



Pacific Institute
for Climate Solutions
Knowledge. Insight. Action.

Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions Opportunity Projects Program Guide for Applicants

Eligible Activities and Recipients

The PICS Opportunity Projects Program provides support for research projects that develop and facilitate 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 ideas, new entrants to the climate solution generation space or new partnerships 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 translation of their research that will facilitate more direct contributions to change processes that facilitate climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Active partnerships between climate solution seekers and academic researchers that support mutual learning for solution co-development are vital to PICS' research programs. Research teams comprising researchers from diverse disciplines and involving partners with complementary research and implementation skills are strongly encouraged. The PICS collaborative model relies on three kinds of contributing partners:

- **Solution Partners** bring practical, domain knowledge and experience. They play a key role in identifying and framing the problem, developing solutions and supporting the application of results, helping to translate theory to action. Solution Partners may be based in private sector, governmental or non-governmental organizations.
- **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.
- The **PICS Partner** is a knowledge broker that supports relationships and networks; provides training and financial support. We are a catalyst for action, engagement and communication to help realize and track intended outcomes and impacts.

The Opportunity program requires the definition of anticipated research impact and complementary non-research activities that will lead to solution implementation and PICS expects implementation activities to 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 graduate student and postdoctoral research and as such project teams must include at least one applicant who holds a regular faculty position at one of the four PICS partner universities: Simon Fraser University, the University of Victoria, the University of Northern British Columbia and the University of British Columbia with at least 50 per cent of funds being used to support graduate students or postdoctoral fellows at these BC universities. Researchers located outside of British Columbia are welcome to participate in Opportunity projects 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. Matching funding from project partners is not a requirement, but leveraging PICS funding to secure additional funds and resources is encouraged.

All project partners are expected to make tangible contributions toward the successful development and implementation of the proposed climate change solution.

Awards of research grants within this program are made on a competitive basis including peer review of applications.

PICS aims to develop a portfolio of research activities that is balanced across research topics, implementation timeframes and the geographic location of researchers.

Proposal requirements and submission details for Opportunity Projects Program:

- Proposals should be submitted before Oct. 15, 2018. Subsequent award competitions will be held annually with a deadline for application submissions to be announced at a later date.
- Notification of adjudication decisions will be made by Jan. 31, 2019.
- 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 research program.
- 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.
- The role of each partner and tangible partner contributions must be fully described in the research proposal. 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.
- At least 50 per cent of requested project funding must be used for development of graduate students, postdoctoral fellows.
- 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 PICS terms of reference for research engagement as described in Appendix C.

Evaluation

Proposals will be initially evaluated internally for alignment with PICS overall program objectives by PICS staff. Promising proposals will enter into a peer review process 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 net carbon emissions and/or effective adaptation to climate change in BC and beyond.
 - The need and opportunity for original research to address the specific climate change mitigation or adaptation problem and contribute to its solution are demonstrated.
 - The main intended outcome(s) and longer-term impacts are identified and the means by which the project will contribute to and track their realization are explained.
 - The originality of the proposed solution and research approach are demonstrated.
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 to answer the research questions and achieve the objectives.
 - The proposal reflects critical understanding of relevant theory and experience from a variety of perspectives.
 - 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 and implementing the research program.
 - 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 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 progress during the project and for assessing outcomes afterwards are defined.
 - 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.).

Proposal submission and checklist for applicants

Completed proposals should be submitted by email to picsopp@uvic.ca before Oct. 15, 2018. Acknowledgement of application will be sent to applicants upon receipt of the proposal by PICS.

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

Appendix A: Required content and format of proposals

1. [Cover page](#) prepared using supplied template
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
7. Two-page CVs of all project participants

Appendix B: Budget details

Include a spreadsheet 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 students, post-doctoral fellows (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 support 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 recipients' home institution semi-annually.

Unspent funds will not in general be allowed to be carried forward into future years. If 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.

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 wound down to zero in the following year.

Reports

An annual report (three pages maximum) 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.

Project Team and Meetings

In addition to regular project meetings, in collaboration with PICS project participants will organize an introductory kick-off meeting at project initiation and an end-of-project meeting at project conclusion.

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

PICS Acknowledgement

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

Project participants will acknowledge the support of PICS on all publications, activities and events related to PICS-sponsored projects. Acknowledgement will be in the form of researchers identifying themselves as being affiliated with PICS in addition to their normal title, as well acknowledging financial support by PICS.

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.

PICS Engagement

Upon award of an Opportunity project, PICS will become a partner with the project team and will work to facilitate effective collaboration among participants, facilitate engagement with other relevant organizations whose goals are aligned with those of the research project, and facilitate communication and engagement of project activities and results to the broader community as a whole.

The project partners shall make themselves available for occasional meetings, media interviews and other knowledge mobilization activities throughout the duration of the project.