



Innovation Pathway Program Guide

Climate Stream

February 2025



Innovation Pathway Program Guide – CLIMATE STREAM

Purpose

The British Columbia (B.C.) Ministry of Health (the Ministry) works collaboratively with system partners to build on existing strengths and enable an innovation ecosystem that supports and advances innovation across the health system. The Ministry's Health Innovation Hub and Climate Resilience Unit have collaborated to launch the 2025 intake of the *Health Innovation Pathway Program's climate stream* to test and assess innovative approaches to advance a low-carbon, climate resilient and sustainable health system in B.C. This program guide provides an overview of the climate stream and how to apply. Please be aware that the Ministry may continue to modify this guide as the program evolves.

What is innovation?

- Innovation is a new or improved solution with potentially transformational ability to improve outcomes. This may be an idea, product, policy, service, or care pathway with clear benefits when compared to what is currently done.
- Accelerating innovation involves an iterative process to identify, design, and implement innovative ideas that may be spread and scaled across the health system, including the following phases:
 - Ideate: generate ideas to solve an identified problem, gap or need
 - Design: develop and refine a solution/innovation to test in a real-world setting
 - Test and Assess: trial and evaluate a solution/innovation in a real-world setting
 - Implement: deliver solution/innovation within one or multiple sites or settings
 - Spread and Scale: solution/innovation is successfully implemented within one or multiple sites or settings and is ready to be expanded across the health system
- The Health Innovation Pathway Program's **climate stream focuses on the testing and assessment phase** of the innovation cycle, which is instrumental to ensure innovations selected for spread and scale are:
 - Shown to be effective, as evidenced by Indigenous and/or Western methods;
 - Feasible and successful in a real-world health care or community setting; and
 - Supportive of health system priorities and commitments.



Rationale and Scope

While the health sector plays a critical role in addressing the health risks of climate change, it also generates greenhouse gas emissions and waste that further contribute to climate change and environmental harm. Climate action offers an opportunity to enhance the health and well-being of our communities while strengthening the resilience and sustainability of the health systems they rely on. As the climate continues to change, the deep connection between human health and the environment becomes increasingly clear, underscoring our shared responsibility to foster a healthy, sustainable, and climate-resilient British Columbia.

B.C. has seen a rapid expansion and acceleration of health sector action on climate change, planetary health and environmental sustainability in recent years. The Health Innovation Pathway Program's climate stream aims to catalyze this progress by supporting the **testing and assessment** of health sector innovations in one or more priority action areas, including:

1. Climate mitigation (greenhouse gas emissions reduction)¹
2. Climate preparedness², adaptation³ and/or resilience⁴
3. Environmental sustainability⁵ and planetary health⁶

¹ Climate mitigation involves reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and/or enhancing carbon sinks.

² Climate preparedness refers to the capacity of the health system at any moment to adapt to a climate-related hazard.

³ Climate adaptation refers to the process of adjusting institutional, behavioural, structural or ecological practices and processes, or critical infrastructure, to prevent or reduce climate-related health risks.

⁴ Resilience refers to the capacity of individuals, communities or systems to withstand climate impacts and transform/adapt based on past, present and future climate-related hazards.

⁵ Environmentally sustainable health systems aim to minimize the negative environmental impacts of health care and restore or improve environmental conditions to benefit the health and well-being of current and future generations.

⁶ Planetary health is a concept that aligns with long-held perspectives of Indigenous Peoples that human health and the health of the natural world are deeply interconnected, and reflects our shared responsibility to care for the health of individuals and populations as well as the ecosystems that sustain us—such as clean air, water, and food.



Eligibility

To qualify for funding, proposed innovations **must**:

- Have the potential to address an existing system-level gap, problem or need related to health sector climate mitigation, adaptation, environmental sustainability and/or planetary health.
- Have an executive sponsor (Vice President-level preferred) and project lead or contact within the health authority to champion and oversee the project's implementation. While innovations may be led and delivered in part or in whole by external partners, health authority oversight supports system navigation and integration as well as accountability and reporting to the Ministry on key indicators/measures.
- Be supported by evidence with a reasonable expectation of benefit realization, including recognition and valuing of both Indigenous and Western methodologies.
- Be ready for testing and assessment in a real-world health care or community setting. Though funding is focused on testing and assessment, the project timeline may include other phases.
- Be clearly within the mandate of the Ministry of Health and/or health authority. While projects delivered in collaboration with other sectors or partners are encouraged, partners that are critical to the project's implementation must be clearly identified in the application, including confirmation of support and clearly defined roles and contributions.

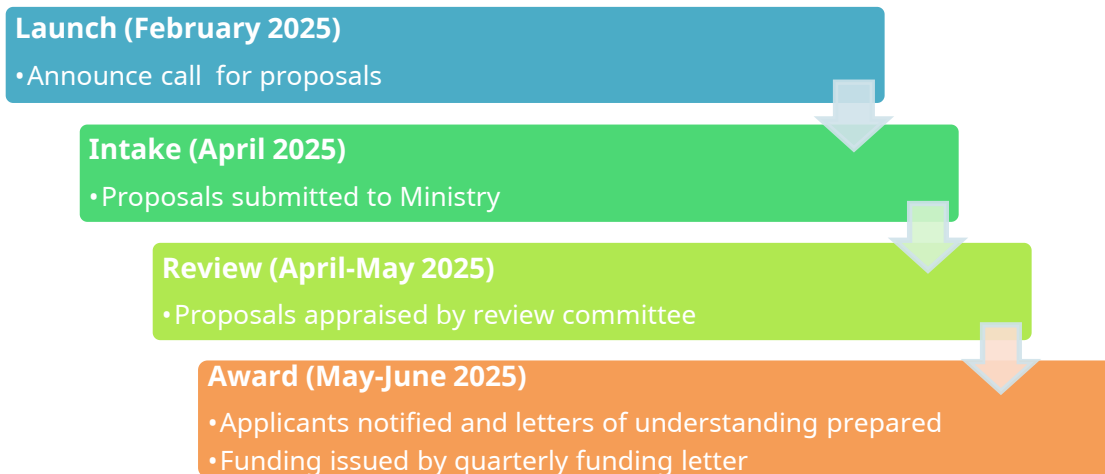
Projects will be prioritized for funding if they:

- Are aligned with health system priorities as per the [ministerial mandate letter](#), health authority mandate letter, Ministry or Health Authority [Service Plan\(s\)](#), or other health system plans/strategies.
- Support health system commitments and accountabilities related to climate change, including the [Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy](#), [CleanBC](#), and legislation for [climate action](#) and [emergency management](#).
- Reinforce provincial and health system commitments to Indigenous reconciliation and/or equity, diversity and inclusion.



Application Process

The Health Innovation Pathway Program's climate stream applies a transparent and standardized process (summarized below) to intake, evaluate and select innovations for funding.



How to Apply

1. Review the program guide to verify your innovation meets the eligibility criteria for the climate stream. Applicants are also invited to attend an information session where the Ministry will respond to questions about the climate stream's application process and eligibility requirements. Further inquiries can be directed to the Ministry of Health's Climate Resilience Unit at HealthClimateResilience@gov.bc.ca.
2. Applicants are encouraged to consult with their health authority's lead(s) for climate change, sustainability, and/or planetary health (see contact list in Appendix A) to support coordination and alignment with other activities underway in their organization/region.
3. Complete the program intake form and submit to healthinnovation@gov.bc.ca no later than **5 pm PST on Thursday, April 3, 2025**. The intake form follows the criteria in the Decision Support Tool (Appendix B).
4. To better understand the proposal and verify eligibility, the Climate Resilience Unit may contact the submitter and/or relevant Ministry program areas. The collection of additional information may be required.



The Ministry is committed to supporting Indigenous leadership and self-determination and recognizes that Ministry processes may not align with Indigenous approaches. Proposed projects that are led or co-led by Indigenous organizations or communities are encouraged to contact the Ministry's Climate Resilience Unit directly at HealthClimateResilience@gov.bc.ca to discuss your project and how we can support you.

Evaluation

1. A Ministry review committee will screen and evaluate the proposals according to the criteria in the **Decision Support Tool** (see Appendix B). While proposals will be scored, the purpose of the criteria is to better understand the proposals and determine fit for the program. The score is not the single determining factor for a funding recommendation. Relevant program areas and subject matter experts within the Ministry may be consulted as appropriate to verify the eligibility, impact potential, and alignment of the proposal.
2. The Climate Resilience Unit will prepare a decision package of materials containing the proposals, evaluation results, and recommendations for consideration.
3. All applicants will be notified of the decision within 6 weeks from the date proposals are submitted to the Ministry of Health.
4. If funding is approved, the Climate Resilience Unit will work with the applicant to generate a letter of understanding outlining the project, budget, funding terms, and reporting.
5. Proposals that are not successful may request feedback on their proposal.

Funding Requirements

While there is no maximum budget for each proposal, the average award is expected to be approximately \$50,000-100,000 for projects occurring within a single organization or department, or more for projects involving multiple departments, health authorities or regions. Collaboration with other internal or external organizations, departments, or health authorities is encouraged and receiving funding from other sources does not eliminate projects from consideration for program funding.

In some cases, multi-year funding for projects may be considered, though funding beyond 2025/26 is considered notional and cannot be guaranteed. Funding allocated for 2025/26 must be spent by the health authority by the end of fiscal year (March 31, 2026) with any unused funds to be returned to the Ministry, though project activities can continue beyond the funding period (e.g., for projects with additional or in-kind funding sources).



Funding can generally be used for:

- Labour costs for individuals working directly on the project.
- Reasonable material costs.
- Equipment required for the project.
- Software or information databases.
- Subcontractors for direct project work or evaluation.
- Costs which the Ministry of Health preapproves in writing as an eligible expense.

Monitoring and Reporting

Health authority project leads/contacts are expected to report to the Ministry on key performance indicators/measures on a regular basis as defined in the letter of understanding and must be completed within two years of receiving funding. Monitoring and reporting is critical to the innovation process and presents benefits beyond ensuring accountability for public funds. For instance, monitoring innovation implementation and outcomes can signal when there is a need to pivot the approach or possibly discontinue if/as appropriate and can generate evidence to support a business case for the spread and scale of the innovation if results/outcomes are compelling. Alternative approaches to monitoring and reporting may be considered for some projects, such as Indigenous-led innovations.



Appendix A: Contact Information

Ministry Contacts

Health Innovation Hub

Strategic Innovation Division
BC Ministry of Health

Email: healthinnovation@gov.bc.ca

Climate Resilience Unit

Strategic Innovation Division
BC Ministry of Health

Email: healthclimateresilience@gov.bc.ca

Health Authority Contacts

Organization	Contact
Fraser Health	Amy Lubik , Climate Lead Darryl Quantz , Planetary Health Lead
Interior Health	Kady Hunter , Climate Change and Health Lead Amanda McKenzie , Manager, Environmental Sustainability
Island Health	Paivi Abernethy , Climate Change & Planetary Health Senior Scientist Blair McFarlane , Environmental Sustainability Manager
Northern Health	Jade Yehia , Climate Change and Health Lead John Short , Climate Change and Health Lead
Vancouver Coastal Health	Craig Brown , Climate Change and Health Lead VCH Planetary Health Team
Provincial Health Services Authority	Angela Yao , Senior Scientist, BC Centre for Disease Control Mark Goudsblom , Executive Director, Planetary Health
First Nations Health Authority	Maery Kaplan-Hallam , Climate Change and Health Specialist
Providence Health Care	Raluca Radu , Planetary Health Lead



Appendix B: Decision Support Tool

This tool supports the determination of proposal fit and eligibility for the program/stream. The score is not the single determining factor for a funding recommendation.

FIT AGAINST CRITERIA MATRIX					
Criteria	Total Score:				
	Substantial	Moderate	Minimal	None	SCORE
	3	2	1	0	/3
1. Screening Criteria					
1a. Potential to address gap, need or problem related to health sector climate mitigation, adaptation, environmental sustainability and/or planetary health					
1b. Identified health authority project lead/contact and executive sponsor					
1c. Innovation is ready for testing and assessment					
1d. Innovation is supported by evidence					
1e. Innovation is within mandate of Ministry of Health and/or health authority					
2. Strategic Alignment					
2a. Aligns with health system priorities and/or strategic plans					
2b. Supports health system climate commitments/accountabilities					
2c. Reinforces Indigenous reconciliation and/or equity, diversity and inclusion					
3. Project Approach					
3a. Proposal outlines project objectives, activities, outputs, timeline, outcomes					
3b. Proposed budget provided					
3c. Cultural safety and equity/diversity/inclusion considered in project approach					
3d. Project team and engagement approach are suitable and appropriate					
3e. Proposal identifies project risks and risk mitigation measures					

