



**2020 Request for Expressions of Interest
CIF Funding for Priority Projects**

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1.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 Introduction

The Continuous Improvement Fund (CIF) is a funding program developed through the cooperation of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), the City of Toronto, Stewardship Ontario (SO) and the Resource Productivity and Recovery Authority (RPR), formerly Waste Diversion Ontario.

The CIF started in 2008 through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the program partners. In September 2015 the former WDO board (now RPR) extended the operation of the CIF and resolved to have CIF report directly to RPR for the purposes of carrying out its responsibilities under the Blue Box Program Plan.

This year's Request for Expressions of Interest (REOI) reflects the priorities in the CIF's current strategic plan (2019-2021). Funding opportunities will focus on transitional support and collective activities intended to broadly benefit municipalities across the Province. Individual programs and their operators will continue to receive program support services and guidance to assist them with ongoing operational needs.

Collective Benefit projects eligible for funding by the CIF will include:

- Transitional support
- Market research & support
- Collection and processing initiatives
- Performance analytics and better practices research
- Waste composition studies

Support services will include:

- Procurement and contract management support services
- Training
- Outreach services

For the purposes of clarity, 'support services', as noted above, is intended to mean the provision of knowledge sharing by CIF and is not an area open to applications through this year's REOI. For more information on how to access these resources please [contact CIF Staff](#).

The CIF has \$1.5 million to invest in 2020.

The CIF provides grants and loans to execute projects that will increase the effectiveness and efficiency of municipal Blue Box recycling programs in Ontario. This is accomplished by funding projects that have been identified as priorities for the CIF as reflected in the CIF's strategic plan and annual operating plan. More information about the CIF can be viewed at thecif.ca.

1.2 The Opportunity

The CIF's role is to assist municipalities and to invest in program changes and infrastructure improvements that are of a collective nature and will benefit Blue Box programs throughout the Province.

This year's REOI recognizes new priorities established by CIF stakeholders, including the coming transition to an Individual Producer Responsibility (IPR) scheme. Given the uncertainty of the transition timelines and the wind up of the Blue Box Program Plan, additional rules and conditions may be applied by CIF Committee on any resultant 2020 grant opportunities.

The 2020 CIF Operations Plan details the CIF's new priorities and project areas and includes an approved budget of \$1.5 million. Of that total, \$250,000 will be allocated towards the provision of support services to individual programs through the CIF Centre of Excellence (CofE). As noted, the CofE is not an area open to applications this year. The remaining \$1,250,000 is available to fund new initiatives that are of a Collective Benefit, which demonstrate a capacity to:

- Continue to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the existing program at a collective level;
- Prepare municipalities for program transition;
- Aid in stabilizing sustainable markets for Ontario's Blue Box materials; and/or
- Aid municipalities with day-to-day decision making and longer-term planning.

Table 1: 2020 Projects Priorities & Budget Allocation

| Collective Benefit Projects | 2020 Budget Allocation |
|---|------------------------|
| Transitional Support | \$250,000 |
| Market Research and Support | \$150,000 |
| Collection and Processing Initiatives | \$375,000 |
| Performance Analytics and Better Practices Research | \$130,000 |
| Waste Composition Studies | \$345,000 |
| Total Grant Available: | \$1,250,000 |

1.3 Purpose of the Request for Expressions of Interest

The purpose of this REOI is to solicit high quality proposals for funding of projects consistent with the 2020 priorities of the CIF. The proposals provided through this process will enable CIF to determine which projects represent the greatest benefit to Blue Box programs in Ontario and to allocate funding appropriately to optimize the return on funding awarded within the priority project areas identified for this year.

This is the eleventh year an REOI has been released to encourage municipalities to undertake new effectiveness and efficiency projects. As of December 31, 2019, the CIF has received and reviewed a total of 1,068 project proposals and provided \$60.2 million in funding with a combined value estimated at over \$137.3 million. CIF has also identified, tested and proven a number of operational better practices to improve Blue Box program delivery through funding of over 750 innovative projects. The CIF seeks to build on this success in 2020, in part through the next set of projects to which it will provide funding.

REOI applications will be accepted throughout 2020 on a first come, first served basis up to the limits of the funding categories noted in Table 1. Approval of waste composition studies will continue to be determined in accordance with the decision-making process outlined in [Section 3.2.5](#) of this document. Decisions on grant opportunities may be postponed, amended, or terminated subject to changing circumstances related to the transition of the Blue Box Program to the IPR framework.

Municipalities considering projects that will extend into 2021 are still eligible to apply for funding under this REOI, but preference will be given to those that can be completed by December 31, 2021 – so as to allow the CIF to wind up as soon as is practical per the [Minister’s direction letter](#). The CIF reserves the right to prioritize projects with earlier completion dates and shorter payback periods in instances where demand for funds exceeds the amounts available in the 2020 REOI budget.

Please note that projects funded in 2020 will need to be commenced and completed within the timelines stated in the grant approval(s). The CIF reserves the right to terminate projects and cease funding for projects not commenced or completed on time.

1.4 NEW REOI Process for 2020

The REOI process for 2020 has changed. It will no longer follow a specific schedule of inquiry and submission deadlines. Instead, the CIF will consider new project proposals throughout the year on a continuous intake basis, and first-come-first-served within the identified budget envelope. This approach will expedite project approvals while allowing for more flexibility to respond to any required change in operations resulting from transition.

This year, project proposals must demonstrate they are of ‘Collective Benefit’.

“A **Collective Benefit** means a cost, marketing, technical, knowledge, procedural, administrative, and/or transition-related improvement to Ontario’s Blue Box Recycling Program that demonstrates the potential to be implemented in more than one Ontario municipality.”

To accommodate the shift in focus to projects demonstrating ‘Collective Benefit’, a new pass/reject test requiring a minimum score of 65% on the Collective Benefit category within the evaluation scorecard will be required for an application to be considered. This will be done to ensure approved projects are aligned with the CIF’s strategic and operational priorities.

2.0 INSTRUCTIONS TO RESPONDENTS

2.1 Questions or Clarification Requests

Direct all inquiries to Laurie Westaway by phone at (705) 868-2719 or by email to lwestaway@thecif.ca.

2.2 Submission Requirements

Applicants, which may include municipalities, stakeholders and consultants or others (who can demonstrate municipal support for the proposed project), wishing to submit an application for funding must complete [Form 1](#) AND Form 2 or 3, depending on the type of project. Where a proponent is submitting multiple projects for consideration, they need only submit one copy of Form 1 and a project specific form for each of their proposed projects. Where an applicant is uncertain which category of funding to submit their project under they must complete Form 1 and simply check the appropriate box on Form 1 or add a note in the “Additional Comments” section on any of the project specific forms requesting that the project be considered under additional funding categories.

Applications and supporting documentation should be emailed to Laurie Westaway, Project Manager at lwestaway@thecif.ca anytime throughout the year.

Section 3 below describes each of the priority project areas. Other relevant documentation that may be needed to support the application could include (for example):

- ✓ Collection records
- ✓ Processing records
- ✓ Contracts, agreements
- ✓ Quotations, drawings, concept sketches
- ✓ Staff reports (to Council, etc.)
- ✓ Council resolutions
- ✓ Studies, budgets, analyses, reports
- ✓ Engineering/consultant documents

To ensure an application’s best chance of success, please provide the following information:

- Timelines for project commencement, milestones and completion
- Descriptions of the goals your project will accomplish (i.e. how will your program change, what savings will be realized, will tonnage increase, will residue decrease)
- Descriptions of the tasks you will perform to accomplish your goals
- How you will monitor, measure and report project milestones and results including estimates of staff time and/or costs of monitoring and measuring
- Costs associated with each task, both currently done (i.e. baseline) and after the project is implemented
- Estimates of soft costs (e.g. P&E, staff training, consulting, engineering, public consultations, zoning changes, utility connections, website upgrades)
- Descriptions of sufficient resources, either municipal staff time or consultant budgets to complete the project

- Descriptions of your project planning and steering
- Estimates of how much your project will save over 5 years (i.e. Include a calculation showing how long it will take to pay back the project cost). As an aid, you can use the [2020 Payback Calculation Sample](#).

A high-quality application, generating the best chance of being funded to the highest amount possible, will explain how the proposed project satisfies the following evaluation criteria:

1. Collective Benefit
2. Cost Savings
3. Program Performance Improvements and Knowledge Development
4. Project Implementation Monitoring/Measuring and Reporting Results

This year, the criteria used for evaluation of CIF funding applications was updated to reflect current CIF priorities. Due to the coming transition to IPR, the evaluation criteria may be subject to further revision without notice. Download a copy of the [2020 Funding Application Evaluation Scorecard](#) if you wish to examine details of how your funding application will be evaluated.

Each application will be evaluated on its own merits and CIF reserves the right to accept, reject or modify the scope of any application to better serve the collective needs of municipalities.

3.0 BACKGROUND ON PRIORITY PROJECTS AND GRANTS

This section describes the CIF priority project areas for 2020. General information on the project types that may be funded are provided below.

3.1 Funding Priorities

The funding priority for 2020 is Collective Benefit, including:

- Transitional support
- Market research and support
- Collection and processing initiatives
- Performance analytics and better practices research
- Waste composition studies

The sections on the following pages outline how these priorities will be implemented in the 2020 REOI process. Please note that approved projects are expected to be commenced and completed within the timelines stated in your application form(s). CIF reserves the right to terminate projects and cease funding for projects not commenced or completed on time.

When you are ready to apply, fillable forms are available here.

3.2 Collective Benefit Projects

Collective Benefit projects include a range of potential research and pilot projects, data acquisition and analysis activities, and initiatives that support municipalities in preparing for transition to IPR. **Collective Benefit** activities represent initiatives intended to be of broad benefit to municipalities and Blue Box Program stakeholders across the province.

Given the uncertainty of potential transition, additional rules and conditions may be applied by CIF Committee on any resultant funding opportunities. Each application will be evaluated on its own merits and CIF reserves the right to accept, reject or modify the scope of any application to better serve the collective needs of municipalities.

Table 2: 2020 Collective Benefit Projects Budget Allocation

| Collective Benefit Projects | 2020 Budget Allocation |
|---|------------------------|
| Transitional Support | \$250,000 |
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| Collection and Processing Initiatives | \$375,000 |
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| Waste Composition Studies | \$345,000 |
| Total Grant Available: | \$1,250,000 |

Maximum Funding Level: Up to 100% of project costs

3.2.1 Transitional Support

In 2015, the CIF committed \$1 million per year for three years (2016 to 2018) to assist municipalities in dealing with the implications of the Waste Free Ontario Act. Committee also agreed to roll over unspent funds from previous years to make full use of these allocated resources. A total of \$250,000 of the unspent transitional support funds will be made available in 2020 to support related activities. Provision of the remaining funds will be deferred for future consideration. Projects funded under this category will demonstrate a Collective Benefit to municipalities across Ontario and be subject to review by CIF Project Committee.

To apply, fill out [Form 1: General Information](#) and [Form 2: Collective Benefit Projects](#).

3.2.2 Market Research and Support

Market stability remains an ongoing issue for municipalities and other stakeholders. Concerns, however, reached all-time highs when the Chinese government enacted the National Sword program. While development of stable markets for recyclables will ultimately be the responsibility of producers, many municipalities will remain invested in marketing decisions for the foreseeable future as the exact dates each municipality will transition are not yet known. It is, therefore, in the best interest of all stakeholders to continue funding options for diversion of problematic materials and development of domestic markets. The 2020 Operations Plan includes \$150,000 to facilitate this work.

To apply, fill out [Form 1: General Information](#) and [Form 2: Collective Benefit Projects](#).

3.2.3 Collection and Processing Initiatives

While it is understood that transition of the Blue Box Program is planned to begin in 2023, there is still uncertainty as to which programs will transition first. Given this fact, there will still be a need for individual municipalities and stakeholders to make investments in collection and processing infrastructure to ensure the continued viability of their programs and to minimize operating costs. Initiatives that seek cost savings opportunities and improve diversion will remain a priority for non-transitioned municipalities. While it is unlikely the CIF will be able to fund major capital activities, funding remains available to undertake analyses of new technologies and processes and, with the cooperation of host municipalities, pilot new and promising collection and processing strategies. A budget of \$375,000 has been set aside for this purpose.

Each application will be evaluated on its own merits and CIF reserves the right to accept, reject or modify the scope of any application to better serve the collective needs of municipalities.

To apply, fill out [Form 1: General Information](#) and [Form 2: Collective Benefit Projects](#).

3.2.4 Performance Analytics and Better Practices Research

Understanding program costs and the value proposition of implementing better practices will remain an important aspect of municipal operations irrespective of when municipalities begin to transition. Recognizing this fact, ongoing development of program analytics and identification of better practices will remain a priority for the CIF. A budget of \$130,000 has been set aside to support further work into program performance assessment and identification of better practices. Unsolicited proposals to develop, prove out and promote best practices will be considered under this category where they include evidence of broad interest amongst stakeholders and have a clear plan for dissemination of the resulting learnings.

To apply, fill out [Form 1: General Information](#) and [Form 2: Collective Benefit Projects](#).

3.2.5 Waste Composition Studies

The 2020 Operations Plan budget includes \$345,000 which is intended to fund a another round of four-season waste composition studies in cooperation with Stewardship Ontario (SO). As in past years, preference will be given to communities which have not been offered waste composition studies to date and where the studies can be used to facilitate strategic data collection. Recognizing that waste composition studies funded under this budget would be initiated in June of 2021 and not be completed until May of 2022, it is expected approvals will be subject to confirmation of the timeline for windup of the CIF which will be confirmed upon approval of the CIF Windup Plan by RPRA. This approval is expected in December of 2020.

These studies are fully funded by CIF and SO in accordance with the [current Terms of Reference](#). Municipalities that require additional information are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the details of this funding agreement.

The CIF reserves the right to adjust funding levels based on the unique nature of the proposed scope of work, available funds and amounts of funding received from other sources. [Contact CIF staff](#) to discuss your study requirements and potential funding available.

To apply, fill out [Form 1: General Information](#) and [Form 3: Waste Composition Studies](#).

4.0 EVALUATION

All submissions under this REOI will be evaluated using the [2020 Funding Application Evaluation Scorecard](#). Project funding levels are contingent on the overall submission score. The core criteria used for evaluation have emphasis placed on proving impacts that are of Collective Benefit of prospective projects. Due to pending changes to legislation and/or transition to IPR, the evaluation criteria may be subject to further revision without notice.

To maximize their chance of success, applications **must have the required level of detail and a clear and supportable business case** demonstrating that the proposed project meets the 2020 CIF priorities as well as stated financial objectives.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to thoroughly review the [sample application](#) for guidance on how to prepare a high quality application and to [request](#) for assistance prior to submission.

Current CIF policy limits funding to cost savings projects to those able to demonstrate a five-year payback period or less. However, due to the transition of the Ontario Blue Box Program to IPR, priority will be given to projects that can be completed by December 31, 2021. It is possible a project can be implemented by this date but not have achieved its full payback. Proponents encountering this situation are encouraged to [contact CIF staff](#) to discuss the project's anticipated timeline and its funding implications.

Applications for project funding for capital investments will require a sufficient level of detail to enable CIF to accurately assess the Collective Benefit, determine the potential return on investment and the portion of the proposed project that is related to Blue Box services.

If municipalities are in the preliminary stages of planning for these types of projects, CIF requests that municipalities respond to the REOI with draft project details. CIF may assist financially with the planning and project development. In the event that there is an oversubscription for funding in any funding category, applications will be judged based on the most complete proposal and on improvements that will provide the greatest return on investment.

In the event that applications for funds in any funding category are undersubscribed, CIF Committee may elect to reallocate funds to other project areas.

To submit a funding application package:

1. Download the fillable version of Forms 1, 2 and 3.
2. Fill out [Form 1: Applicant General Information](#). If you are submitting multiple applications, you only need to submit one copy of Form 1.
3. Fill out [Form 2: Collection Benefit Projects](#) OR [Form 3: Waste Composition Studies](#).
4. Email the completed forms and other supporting documentation to Laurie Westaway, Project Manager lwestaway@thecif.ca.