

The following is a list of frequently asked questions that may be of assistance during preparation of project applications. If anything is unclear, please send an email to [lwestaway@thecif.ca](mailto:lwestaway@thecif.ca) for clarification.

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## 1. How do I write the strongest application possible?

Ensure you are applying under the correct CIF Project Priority. **Do not submit duplicate applications under more than one category**; just check the appropriate box on Form 1 or add a note in the forms under the “Additional Information” section requesting the project be considered under more than one category.

After reading REOI Section 3.0, Background on Priority Projects and Grants, if you still have questions about what category your project should be submitted under, please [contact CIF staff](#) for guidance.

For 2020, the criteria for evaluating CIF projects was updated. Due to pending changes to legislation and transition to Individual Producer Responsibility (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 project application will be evaluated. To maximize your chances of project approval and greatest funding level, identify which of the criterion your idea satisfies in your application submission and explain how.

**Note:** Your project/idea must target eligible tonnage (i.e. residential recyclables collected curbside, at a depot or through a multi-residential program). Industrial, Commercial and Institutional (IC&I) programs are not eligible, nor are other diversion programs such as organics, electronics or tires. (See question 14, non-eligible projects, below.)

## 2. Do I have to include detailed timelines for the project?

Yes, even if those timelines are best estimates. Preference is given to projects that are the most ready to proceed, (i.e. have council and budget approval, but have not yet started). Include dates of approvals and amounts if available. There is also a [Timeline Template Sample](#) available for download, which is adaptable for your own project timeline planning purposes and can be submitted as part of your application.

## 3. My project has already started; can I submit an application for it?

CIF does not fund projects that were underway prior to the REOI application submission. Preference is given to projects that allow for CIF input. CIF seeks the opportunity to be involved in the refinement of project plans so that proponents and other municipalities have the opportunity to benefit from the collective experience of the CIF organization.

## 4. Do I have to have council approval for my project prior to submitting an application?

No, council approval is not required at the time of submission. However, council and budget approval does indicate a higher level of project readiness and will earn a higher evaluation score for your application. This is especially true for capital intensive projects.

## 5. How do I demonstrate cost savings and payback estimates?

CIF must evaluate each and every application so we need your best estimate of what the project will cost to compare it against all the other requests for funding.

- [Sample Final Report Project Budget](#) (see page 9)
- [2020 Payback Calculation Sample](#)

Some sample items to include on your application:

- Consider the change you are proposing; is it a new procedure or a new piece of equipment? Will it reduce labour costs, energy requirements, maintenance expenses, or downtime?
- Outline your current practice and the cost to carry out that practice.
- Detail all of the estimated costs associated with improving upon the current practice. Ensure your cost estimates reflect current pricing, are accurate, and have fully anticipated all related expenses required to implement your idea. Try to get real price estimates for equipment, goods and services you include in your budget (you can even include the supplier name and estimate on the spreadsheet). Don't forget to include items like engineering, consulting, P&E, monitoring, measurement and reporting. Show us your calculations for the cost of each task your project requires to reach a successful conclusion. Refer to the [2020 Guidance for Monitoring and Reporting of CIF Funded Projects](#) for more information.
- Detail the costs savings that will be realized as a result of implementing your idea. Note: only costs savings achieved for operation of the Blue Box program are eligible. Avoided landfill costs, for example, are not included.
- Payback period Calculation – based on the estimated annual savings, calculate the number of years to achieve a payback on the investment.
  - Projects, excluding studies and proof of concepts, (e.g. a test for a Province-wide innovation) must demonstrate a payback of 5 years or less. Due to the transition of Ontario's Blue Box Program to IPR, priority will be given to projects that end before December 31, 2021.
  - For municipalities, the payback time is calculated on the total project costs. For private company applicants, payback amounts are the CIF grant portion of the project (normally 50% of total project cost).

## 6. Should I use spreadsheets to prepare my project budget, cost savings and payback?

It is our preference to have all budget, costs savings and payback analysis submitted in spreadsheet format, but the most important thing is to demonstrate that you've thought through the capital and operating implications of your project and have a supportable business case.

A [Payback Calculation Sample](#) is available. [Contact CIF staff](#) for tips, guidance or assistance with budget/payback preparation.

## 7. Do I have to include all expected results?

You should, since it supports your proposal, but it is not mandatory. CIF must evaluate each and every application so we need your best estimate of what the project will achieve to compare it against all the other requests for funding. In addition to the cost savings, results may include: improved access to service, or ease of participation, less residue collected, processing improvements, more sales revenue, reduced carbon emissions, labour savings, etc.

## 8. What do you mean by “monitoring, measurement and final reporting”?

In your project application, you will have outlined the current baseline position and the tasks that will be done to achieve the stated goal. Stated goals may include, for example, reducing labour costs by a specified amount by installing a new machine, or reducing hauling costs by increasing the payload of each haul and reducing the number of hauls per year by a specified amount.

Your monitoring and measuring strategy will detail how you will track your results throughout the project. It will specify what details you will track (e.g. number of labour hours or number of hauls). It will also indicate where the data will be obtained from, how often it will be monitored and how it will be recorded. Ultimately, your monitoring and measuring plan will substantiate whether or not your project has been successful in achieving its goals.

The monitoring and measuring plan must be submitted and approved by CIF before the launch of your project.

CIF holds back 25% of total funding until the final project report has been filed. The final report will detail the extent to which the project achieved its goal (i.e. exact cost savings, exact number of labour hours reduced, exact number of hauls reduced). The report will also include:

- a detailed summary of the process undertaken to achieve the goal,
- a commentary on the effectiveness of the process,
- a listing of obstacles encountered, their solution and the cost to implement the solution.

Project results, both positive and negative, are vitally important so other municipalities can use them to continuously improve. [Contact CIF staff](#) for guidance or assistance in preparing your final report. Review these documents for additional guidance:

- [2020 Guidance for Monitoring and Reporting of CIF Funded Projects](#)
- [Sample Final Project Report](#)

## 9. How do I submit my “study” application?

Any projects requiring a study must fit criteria described in the Collective Benefit section of the REOI.

## 10. How do I quantify results of a study, audit, P&E or similar project?

Composition studies, performance audits and/or P&E costs may be part of an overall project budget for a Collective Benefit project. Let us know what is happening before and after. Tell us how much your current P&E is costing and how many residents it reaches. Explain how you will pay for and perform monitoring and measurement (e.g. surveys to check and record if residents received and understood the P&E or changes to curbside composition or program contamination rates) and how you will report the before and after effects on your program. Describe if/how the costs, tonnage or residue levels changed.

## 11. How do I apply for Blue Box, reusable bag, or recycling cart funding?

CIF does not directly subsidize routine Blue Box, reusable bag or recycling cart purchases, however, costs for Blue Box, recycling carts and/or reusable bags may be submitted as part of an overall budget for a centralized cost savings or Collective Benefit project.

CIF has negotiated the [Cooperative Container Procurement Program \(CCPP\)](#) to establish economies of scale prices for the purchase of Blue Boxes, recycling carts and reusable bags.

## 12. What will happen after I have submitted my application?

Your application submission will be acknowledged by CIF and a reference number will be provided. Please make sure all communications with CIF include the reference number in the subject line.

Next, the application will be assigned to a specific project manager for review.

Your CIF Project Manager will check to ensure your application is complete and that all the expenses you have identified are eligible for funding. They will also look for opportunities for you to strengthen your submission and may follow up with you via email or telephone.

Your application will then be evaluated using the [2020 Funding Application Evaluation Scorecard](#).

More information is available on the [Funding Process: Application Through to Approval](#) webpage.

## 13. When can I start spending my grant money?

Expenditures made prior to submission of the REOI application are not eligible for funding. If project spending occurred before the application was submitted, CIF will not consider the application.

If any proven project related spending occurs after an application has been submitted but before approval, CIF will consider the application but will not guarantee the application or any related expenditures will be approved.

## 14. What applications will be rejected?

CIF gets many applications for the types of ineligible projects listed below. Please do not submit applications for funding that pertain to:

- Routine program growth (A new street is added to existing collection)
- Routine maintenance items (Our collection trucks need painting etc.)
- Routine staffing requirements (We need a summer student)
- Routine box, bag or cart replacement (Use the CIF [Cooperative Container Purchase Program](#))
- Non-Blue Box related projects (Help us to draft our organics collection RFP)
- Cost Savings projects with a payback period exceeding five years.

If you are unsure if your project idea is eligible for funding, please [contact CIF staff](#) before preparing your application.

## 15. Do I have to duplicate the same application under different funding categories?

**Do not submit duplicate applications** under more than one priority; just check the appropriate box on Form 1 and/or add a note in any of the forms under the “Additional Information” section requesting that the project be considered under more than one category.

## 16. What resources/templates/samples/guidance are available for applicants?

- [CIF Funding Process web page](#)
- [2020 Payback Calculation Sample](#)
- [2020 Timeline Template Sample](#)
- [2020 REOI Example Application](#)
- [2020 Guidance for Monitoring and Reporting of CIF Funded Projects](#)
- [2020 Funding Application Evaluation Scorecard](#)
- [Curbside Waste Composition Study Documents](#)
- [Sample Final Project Report](#)
- [Final Report Template](#)
- [CIF staff](#)

## 17. Can a non-municipality apply for funding?

Yes. Other applicants are welcome to apply. Applications received will be evaluated using the same criteria as municipal proposals with particular consideration as to whether there is municipal or other stakeholder support for the proposal where appropriate. This consideration is particularly important where the success of the project is contingent upon the involvement of municipalities.

Please note that it is not the role of the CIF to ‘sell’ an applicant’s idea, services or equipment to program operators. [Contact CIF staff](#) early for help to develop, draft and submit applications.

## 18. When must my project be completed?

Current CIF policy limits funding to projects with 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.

## 19. Is waste composition study data confidential – who can see my study data?

Information, data and results of any waste composition studies (i.e. raw data) will be provided by the contractor(s) to the municipality, CIF and SO. An aggregated version of the waste composition study results (by RPR Datacall grouping) will be posted to the CIF web site for public use. Individual municipal data will be confidential unless the municipality provides authorization to release it.

## **20. Who is responsible for coordinating my waste composition study?**

Waste composition studies are to be co-ordinated between the CIF and SO. CIF and SO will share responsibility for organization and administration of the studies. Participating municipalities will be responsible for local co-ordination requirements (e.g. scheduling with local haulers) at their cost.

## **21. How is waste composition study data used by RPRA/CIF/SO?**

CIF uses the combined data to track trends in Ontario Blue Box material composition, weight, type, contamination, quality, etc. and to monitor and measure the effect of local changes made to individual municipal programs. Information, data and results of any studies are to be shared between the RPRA, CIF and SO, provided that the information and data are used for the sole purpose of operating the Blue Box Program Plan and are not shared beyond these parties unless authorized in writing.

## **22. Are there other CIF policies that may affect how much funding I receive?**

In some cases, policies have been established to limit the scope or funding amount available for projects that fit within the priority areas of the REOI. If you require clarification as to whether policies may be relevant to your project, please [contact CIF staff](#) before preparing your application.

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