

Opportunity Projects Program - 2020 Competition Guide for Applicants

Eligible Activities and Recipients

The PICS Opportunity Projects Program provides support for engaged research projects that develop new knowledge and directly facilitate use of that knowledge for climate change mitigation and adaptation solutions. This program is aimed at self-contained projects of less than three years duration and encourages applications involving one or more of the following attributes: innovative and impactful ideas, new entrants to the climate solution generation space or new partnerships between academics and practitioners that may not have developed a prior track record of success.

Through the program, PICS encourages and supports researchers to shift thinking and practice towards active knowledge exchange and translation of their research to facilitate more direct contributions (e.g. in management, policy and decision making) to climate change adaptation and mitigation.

PICS Collaborative Research Model

The Opportunity Projects Program provides support to active partnerships between climate solution seekers and academic researchers that support mutual learning for solution co-development. Teams comprising two or more researchers from diverse disciplines and solution seekers with complementary research and implementation skills are strongly encouraged. The PICS collaborative model relies on three kinds of contributing partners to co-design, co-develop and co-deliver the project:

- **Research Partners** bring theoretical knowledge and experience, research skills and academic excellence to the project to help generate and transform novel ideas to produce new knowledge and social, technical and institutional innovations.
- **Solution Seekers** bring practical, domain knowledge and experience. They play a key role in identifying and framing the problem, developing solutions that are not only useful but used, and supporting the application of results, helping to translate theory to action. Solution seekers may be based in private sector, governmental or non-governmental organizations.
- The **PICS Partner** is a convener, knowledge broker and active project partner that works to ensure that the project is innovative and impactful from project onset to completion. PICS provides financial, engagement and communication support aimed at bridge-building between engaged research and evidence-based practice through the proposal development stage, at the onset of the project, and through project continuum to overall completion.



The Opportunity Projects Program requires the definition of anticipated research impact and complementary non-research activities that will lead to solution implementation. PICS expects implementation activities that will at least begin, but also will continue, after the completion of the research funding period. Project proposals are not limited to any particular field of mitigation or adaptation. Proposals must show the research to be of importance to British Columbia in developing climate change solutions and clearly articulate how climate change solution capacity will be increased through the conduct of the proposed work.

In some cases, climate solution seekers who are interested in forming research partnerships may not have an existing relationship with academic researchers. Conversely, researchers proposing very early stage, ground-breaking projects may struggle to find complementary climate solution seeking partners. In either case proponents of the project are encouraged to contact PICS before submitting an application to obtain assistance with forming partnerships or a ruling on the requirement for partnerships. While PICS is committed to fostering climate solutions partnerships, the intent is not to stifle innovation.

Opportunity projects are intended to be used in part to support development of expertise and capacity within British Columbia. To support this goal, at least 50 percent of research funds must be used to support graduate student stipends and postdoctoral fellows at one or more of the four PICS universities: Simon Fraser University, the University of Victoria, the University of Northern British Columbia and the University of British Columbia. Applications must be submitted by the project team's Principle Investigator, who must be a full-time faculty member at one of the four PICS universities. Researchers located outside of British Columbia are welcome to participate in Opportunity Projects as part of a project team so long as these minimum requirements are met.

Project proposals may request support for up to three years. Annual funding from PICS will not exceed \$60,000 per project in any one year. Matching funding from project partners is not a requirement, but demonstration of leveraging PICS funding to secure additional funds and resources is encouraged. Proposals for projects of shorter duration or smaller budgets are welcome.

PICS aims to develop a portfolio of research activities that has a diversity of research topics, implementation timeframes, the geographic locations of intended impacts within BC, and PICS universities involvement.

Proposal requirements and submission details for Opportunity Projects Program:

- The deadline for proposal submissions is **August 04, 2020** at 11:59 p.m.
- Notification of adjudication decisions will be made by **Dec. 01, 2020**.
- Applicants are encouraged to contact PICS staff to discuss their proposal before submitting an application. PICS staff may provide some guidance at that time to increase alignment with the goals of the Opportunity Projects Program. Enquiries should be directed to picsopp@uvic.ca.
- Project duration should be based on the scope of work, but shall not exceed three years. Projects of shorter duration are encouraged.



- Maximum project support is \$60,000 per annum. Smaller budgets are welcome.
- Approximately three to five awards per call will be made.
- Partner activities during and after the formal research program form an important part of PICS sponsored research activities and must be described in the research proposal. Interested applicants whose planned program structure does not include partnerships must receive approval from PICS *prior* to the application process for the application to be considered.
- At least 50 percent of requested project funding must be used to support graduate student stipends and/or postdoctoral fellows' salaries at one or more of the four PICS universities.
- The official start date of projects will be on or before April 01, 2021.
- Proposals should be prepared using the application template described in Appendix A and include a budget using the format described in Appendix B.
- Awardees will be required to adhere to the Terms of Reference described in Appendix C.

Evaluation

Proposals will be initially evaluated for alignment with PICS overall program objectives by PICS staff and domain experts. Promising proposals will enter into a national/international peer review process by both academic and solution seeking communities to ensure the targeted solutions are valuable and research excellence is achievable.

Proposals will be evaluated on the following three broad areas with equal weighting given to each major area:

1. Relevance of the proposed project to meaningful climate change solutions:
 - The proposal has high potential to contribute to reduced carbon emissions and/or effective adaptation to climate change in BC and beyond.
 - Demonstrates the need for original research to address the specific climate change adaptation and/or mitigation problem and contribute to its solution.
 - The originality of the proposed solution and research approach are demonstrated.
 - Identifies the main intended outcome(s) and longer-term impacts and explains the means by which the project will contribute to and track their realization.
2. Credibility of the research component of the proposed project:
 - The research problem, research question, objectives and supporting activities are clearly defined and logically defended.
 - Research methods and team are well-suited and qualified to answer the research questions and achieve the objectives.



- The proposal reflects critical understanding of relevant theory and experience from a variety of perspectives and contributes to the knowledge base in the relevant domain.
 - Actual, perceived, and potential bias in the research is clearly stated and accounted for.
 - Plans for project collaboration clearly outline all partners' roles and contributions in defining the research problem, co-designing, co-producing and implementing the research results.
 - Wider user engagement, knowledge translation and implementation plans are adequately described.
 - Budget is realistic and other resources are sufficient to make the proposed work successful.
3. Effectiveness of proposed project:
- The project plan includes strong, specific actions to engage with intended users and to position the research results for use.
 - The proposal anticipates and appropriately takes account of stakeholder and other perspectives, values, and contexts.
 - Indicators and methods for monitoring impact progress during the project and for assessing outcomes afterwards are proposed.
 - Partnerships contribute to diversity and interdisciplinarity in the project and enhance representativeness.
 - The project will help build capacity in the identified area (e.g., students/postdocs; dissemination to academic and user communities, etc.).

A complete application will include:

- ✓ [Cover page](#) using template supplied
- ✓ Maximum five-page application prepared according to guidelines in Appendix A
- ✓ Literature citations
- ✓ Project management plan
- ✓ Budget details and justification prepared according to guidelines in Appendix B
- ✓ List of suggested reviewers
- ✓ CVs (maximum two page) for major project participants

PICS will acknowledge receipt of the application within one week. If you do not receive a receipt email within a week, phone (250) 853-3595.



Appendix A: Required content and format of proposals

The proposal should be submitted as a *single pdf file* and include the following components:

1. **Cover page** prepared using supplied template and signed by all project partners.
2. Main body (maximum five pages):
The main body of research proposals are not to exceed five pages in length, minimum 11 pt. font and 2.5 cm margins.
Required components and suggested length:
 - a. Objective of the project. Explain the scale, scope and originality of the targeted solution (one page).
 - b. Description of anticipated climate solution impacts and proposal for how impacts will be measured and tracked (one page).
 - c. Details of proposed research activities, work plan and timeline (two pages).
 - d. Plans for implementation of anticipated solution (one page).
3. Literature citations.
4. Proposed budget and justification, including description of partner contributions.
5. Project management plan including description of how the team will work together, schedule for partner meetings, project review.
6. Suggested reviewers' names and contact information: three reviewers for the research component, and three reviewers who can evaluate the proposed project from a solution-seeking perspective. Reviewers should have no conflicts of interest with the applicants (see **Appendix D: Reviewer conflict of interest**). We are particularly looking for reviewers from outside of BC.
7. Two-page CVs of all project participants.



Appendix B: Proposed budget details

Include a table with an annualized budget for the entire planned program.

Financial contributions from partner organizations is desirable but not required. Where appropriate, indicate partner contributions in the form of in-kind or financial contributions to the project. In situations where contributions do not take the form of auditable expenses please list the nature of anticipated contributions (e.g. access to data, use of facilities, etc.) below the detailed budget table.

What PICS will fund under the Opportunity Projects Program:

- Financial support of graduate student stipends, and/or post-doctoral fellow salary (minimum 50 per cent of budget must be in this category).
- Equipment, materials, supplies, as needed to conduct the research and mobilize the knowledge generated.
- Support for research associates or other research staff, incremental from current staffing.
- Costs associated with specialized software, costs associated with obtaining access to data.
- Travel, in particular for fieldwork, partner engagement, and knowledge mobilization.

What PICS will NOT fund under the Opportunity Projects Program:

- Staff costs for project administration.
- Hospitality.
- Capital equipment, furniture, space refurbishment or improvement.
- Indirect costs of research, i.e. overhead charges will not be paid as per the terms of the PICS endowment.



Appendix C: Terms of Reference

Project Funding

Project funds will be transferred to the Principal Investigator's research institution semi-annually.

Unspent funds will not in general be allowed to be carried forward into future years. If exceptional circumstances merit carry forward, a written request and justification must be submitted to PICS at least 60 days prior to the end of the current project year for consideration by PICS.

Renewal of funding beyond the first year will be subject to an annual PICS progress review. If progress is unsatisfactory to PICS funding may be reduced or withheld in the following year.

Collaborative Engagement and Partner Roles

Upon award of an Opportunity Project, PICS will become a partner with the project team and will work to facilitate effective collaboration among participants to maximize research impact. The PICS team will support this process through its networks, staff time, convening and communications capabilities.

The project partners must be committed to co-defining a suite of activities that will move the new research knowledge into the realm of implementation.

Solution seeker partners must be prepared to contribute significantly to the project in the form of not only regular engagement with the researchers but as appropriate through contributions such as data, equipment, resources for field studies, financial contributions, human resources, etc.

Tri-Partner Meetings

In addition to regular project discussions between researchers and solution seekers, bi-annual discussions should also be planned with PICS, and research and solution seeker partners. These tri-partner engagements should include discussion of research results, progress on project impact objectives, communication products, and support needs, etc. An end-of-project meeting with tri-partners plus additional relevant solution seekers and researchers should be held before the end date of the project.

Kick-off Workshop

A co-designed kick-off workshop must be held within one month of the project start date. A key aim for this workshop is to set the stage and terms for tri-partner engagement for the duration of the project as well as facilitate discussion on impact pathways and progress indicators.

Students

Students who are working on a PICS sponsored project will be acknowledged as PICS Scholars and will be invited to participate in PICS student engagement activities. To facilitate this the project team will provide PICS with the names, contact information and research topic/title for students and postdoctoral fellows working on the funded project.

Annual Reports

An annual report (~five pages of text plus graphics, publications list, financial report, etc.) will be



submitted to PICS at least 60 days prior to the end of the current project year to allow for review and approval of subsequent year's funding.

PICS Acknowledgement

Researchers will provide PICS with details of their publication plan upon submission of manuscripts and theses for review. This is for planning purposes so that PICS will have sufficient lead time to work with authors to help publicize research contributions once they are published.

The project team will provide PICS with a copy of documents/infographics/etc. for knowledge mobilization and engagement for PICS feedback and layout/editing/graphic assistance as necessary. All such products will contain the PICS logo and follow the [PICS branding guidelines](#).

Project participants will acknowledge the support of PICS on all publications, documents/infographics/etc., activities and events related to PICS-sponsored projects.

Author affiliation on publications: Acknowledgement will be in the form of researchers identifying themselves as being affiliated with PICS in addition to their normal title, as described in the following example:

Author¹, author², and author³.

Example:

¹ Name, School of Environmental Studies and Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions, University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.

² Name, Department of Biology, University of Manchester, Manchester, UK.

³ Name, School of Resource and Environmental Management and Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions, Simon Fraser University, British Columbia, Canada.

Acknowledgment of PICS financial support: PICS should be acknowledged within any published manuscript in a way compatible with the following example:

The authors acknowledge the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions for funding this research under the Research Engagement Program. (Project # xxxxxx-xxxx).



Appendix D: Reviewer conflict of interest

To ensure the integrity of the proposal review, the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions adheres to the principles of fairness and the absence of conflict of interest. Potential conflicts of interest may arise from:

- A current, previous (within 12 months) or possible future employment or affiliation with the institution involved in the proposed project.
- An existing or past relationship as a thesis advisor or student/postdoc with the applicant(s).
- Co-authorship on a paper or collaboration on a project within the past 48 months
- A family or friend relationship.
- A financial interest in the outcome of the decision.