership for input if necessary

Use guide and proposal format template to develop a draft proposal

Obtain letters of support from any partners and formal approval (BCFR) from community leadership

Final proposal review and inclusion of all necessary appendices

Submit completed proposal
Review and Selection Process

All proposals will be subject to a review by the BCFNECP Selection Committee. The Regional Environmental Health Manager and the Committee are responsible for both the administrative and technical review of the proposals. The decision of the Selection Committee is final.

Proposals are first assessed to determine whether all mandatory criteria have been met. Proposals must pass this administrative assessment for further consideration. Qualifying proposals are then reviewed in detail by the Selection Committee for technical and overall merit.

Successful Applicants

Applicants are notified of the selection process results in January. Any necessary proposal refinements will be identified at this time. A project kick-off teleconference will then be held with each successful project team. Requirements from successful applicants are as follows:

**ANNUAL BCFNECP WORKSHOP**

Since 2005, the BCFNECP has held an annual workshop for project teams to meet one another and share their research in a supportive environment. The workshop usually takes place in February. While the workshop is always held in BC, the exact location changes each year. Invitations are sent directly to project team members.

The BCFNECP will provide funding support for up to two representatives from each project team to attend the workshop. This includes travel, meals, and accommodation. The project team does not need to earmark funds within the proposal budget to attend the workshop as Health Canada will reimburse for this separately. Additional people are welcome to attend; however, this will be at their own expense and can not be billed to the project.
REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The payment of a funding arrangement is conditional on performance and achievement of goals, objectives and deliverables. In its accountability to community members and Health Canada, the Recipient must report on the project that it was funded for and the results achieved as outlined within the funding agreement. The reporting requirements include:

- **Financial Activity reporting:**
  As outlined in the Schedule Interim Report on Program Expenditures
  A template will be provided by Health Canada
  a) One interim financial activity report (due November 15)
  b) One final financial activity report (due June 30)

- **Project Activity reporting:**
  a) Teleconferences as required throughout the project period
  b) One interim project activity report (due November 15)
  c) One final project activity report (due June 30) which include:
     a. Detailed project outcomes and deliverables as specified in the approved project proposal
     b. Project presentation materials for presentation at the BCFNECP workshop
     c. A two-page plain language summary of findings for public distribution

*Project reports will only be used for the purpose of ensuring accountability of funding arrangements under the BC First Nations Environmental Contaminants Program and will not be distributed without the permission of the First Nation.*

HEALTH CANADA RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD (REB)

- **REB Application:**
  All research funded by Health Canada involving humans as research subjects must be reviewed and approved by the Health Canada Research Ethics Board (REB). Successful BCFNECP applicants will be provided with instruction on the REB application process once the BCFNECP project selection process is complete. General information and application requirements concerning the REB review can be found at: [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/sr-sr/pubs/advice-avis/reb-cer/index-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/sr-sr/pubs/advice-avis/reb-cer/index-eng.php)

- **REB Project Completion Report:**
  Projects that acquire REB approval will also be required to submit a project completion form to the REB once the research has finished. For more information on the REB or the REB approval process, please contact the REB directly in Ottawa at:

  Telephone: (613) 941-5199
  E-mail: reb-cer@hc-sc.gc.ca
WHAT MAKES A STRONG APPLICATION?

- Project focus is on human health with respect to chemical environmental contaminants
- Project is focused on research as opposed to just monitoring
- Includes objectives that are realistic, achievable, and measurable along with activities that support each objective
- Project is driven by community rather than external researchers
- Provides an opportunity for individuals within the community to become actively engaged and simultaneously educates them
- Involves local experience and knowledge
- Includes information for how the research results will be used/applied
- Includes a project evaluation (usually involves team “lessons learned” review, review and approval by community leadership, and any other internal or external feedback desired)
- Includes a detailed budget of project expenses
  - Materials, supplies, and equipment
  - Itemized budget with number of unit(s), unit cost, and total cost
  - Salaries and wages for each team member
  - Best estimates of all expenses and in-kind donations at fair market value
OTHER POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE

For help with proposal writing/development and finding scientific specialists to work with, the First Nations Environmental Health Innovation Network (FNEHIN), the National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health (NCCAH), and the Network Environments for Aboriginal Research BC (NEARBC) based at the University of Victoria’s Centre for Aboriginal Research are useful resources:

www.fnehin.ca
www.nccah-ccnsa.ca/en/
http://cahr.uvic.ca/nearbc/

For projects involving drinking water related research, multiple communities or a broader geographical, financial or research scope, funding may be available through the National First Nations Environmental Contaminants Program (NFNECP). For more information on the NFNECP, please refer to the following website:

www.environmentalcontaminants.ca

or contact the NFNECP Coordinator (in Regina) for more information:

Kim McKay-McNabb
First Nations University of Canada
Tel: (306) 790-5950 ext. 3330 or
1 (866) 981-7918 ext. 3330
Fax: (306) 790-5993
Email: nfnecp@fnuniv.ca and dwqp@fnuniv.ca
Proposal Template

**IMPORTANT!**

Only proposals meeting ALL of the requirements below and adhering to the following template format will be eligible for consideration. Letters of Interest or Intent will not be accepted.

**General Requirements**

- Maximum 6 pages single-sided or 3 pages double-sided (not including cover page and appendices)
- Can submit by email, fax, or courier/mail—paper copies will be accepted on 8.5” x 11” sheets only, unbound, capable of being copied
- Please provide page footers, including page numbers and community/organization name
- Only one proposal per First Nations community/organization per funding year
- The First Nations community/organization may apply funding for either BCFNECP or NFNECP per funding year, not both

**Cover Page**

- Descriptive project title: try to avoid generic titles such as “Environmental Contaminants Project”
- Subtitle: provide a sentence which summarizes/describes the project
- Organization name
- Primary contact person
- Mailing address, telephone, fax and e-mail
- Funding amount requested
- Date of submission
Summary

- Suggested length: 1-2 paragraphs
- Clearly, and in plain, non-scientific language, summarize the project. This summary may be used in Health Canada documents that provide general information about funded projects.
  - What is the proposed work? Clearly indicate the human/community health aspects of the project.
  - What research question(s) are being addressed and why?
  - Where and when will the work be done?
  - What are the expected results?
- Indicate the BCFNECP priority area(s) addressed by the project -- see page 4

Objective(s)

- Suggested length: 2-3 paragraphs
- What is the research question(s) being addressed? What do you wish to learn?
- Provide well defined short-term and long-term objectives for the project.
- Indicate a clear relationship between environmental contaminant in question and human health

Background & Rationale

- Suggested length: ½ to 1 page
- Background
  - History of the issue and health impact(s) it has had on community members?
  - What has previously been done to address the issue(s)?
  - Is this a continuation of a previous or existing research project? If so, please elaborate. Has funding been provided by the BCFNECP in the past?
  - If available, any background or established scientific research on the environmental contaminant and/or health concern is encouraged
Rationale
- Describe how the community would benefit from this project.

Capacity Building
- What specific knowledge, skills, tools, and training opportunities will the community gain as a result of this project?
- What specific community expertise will be used for this project?

Traditional/Local/Indigenous Knowledge
- Describe how the project will incorporate traditional, local, and/or Indigenous knowledge.

Activities, Methodology, & Timelines
- Suggested length: 1 to 2 pages
- Provide a detailed list of all activities that will take place. Please be as specific as possible.
- Describe the methodology associated to the activities, i.e. how will the work be conducted? The points below are only examples and are not an exhaustive list of methodology details.
  - Sample collection and/or subject selection
  - Sample size
  - Measurement techniques
  - Lab analysis
  - Data analysis
  - Quality control
- List the expected dates for each activity, including any time limitations (seasons, availability of resources, migration of animals or fish)

Outcomes & Deliverables
- Suggested length: 1/2 page
- Describe the expected outcomes, benefits, and beneficiaries of the project.
- List expected deliverables of the project, including reports, publications, conference/workshop presentations, communication initiatives and/or materials (e.g. newsletters, pamphlets, videos).
Budget

- Provide detailed budget information as per budget template in this guide
- Include any additional information for successive/previous years if applying for a project that spans multiple years
- If project is only a component of a bigger project, please provide general information regarding overall project budget

Project Team & Partners

- Suggested length: n/a
- Provide name, title, telephone, fax, and email for all members of the project
- List departments, agencies, Aboriginal groups, universities, or communities that are involved in the project.

Project Evaluation

- Suggested length: 1/3 page
- Indicate how the project will be evaluated and by whom.
- What indicators will be used to measure outcomes?

Communication Plan

- Suggested length: 1/3 page
- Describe how project progress and results will be communicated within the team, with the community, and externally.

Appendices

- Attach any necessary supporting information which provides relevant project information (i.e.: laboratory QA/QC data, project team member resumes, etc.).
- A Band Council Resolution (BCR) must be included with the proposal.
- Proposals involving a partnership between two or more communities require a BCR only from the community/organization that is going to be managing the finances on behalf of the project (there can only be one). Any other participating communities or organizations will need to provide a letter of support.
Example Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expense Categories</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Cost/unit</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Salaries and Wages</strong></td>
<td>Project Manager</td>
<td>60 days</td>
<td>$150/day</td>
<td>$9,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Field Researcher</td>
<td>40 days</td>
<td>$125/day</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Field Researcher</td>
<td>40 days</td>
<td>$125/day</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Equipment and Facilities</strong></td>
<td>Lab samples</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lab tests</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Travel</strong></td>
<td>Fuel</td>
<td>Market Value</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shipping</td>
<td>Market Value</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional Fees</strong></td>
<td>Technical Advisor</td>
<td>7 days</td>
<td>$2000/week</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operating Costs</strong></td>
<td>Office supplies, meeting expenses, base maps, phone, fax, printing. Admin. Fee</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Costs (must specify)</strong></td>
<td>Community Elder experts</td>
<td>20 Elders</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Funding from Other Sources</strong></td>
<td>XX First Nations in-kind donations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$4,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Project Costs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$29,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FUNDING REQUESTED FROM BCFNECP (25 K max.)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$25,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Important Notes:**
- Honorariums are not to exceed $200 per person per event/service
- Funding is limited to those activities/expenses directly associated with the project
- The proposed budget should not include the annual BCFNECP workshop travel costs for the two project representatives as this will be funded separately by Health Canada
Description of Budget Categories

Salaries and Wages

- Entries under this category are the salaries paid to people specifically hired for the project.
- Be careful to ensure that contract employees are not included under more than one category.

Equipment and Facilities

- Equipment costs (purchase, lease, maintenance): specify the type of equipment and the extent to which it will be applied to the project. Only equipment that is either purchased leased or developed specifically for the particular project should be listed in this category.
- The maintenance cost of equipment already owned by the federal government and used as part of the project should be reported as Funding from Other Sources.
- Laboratory analysis: indicate the cost of analysis per sample, the type of analysis and the number of samples to be analysed. Only the cost of sample analysis and/or the development of specific analytical techniques for a project are appropriate.
- Note: Equipment may be purchased up to $5,000 upon written authorization from the Regional Environmental Health Manager. All equipment purchased with Health Canada funds is the property of the Canadian Federal Government. It is preferable to lease equipment for the project.
Travel

- Include all travel, accommodation and meal costs.
- Cost of establishing and operating field camps, and shipping (i.e. freight) charges should also be included in this category.

Professional Fees

- Contracts: please indicate the total estimated value of each contract under the project, the contractor name (if known), and purpose.
- In the case of contracted laboratory services, indicate the cost of analysis per sample, the type of analysis and number of samples.

Operating Costs

- Includes miscellaneous operating costs (office supplies and operating expenses, phone, printing, computer time, fax, postage)
- Supplies (including laboratory supplies/consumables)
- Publication costs (specify name and anticipated date of issue)
- Administration fees (if applicable). Administration fees are not to exceed a maximum of 10% of the total project funding amount and must be itemized.
- A list of potential administration fees include:
  - Administrative and clerical salaries and benefits
  - Legal and general liability insurance
  - General purpose equipment and maintenance and repair
  - Telecommunication costs
  - Photocopier and copying costs
  - Office supplies, Postage costs, Printing costs

Other Costs

- If any budget items do not clearly fit in any of the above classes of expenditures, please identify them here with a brief description.

Funding from Other Sources

- Indicate other funding (staff salaries, services, facilities, operating funds, etc.) as well as the estimated value, status and source of other known or potential contributions to the project.
- Include any in-kind contributions from other sources.
Application Checklist

Only proposals that are written in accordance with the requirements outlined in this guide and received by the application deadline will be considered. Your proposal application package must include the following:

1. Proposal document written in accordance with the proposal format template in this guide
2. Complete contact information for the project team’s primary contact person
3. Proposal budget using the template in this guide
4. A signed Band Council Resolution from the First Nation community or organization that is to receive the funding
5. Relevant Appendices (i.e.: sample survey questionnaire, letters of support from partnering communities or collaborating organizations, lab QA/QC data, project team member résumés etc.)

Important Reminders:

- Ensure that administration fees do not exceed 10% of the project budget ($2,500 max.)
- Ensure that alternate or supplementary sources of funding have been identified
- If a multiple-year project, a clear project timeline is included which indicates intended activities for each year
- Include how the proposal will build on any existing information or research that has already been conducted

Submit your completed proposal by courier/mail or fax to:

Environmental Public Health Services
First Nations & Inuit Health, Health Canada
404 -1138 Melville Street
Vancouver, BC V6E 4S3
Fax: 604-666-3356

A Call for Proposals flyer accompanies this guide and includes the submission deadline date along with email and contact details for further information about the Program.
BC First Nations Environmental Contaminants Program (BCFNECP)
Environmental Public Health Services
First Nations & Inuit Health, Health Canada
404 – 1138 Melville Street
Vancouver, BC
V6E 4S3
Fax: 604-666-3356