



Agriculture Water Infrastructure

Stream 4: Strategic Projects

STREAM GUIDE 2025/26



TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROGRAM OVERVIEW	2
Program Objective	2
Program Goal	2
Program Structure	2
STREAM 4 OVERVIEW	3
Project Length	4
PARTICIPANTS	5
Geographic Prioritization	7
PROJECT ACTIVITIES	9
ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES	9
INELIGIBLE PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES	20
APPLICATION INFORMATION	21
Important Dates	21
Application Process	21
Have a question?	23
Review and Adjudication	23
NOTIFICATIONS AND OBLIGATIONS	25
APPENDIX A: Evaluation Criteria for Step 1	27
APPENDIX B: Evaluation Criteria for Step 2	28

If there is a discrepancy between this program guide and the information found on www.iafbc.ca, the website will take precedence.



We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Province of British Columbia through the Ministry of Agriculture and Food.





PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Agriculture Water Infrastructure Program (AWP) aims to increase the adoption of efficient irrigation infrastructure and improve agricultural water supply and management in British Columbia. Through this program, the Government of BC seeks to see improvements to stream flows, fish populations, and increased and more sustainable food production.

Program Objective

The objectives of this program are to:

- Maximize available water for agricultural uses, particularly irrigation and livestock watering, in water-scarce and drought-prone areas that will be increasingly stressed by climate change and will benefit from more efficient infrastructure or storage.
- Increase agricultural production with additional water infrastructure in areas with sufficient water supply or with high potential for farmland expansion.
- Protect agricultural land from flooding with effective drainage and diking infrastructure, resulting in improved food production in areas subjected to excess water.

Program Goal

Improve water security in agricultural areas and food security in BC.

Program Structure

Funding is available through four funding streams. This program guide outlines Stream 4: Strategic Projects.

Funding Stream	Funding Allocation to Stream	Max. Funding Amount per Project	Cost-Shared Ratio
Stream 1: Producer Projects	up to \$9M	up to \$1M per project	50%
Stream 2: Community Projects	up to \$21M	up to \$2M per project	50%
Stream 3: Assessments, Engineering Studies, or Plans	up to \$5M	up to \$200K per project	50%
Stream 4: Strategic Projects	up to \$7.6M	Up to \$2M per project	50%

Please see www.iafbc.ca/awp/ for eligibility details on the other AWP program streams.



STREAM 4 OVERVIEW

Stream 4: Strategic Projects focuses on supporting strategic and collaborative community projects in areas with high water use conflict, risks to the aquatic ecosystem (e.g., environmental flow needs), existing and potential risks of agricultural water shortage, and/or opportunities to expand water availability through community-led strategic projects. Projects must address known water use conflicts, persistent water scarcity, or agricultural water supply challenges through a combination of new/improved water storage, conveyance, supply systems, or other innovative solutions. Project implementation may involve a hybrid of single-user (i.e., on- or off-farm) and multi-user water infrastructure solutions that support the strategic project goals, aiming to collaboratively resolve water supply challenges or conflicts at the community/watershed level.

Successful applicants of Stream 4: Strategic Projects will receive cost-shared funding to enhance water use efficiency, improve water security, increase water availability, or improve drainage conditions for agricultural communities through a collaborative approach.

Within Stream 4: Strategic Projects, there are ten eligible activities:

1. Rehabilitation and upgrades of (regulated and unregulated) agricultural dams and reservoirs to meet regulatory requirements.
2. Improvement, expansion, or new construction of dugouts and related water storage infrastructure for irrigation water and livestock watering, including rangeland.
3. New construction of other water storage infrastructure.
4. Improvement, expansion, or new construction of off-farm conversion of conveyance ditches to pipelines, where savings of 30 to 50% can be achieved.
5. Improvement, expansion, or new construction of water delivery systems to the farm gate from off-farm infrastructure and licensed intakes on streams.
6. Extension of an existing water purveyor network to expand water supply to additional agricultural lands.
7. Development of new water purveyed systems to agricultural land.
8. Installation of meters where a universal agricultural water metering program is being implemented by a water purveyor.
9. Improvement or expansion of diking and drainage systems.
10. Other (innovative) strategic community or watershed solution to a water supply challenge or conflict that may include a hybrid of single-user or multi-user water infrastructure.



Cost-Shared Ratio & Funding Maximum

Table 1. Stream 4: Strategic Projects

Min. Funding Amount	Max. Funding Amount	Cost-Shared Ratio
No minimum	\$2M	50%

The maximum project funding value determined after the review and adjudication of the first stage of applications (expressions of interest) by IAF and Ministry staff. At the direction of Ministry, IAF will advise of funding amounts to those invited to complete a full application. Approximately \$7.6M in funding is available in Stream 4.

Stacking of funds from other government programs is allowed up to 100% of project costs, provided the programs are not delivered by IAF.

What does max. funding amount mean?

This is the maximum amount of funding you may receive. If your total project costs are greater than the maximum funding amount, you can still apply, but you will only be reimbursed to the maximum.

What's a cost-shared ratio?

The cost-shared ratio is the respective share of (eligible) Total Project Costs contributed by the applicant and the funder. In this case, 50% of the eligible costs would be paid by the applicant, with the remaining 50% paid by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food (via IAF).

Project Length

Projects receiving funding through Stream 4 of the Agriculture Water Infrastructure Program can begin as of approval and should be completed within five years or by January 15, 2032, whichever is first. Projects may carry over between fiscal years.



PARTICIPANTS

Eligible Participants

To be considered eligible for this stream, applicants¹ must be BC-based and must be one of the following:

- Irrigation District or Improvement District
- Local Government or Regional District
- Non-Profit Organization – Agriculture (e.g., industry associations)
- Non-Profit Organization – Conservation
- Water Users' Community
- Indigenous Community
- Indigenous Governing Body
- Indigenous Organization - For-Profit
- Indigenous Organization - Non-Profit

Community water supply groups, including Indigenous groups, that provide a combination of irrigation/drainage/diking services to a mix of agricultural and non-agricultural water users are eligible, unless specified as ineligible under the activity description.

Public corporate bodies incorporated or formed under specific provincial legislations that allow them to legally acquire/hold/control property and licences and conduct works are also eligible.

Ineligible Participants

The following applicants are **not eligible** to participate in this stream:

- Diking District
- Producer - Cooperative
- Producer - Corporation
- Producer - Limited Liability Company (LLC)
- Producer - Partnership
- Producer - Sole proprietorship
- Indigenous Producer - Limited Liability Company (LLC)
- Indigenous Producer - Partnership
- Indigenous Producer - Sole Proprietorship
- Indigenous Cooperative
- Indigenous Corporation
- Non-agricultural individuals or groups (including Seafood/Aquaculture)
- Provincial and federal governments
- Crown Corporations

¹ Note: If interested applicants are unsure of their eligibility to apply, please contact IAF at awp@iafbc.ca for guidance.



Additional Requirements

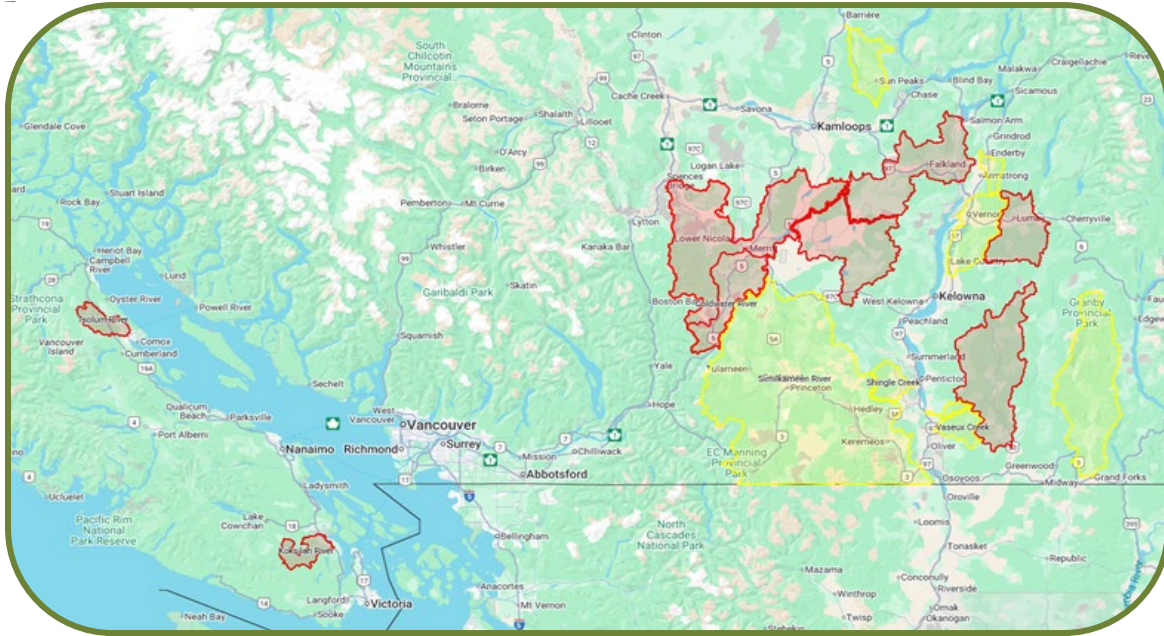
In addition to the program requirements, applicants proceeding to the full application stage for the Agriculture Water Infrastructure Program – Stream 4: Strategic Projects must also meet the following requirements:

- Have completed any required assessments, engineering studies, or plans (within or outside of the program) **before completing a full application.**
- Meet all technical, environmental, and regulatory standards and/or requirements, as applicable, **before completing a full application.**
 - e.g., a water licence has been issued/amended; documentation from the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship confirming the proposed work is mandatory or recommended, and an authorization has been provided by the Dam Safety Program for the alteration, improvement, or replacement of a dam; approval from the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC).
 - If permits are pending/under review but the application is otherwise complete, IAF will proceed to review the application. However, any approval will be conditional for a maximum of 18 months until all required documentation is received. Conditional offers/approvals will not receive contracts or be able to incur expenses and/or begin activities in their application until their project has met the conditions of approval. Please refer to Review and Adjudication below for guidance.
- A description of the parties that will be involved in or invited to participate in the project. Eligible applicants must demonstrate collaboration with other relevant entities in the focus area or watershed as part of their application, if applicable. If further community or strategic engagement is needed to secure project support, applicants should include these activities as part of their Expression of Interest. At least two letters of support from collaborators or interested groups, which may include (but are not limited to): regional water teams from the Ministry of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship, Indigenous communities, industry associations, local governments, or local agricultural groups.
- A summary of relevant studies or plans completed for the focus area or watershed that will inform the proposed project (e.g., agricultural water supply studies, watershed plan, published reports, engineering studies, etc.), if applicable.

Eligible applicants may apply through the Expression of Interest before meeting these requirements. However, they will be unable to proceed to completing a full application until these prerequisites are met. Please refer to the Review and Adjudication of this program guide for details or contact IAF at awp@iafbc.ca for guidance.

Geographic Prioritization

Applicants to Stream 4: Strategic Projects are prioritized geographically based on the watersheds in which their projects are located. The priority watersheds are shown in the [map](#) and listed below.



Tier 1 Watersheds (red on map)

- Bessette Creek (East of Lumby)
- Coldwater River (South of Merritt)
- Koksilah River (South of Duncan)
- Lower Nicola River (Near Merritt)
- Salmon River (Near Salmon Arm)
- Tsolum River (Near Courtenay)
- Upper Nicola River (East of Merritt)
- West Kettle River (East of Penticton)

Tier 2 Watersheds (yellow on map):

- Fortune Creek (Armstrong to Enderby)
- Granby River (Northeast of Greenwood)
- Louis Creek (Northeast of Kamloops)
- Shingle Creek (Near Penticton)
- Shuttleworth Creek (Near Okanagan Falls)
- Similkameen River (Cawston, Keremeos, Hedley, Princeton)
- Vaseux Creek (Near Oliver)
- Vernon Creek (Near Winfield)

Applications will also be evaluated if the proposed projects are located in a region or watershed where it is possible to develop additional or alternate water supply sources. Assessment of this criterion will include a review of water allocation notations. Water allocation notations provide an indication of the potential lack of water availability on a source and are used to inform statutory decisions on water allocations, but does not imply a specific decision will be made by the Ministry of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship.

For more information regarding water allocation notifications and the potential to develop water supply source(s), please refer to the [Water Allocation Notations](#) and [Registered Water Allocation Notations](#) provided by the Ministry of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship.

For questions on water supply sources, please contact

[FrontCounter BC:](#)

Phone: 1-877-855-3222

Email: FrontCounterBC@gov.bc.ca

[Video Conferencing](#), or visit

[FrontCounter BC regional office locations.](#)



PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Not all permits need to be in place prior to obtaining a water licence, but all permits must be in place before beginning construction.

Other types of permits or permissions required to install water infrastructure may include, but are not limited to,

- Permits to cross roads governed by the Ministry of Transportation and Transit (MOTT), the Ministry of Forests (FOR), or municipal governments
- Permission to cross utility Right-of-Ways (ROWS)
- Easements or permission to cross private property
- Permission to join shared waterworks system
- BC Hydro permits to run power to pumps
- Permits/approvals from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO)

For questions on the regulatory requirements, please contact [FrontCounter BC](#):

Phone: 1-877-855-3222

Email: FrontCounterBC@gov.bc.ca

[Video Conferencing](#) or visit [FrontCounter BC regional office locations](#)

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Rehabilitation and upgrades of (regulated and unregulated) agricultural dams and reservoirs

Rehabilitation and upgrades of (regulated and unregulated) agricultural dams and reservoirs to meet regulatory requirements.

One of the primary methods to alleviate both spring flooding and summer drought is the construction or enhancement of water storage systems. A well-designed storage system can capture a portion of the peak spring flow for use later in the summer when demand is highest.

Water storage infrastructure will be eligible where there is an indication that the water supply is currently unable to meet agricultural demand, where it is unlikely to meet demand under future climate change conditions, and where upgrades are required for existing infrastructure that is failing. For example, dams with deficiencies where the dam owner has not been ordered to make repairs or lower the reservoir.

- Deficiencies are most often identified by the owners' consultant. They will often provide recommendations on how to remediate the dams. In these cases, the Dam Safety Program works with the dam owner on a plan to remediate without issuing an order.
- An assessment by the [Dam Safety Program staff](#) would be legally required before the work begins and when the upgrade is completed.
- If the size of the storage is increased, an authorization from the Ministry of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship will be required.

Eligible Activities and Costs

- Construction, materials, machinery/equipment (gates, valves, etc.), and other costs associated with the construction.
- Pumping systems and watering troughs to keep livestock out of the existing reservoir are recommended and are eligible costs, provided the reservoir is deemed to provide a secure source in periods of extended drought. Fencing, if installed along with a pumping system, is recommended and an eligible cost to keep cattle out of the reservoir.
- Other professional services associated with the project supervision

Ineligible Activities and Costs

- Water distribution system
- Used materials

Regulatory Requirement

- Water licence for the proposed use (e.g., irrigation) of the water source (i.e., aquifer, stream)
- Water licence for the proposed storage volume
- Assessment/approval/authorization from the [Dam Safety Program staff](#) of the Ministry of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship
- Change approval to make changes in and about a stream (if applicable)
- Easement (if applicable)

Pre-Construction Requirement

- Engineering assessment, plan, or other consultative services conducted by Qualified Professionals as required by the Dam Safety Program of the Ministry of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship (as described in Stream 3 Activity 3 to 6). The plan, as applicable, should include the items listed under eligible costs within this activity.

Activity 2: Improvement, expansion, or new construction of dugouts and related water storage infrastructure

Improvement, expansion, or new construction of dugouts and related water storage infrastructure for irrigation water and livestock watering, including rangeland.

- Producers on low-flow water supplies will often install a dugout to enhance supply by augmenting water supplies during times of shortage.
- Lining of dugouts to improve water holding capacity.
- Installation of pumps and watering troughs to improve livestock watering and protect stream health.

Eligible Activities and Expenditures

- Construction, materials, liner, pump, intake, machinery/equipment (e.g., gates, valves, etc.), and associated fittings and controls
- Power supply to farm property line as required
- Solar or wind power supply for remote livestock watering systems

- Planting of trees and snow fencing to facilitate snow collection and melt
- Dugout aeration systems (wind or electric compressors)
- Pumping systems and watering troughs to keep livestock out of the existing dugout are recommended and are eligible costs, provided the dugout is deemed to provide a secure source in periods of extended drought. Fencing, if installed along with a pumping system, is recommended and eligible cost to keep cattle out of the dugout.
- Other professional services associated with the project supervision

Ineligible Activities and Costs

- Water distribution system
- Used materials
- Dugouts with design specifications that are legally considered as dams according to the [Dam Safety Regulation](#) (DSR)

Regulatory Requirement

- Water licence for the proposed use (e.g., irrigation) of the water source (i.e., aquifer, stream)
- Water licence for the proposed storage volume
- Change approval to make changes in and about a stream (if applicable)
- Easement (if applicable)

Note: To determine if a water licence is required for a dugout, please refer to [Authorization Requirements for Storage and Use of Water in Dugouts](#).

Pre-Construction Requirement

Please refer to [Authorization Requirements for Storage and Use of Water in Dugouts](#), [Guidance on Farm Water Storage](#), [B.C. Agriculture Water Calculator](#), and [B.C. Farm Water Dugouts](#), or contact the [Dam Safety Program staff](#).

For dugouts and other water storage infrastructure with design specifications that are legally not considered as dams according to the [Dam Safety Regulation](#) (DSR): engineering design plan, prepared by a Qualified Professional, that includes, but is not limited to, farm water use requirement, water supply sources and volume, peak flow rate, dugout dimensions (depth, length and width) with berms, regulatory requirements, and the items listed under eligible costs within this activity.

Activity 3: New construction of other water storage infrastructure

New construction of other water storage infrastructure.

- New storage infrastructure will require an authorization from the Ministry of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship.
- Water use will need to be licensed for each purpose.
- New storage infrastructure will require an engineering plan.

Eligible Activities and Expenditures

- Construction, materials, machinery/equipment (gates, valves, etc.), and other costs associated with the construction.
- Pumping systems and watering troughs to keep livestock out of the existing reservoir are recommended and are eligible costs, provided the reservoir is deemed to provide a secure source in periods of extended drought. Fencing, if installed along with a pumping system, is recommended and eligible cost to keep cattle out of the reservoir.
- Other professional services associated with the project supervision.

Ineligible Activities and Costs

- Water distribution system
- Used materials

Regulatory Requirement

- Water licence for the proposed use (e.g., irrigation) of the water source (i.e., aquifer, stream)
- Water licence for the proposed storage volume
- Assessment/approval/authorization from the [Dam Safety Program staff](#) of the Ministry of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship
- Change approval to make changes in and about a stream (if applicable)
- Easement (if applicable)

Pre-Construction Requirement

Please refer to [Authorization Requirements for Storage and Use of Water in Dugouts](#), [Guidance on Farm Water Storage](#), [B.C. Agriculture Water Calculator](#), and [B.C. Farm Water Dugouts](#), or contact the [Dam Safety Program staff](#).

For water storage infrastructure with design specifications that are legally considered as dams according to the [Dam Safety Regulation](#) (DSR): engineering assessment, plan, or other consultative services conducted by Qualified Professionals as required by the Dam Safety Program of the Ministry of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship (as described in Stream 3 Activity 3 to 6). The plan, as applicable, should include the items listed under eligible costs within this activity.

For water storage infrastructure with design specifications that are legally not considered as dams according to the [Dam Safety Regulation](#) (DSR), an engineering assessment or plan conducted by Qualified Professionals. The assessment and plan should include, but are not limited to, farm water use requirements, water supply sources and volume, peak flow rate, infrastructure dimensions, regulatory requirements, and the items listed under eligible costs within this activity.

Activity 4: Improvement, expansion, or new construction of off-farm conversion of conveyance ditches to pipelines

Improvement, expansion, or new construction of off-farm conversion of conveyance ditches to pipelines, where savings of 30 to 50% can be achieved.

Water demand will increase with climate change, but adding water storage to supplement demand is not always an option. In these cases, the best way to maintain or increase production in water-scarce areas is by using existing water supplies more efficiently to maximize diminishing water supplies and help protect crops from increasingly frequent weather extremes. New delivery systems could also be built to provide better access to water in areas with a sufficient supply. In these cases, anticipated warmer and longer growing seasons could lead to an increase in agricultural production with the funding of additional irrigation infrastructure.

Pipelines reduce conveyance losses and can also provide water to the farm under pressure, thus reducing pumping requirements.

Eligible Activities and Expenditures

- Materials and construction costs for source development (e.g., surface storage and intake)
- Mainline distribution system including materials and construction costs (trenching, augering under roads, canals, or watercourses)
- Electric power line extension if required for an existing diesel pump or a new pump installation/upgrade, to allow water to be brought from the off-farm water supply source to the farm property line. This may include upgrading from a single-phase to a three-phase connection if the pump upgrade requires three-phase.
- Other professional services associated with the project supervision

Ineligible Activities and Costs

- Membership/share cost for tie-in to an existing pipeline
- Troughs, tanks, hydrants in the yard, livestock pens, or barns
- On-farm water distribution systems
- Backflood irrigation works
- Used materials

Regulatory Requirement

- Water licence for the proposed use (e.g., irrigation) of the water source (i.e., aquifer, stream)
- Water licence for the proposed storage volume (if applicable)
- Change approval to make changes in and about a stream (if applicable)
- Easement (if applicable)

Pre-Construction Requirement

Engineering study or design plan by Qualified Professionals to identify technical and construction requirements, e.g., survey of ditch length to be replaced by pipe, diameter of pipeline, location of pumphouse, locations of current and potential service connections, flow measuring devices, river/stream crossings, oil/gas/fibre optics pipeline crossings, and items listed under eligible costs within this activity.

Activity 5: Improvement, expansion, or new construction of water delivery systems to the farm gate

Improvement, expansion, or new construction of water delivery systems to the farm gate from off-farm storage infrastructure and licensed intakes on streams – including the expansion of water distribution systems.

Eligible Activities and Expenditures

- Materials and construction costs for source development (e.g., surface storage and intake)
- Mainline distribution system, including materials and construction costs (trenching, augering under roads, canals, watercourses)
- Electric power line extension if required for an existing diesel pump or a new pump installation/upgrade, to allow water to be brought from the off-farm water supply source to the farm property line. This may include upgrading from a single-phase to a three-phase connection if the pump upgrade requires three-phase.
- Other professional services associated with the project supervision

Ineligible Activities and Costs

- Membership/share cost for tie-in to an existing pipeline
- Troughs, tanks, hydrants in the yard, livestock pens, or barns
- On-farm water distribution systems
- Backflood irrigation works
- Used materials

Regulatory Requirement

- Water licence for the proposed use (e.g., irrigation) of the water source (i.e., aquifer, stream)
- Water licence for the proposed storage volume
- Change approval to make changes in and about a stream (if applicable)
- Easement (if applicable)

Pre-Construction Requirement

An engineering study or design plan by Qualified Professionals to identify technical and construction requirements, e.g., diameter and length of pipeline, location of pumphouse, locations of current and proposed service connections, flow measuring devices, river/stream crossings, oil/gas/fibre optics pipeline crossings, and the items listed under eligible costs within this activity.

Activity 6: Extension of an existing water purveyor network

Extension of an existing water purveyor network to expand water supply to additional agricultural lands.

Eligible Activities and Expenditures

- Mainline distribution system including materials and construction costs (trenching, augering under roads, canals, or watercourses)

- Electric power line extension, if required for an existing diesel pump or a new pump installation/upgrade to allow water to be brought from the off-farm water supply source to the farm property line. This may include upgrading from a single-phase to a three-phase connection if the pump upgrade requires three-phase.
- Other professional services associated with the project supervision

Ineligible Activities and Costs

- Membership/share cost for tie-in to an existing pipeline
- Troughs, tanks, hydrants in the yard, livestock pens, or barns
- On-farm water distribution systems
- Used materials

Regulatory Requirement

- Water licence for the proposed use (e.g., irrigation) of the water source (i.e., aquifer, stream)
- Water licence for the proposed storage volume
- Change approval to make changes in and about a stream (if applicable)
- Easement (if applicable)
- Approval for purveyed boundary changes

Pre-Construction Requirement

- Engineering study or plan, as described in [Stream 3, Activity 2: Engineering studies or plans for water purveyors](#).

Activity 7: Development of new water purveyed systems to agricultural land

Eligible Activities and Expenditures

- Materials and construction costs for source development (e.g., surface storage and intake)
- Mainline distribution system including materials and construction costs (trenching, augering under roads, canals, or watercourses)
- Electric power line extension to the off-farm water supply as required to allow water to be brought to the farm property line
- Other professional services associated with the project supervision

Ineligible Activities and Costs

- Membership/share cost for tie-in to an existing pipeline
- Troughs, tanks, hydrants in the yard, livestock pens, or barns
- On-farm water distribution systems
- Backflood irrigation works
- Used materials

Regulatory Requirement

- Water licence for the proposed use (e.g., irrigation) of the water source (i.e., aquifer, stream)
- Water licence for the proposed storage volume



- Change approval to make changes in and about a stream (if applicable)
- Easement (if applicable)
- Documentation of current purveyed boundaries and approval for any boundary changes

Pre-Construction Requirement

An engineering study or plan, as described in [Stream 3, Activity 2: Engineering studies or plans for water purveyors](#).

Activity 8: Installation of meters by a water purveyor

Installation of meters where a universal agricultural water metering program is being implemented by a water purveyor.

Eligible Activities and Expenditures

- Purchase and installation costs of meters for agricultural users
- Other associated parts and materials (e.g., pipes, valves, etc.)
- Other professional services associated with the project supervision

Ineligible Activities and Costs

- Meters for non-agricultural users
- Used meters, parts, and materials

Regulatory Requirement

- Easement (if applicable)
- Documentation of current purveyed boundaries and approval for any boundary changes

Pre-Construction Requirement

An engineering study or plan to justify that water meters, as flow measuring devices, are part of the long-term water supply solution, as described in [Stream 3, Activity 2: Engineering studies or plans for water purveyors](#).

Activity 9: Improvement or expansion of diking and drainage systems

- Funding under Stream 4 Activity 9 is intended to protect agricultural land from flooding using effective diking and drainage infrastructure, resulting in improved food production in areas subjected to excess water.
- Please indicate if the existing infrastructure has been damaged from a recent disaster.
- The applicant must have the authority and ownership to develop, implement, maintain, and operate the proposed project, as well as plans and a budget for its operations and maintenance of the proposed infrastructure. The applicant will need to maintain ongoing operations and retain title to and ownership of the infrastructure in perpetuity. An exception may be made to transfer ownership to another local government.
- Where the applicant is not the owner of the infrastructure and associated assets, the project may proceed if ownership of the infrastructure and associated assets is transferred to the applicant

before the project is completed. For example, an applicant may apply for infrastructure owned by an improvement or diking district, water utility, or private water systems, if the ownership of the infrastructure and associated assets is transferred to the sponsoring local government.

- The infrastructure should take into consideration flood hazards as well as current and potential future impacts of climate change in the community. The proposed project should help mitigate risks from future disasters due to natural hazards and climate-related risks. While raising the dikes, constructing new dikes, or conducting other related works, the proposed work should not compromise the safety of other dikes or increase the risk of flooding to others or to the environment, e.g., transfer of flood risk downstream, destruction of fish habitat, introduction of pollutants to the environment.
- The proposed works should be planned and scheduled to ensure that flood protection is not diminished during potential flood periods, and temporary measures shall be provided, as necessary, during construction to ensure that the dike functions as designed. The proposed works should be planned and constructed to also meet environmental needs.

Eligible Activities and Expenditures

- Materials and construction costs for a comprehensive flood control system, which may include, but is not limited to, culverts, pipes, flood boxes, utility lines, pump stations, and pump discharge lines.
- Electric power line extension, if required, to allow water to be removed from farmland within the floodplain. This may include upgrading from a single-phase to a three-phase connection if the pump upgrade requires three-phase.
- Other professional services associated with the project supervision, e.g., according to the [Dike Maintenance Act Approvals](#) process.

Ineligible Activities and Costs

- Dike/drainage infrastructure to support non-agricultural activities, e.g., recent or future non-agricultural developments, in known flood hazard areas.
- Construction of evacuation roads or structures.
- Routine or ongoing operations and maintenance, including regular responsibilities for stormwater systems management.
- Flood mitigation projects that yield only temporary measures, e.g., use of sandbags or log jam removal.
- Debris or sediment removal, including clean out of debris control structures (other than when a mandatory phase of a permanent solution).
- On-farm water distribution or collection systems.
- Used materials.

Diking and Improvement Districts: Ineligible Activities and Costs

Diking districts and improvement districts are ineligible for funding under Stream 4 Activity 9 for diking infrastructure improvement or expansion to align with provincial policy direction of dike safety management pertaining to the construction of dikes. Please refer to the [Diking Authorities for New Dikes](#)

[Policy](#) for details. This applies only to diking infrastructure projects proposed by diking districts or improvement districts under Stream 4 Activity 9.

Regulatory Requirement

- Applicants are responsible for obtaining all applicable regulatory approvals, authorizations, and permits from the Ministry of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship as required for the proposed construction under the [Dike Maintenance Act](#), e.g., approvals for construction and design of new dikes, and approvals for changes to existing dikes. **Please refer to the [Dike Maintenance Act Approvals](#) website for the approval process and other related regulatory details.**
- The proposed dike infrastructure must adhere to [Dike Design and Construction Guidelines](#) in order to gain approval from the Ministry of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship, and follow the local, regional, provincial, and federal standards or guidelines (as applicable), which include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - [Dike Design and Construction Guide – Best Management Practices for British Columbia](#)
 - [Sea Dike Guidelines](#) provides guidelines for the design of sea dikes to protect low-lying lands that are exposed to coastal flood hazards arising from their exposure to the sea and to expected sea level rise due to climate change. The guide is for information only and does not represent official B.C. Government policy.
 - [Seismic Design Guidelines for Dikes](#) provides guidance and information for qualified professionals to consider when conducting seismic designs of high-consequence dikes located in the southwestern part of B.C.
 - [Riprap Design and Construction Guide](#) discusses the design and construction of protective works to prevent erosion of riverbanks and dike slopes from stream flow.
 - [Vegetation Management on Flood Protection Works](#) provides guidelines that present minimum standards for managing vegetation on flood control structures in a manner that protects public and environmental safety.
 - [Seismic Design Guidelines for Dikes](#) and [Seismic Design Information Bulletin](#) for diking authorities and engineers undertaking or planning for the seismic design of dikes, or other industry-recognized guidance.
 - Hydraulic modelling is used to generate [flood profiles and flood scenarios](#). The BC Government uses these profiles and scenarios in dike engineering and land use planning.
 - [Provincial Flood Hazard Area Land Use Management Guidelines](#) to help local governments make decisions for flood hazard areas.
 - The drainage infrastructure should also follow the [Agricultural Drainage Criteria](#) to improve regional drainage and hence allow for proper drainage for lowland crops to survive and thrive.
- The proposed construction work must comply with the [Drainage, Ditch, and Dike Act](#).
- Interested funding applicants are also responsible for obtaining any required approvals under the [Fisheries Act](#), [Water Sustainability Act](#) (WSA), or other applicable legislation and bylaws.
- Please visit the provincial [Dike Management](#) and [Dike Maintenance Act Approvals](#) websites for details and identify all necessary regulatory requirements before contacting the [Dike Safety Program staff](#).

Pre-Construction Requirement



An engineering study or design plan by Qualified Professionals to identify technical and construction requirements, e.g., location and upgrade/replacement of culverts, pipes, flood boxes, utility lines, pump stations, and items listed under eligible costs within this activity.

Activity 10: Other (innovative) strategic community or watershed solution to a water supply challenge or conflict that may include a hybrid of single-user or multi-user water infrastructure.

Activity 10 is for proposed projects that do not fall under Activities 1 to 9 and will still contribute to strategic community or watershed solutions for agriculture. The projects must address known agriculture water use conflicts, persistent water scarcity/risks to the aquatic ecosystem (e.g., Environmental Flow Needs (EFN)), or agriculture water supply challenges at a community/watershed level. Applicants must demonstrate community collaboration for the projects (e.g., letters of support, description of collaborators) as described in Application Requirements.

Eligible Activities and Expenditures

- May include a mix of single-user (i.e., on- or off-farm) and multi-user water infrastructure solutions that support the strategic project goals to collaboratively resolve water supply challenges or conflicts at the community/watershed level
- May include new well construction and upgrades or repairs of existing wells with written support from the Ministry of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship as a community/watershed solution

Ineligible Activities and Costs

- Activities that have not been scientifically proven
- Activities that are not authorized by regulatory bodies or permissible under relevant legislation
- Activities that may cause significant harm to the environment, properties, water users, etc.

Regulatory Requirement

Applicants are responsible for obtaining all applicable regulatory approvals, authorizations, and permits from the Ministry of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship as required for the proposed construction, for example:

- Water licence for the proposed use (e.g., irrigation) of the water source (i.e., aquifer, stream)
- Water licence for the proposed storage volume
- Change approval to make changes in and about a stream (if applicable)
- Easement (if applicable)

Pre-Construction Requirement

Assessment, engineering study, or design plan conducted by Qualified Professionals to identify technical and construction requirements of the proposed eligible activities.



INELIGIBLE PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

The following projects and activities are not eligible for funding or reimbursement in this stream:

- Activities or costs incurred prior to approval (no retroactive approval permitted)
- In-kind activities
- Activities to support non-agricultural water uses
- Activities not directly related to agricultural water uses
- Purchase of farm equipment and related accessories or attachments (including tractors, skid steers, and trailers)
- Activities that are not compliant with federal, provincial, or local/municipal regulations
- Financial compensation for lost income, production, or land or other associated losses due to water shortages, government orders, or other reasons
- Activities to remove land from the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR)
- Purchase of land or easement
- Regular or ongoing operating or maintenance activities
- Training or educational courses
- Financing charges, loan interest payments, bank fees, and related charges
- Activities currently receiving funding from other funding sources (unless otherwise specified)
- GST and other taxes/credits reimbursed to the applicant
- Well construction (unless otherwise specified)
- Water quality treatment
- Irrigation systems (new or existing) funded under the Beneficial Management Practices program (BMP 1804)



APPLICATION INFORMATION

Applicants to the Agriculture Water Infrastructure Program – Stream 4 will complete a two-step application process, an expression of interest (EOI) followed by an invitation to complete a full application (if successful). Interested participants will submit an application through the [IAF Client Portal](#). The expression of interest application will be evaluated against the Evaluation Criteria in Appendix A. If successful, applicants will be invited to complete a full application, which will be evaluated against the Evaluation Criteria in Appendix B. Expression of interest applications are accepted through the [IAF Client Portal](#) starting on November 18, 2025, until December 18, at 4 PM PST.

Following the application (expression of interest) review, applicants meeting the criteria will be invited to complete a full application. See Review and Adjudication below for more information.

Important Dates

November 18, 2025	Applications (expression of interest) open
December 18, 2025	Applications (expression of interest) close
March 2026	IAF estimates full application invites will be sent out in/around March 2026.
Upon Approval	Project Start
5 years post-approval	Project End (Projects should be completed within 5 years, or before January 15, 2032)
January 15, 2032	Projects Complete



Application Process

Create an Account & Organization Registration

If you’ve (and your organization) applied for IAF-delivered funding in the past year (since January 2023), you already have an account and you’re all set! Please ensure your contact details and organization information are up to date.

If you don’t yet have an account, do not wait to start this process – it can take up to two business days to validate your organization!



Creating an account and registering your organization is simple:

1. Create a personal profile (name and email)
2. Provide organization information, including:
 - Name
 - Contact details
 - Type of organization
 - BC ID / CRA numbers, or a file number provided and recognized by the provincial government for organizations where BC ID or CRA numbers are not applicable.
 - Primary contact (if this isn't you)
 - And more

Apply for Stream 4: Strategic Projects

Starting on November 18, 2025, select *Agriculture Water Infrastructure | Stream 4* from the **Funding Opportunities** section of the [IAF Client Portal](#) and provide:

- Applicant Type (examples: Producer, Local Government, Indigenous Community, etc.)
- Project Name
- Project Summary
- Select activities you intend to complete
- Proposed Start and End Dates
- Demonstrate how all technical, environmental, and regulatory standards and/or requirements (as applicable) are met.
- Water problems/issues to be solved and how the project will address them.
- Project location (latitude and longitude)
- Performance measurement information
- Total Project Cost (budget)
- And more

IAF staff are available to answer questions regarding eligible activities, costs, and/or the application process. IAF may also contact applicants for additional information or clarification to assess their application. Applicants can contact awp@iafbc.ca with any questions about the program or to receive support in developing their application or book an appointment.

Applicants are encouraged to include only activities they are confident will be completed on time and within budget limits.

Applicants may attach any relevant supporting documents to their Expression of Interest submission. These documents can be uploaded through the [IAF Client Portal](#) as attachments.



Have a question?

If you have any questions about your application, program eligibility, required documents, etc., IAF encourages you to reach out to awp@iafbc.ca. You can also book a 10-minute appointment (completed by phone) with an IAF staff member between November 18 and December 18, 2025. Prior to booking an appointment, you must start your application and provide the ID number (similar to AWP-202425-0####). This gives you and the IAF staff member a specific application to reference and provide support for within the 10-minute timeframe. Applicants are limited to one booked appointment at this time.

Review and Adjudication

EOI Application Review

Applications (expression of interest) are screened by the IAF Team. This review entails:

- Organization/applicant eligibility check.
- Initial review of application completeness, including required permits/documents for each project activity.
- Project/budget eligibility check.
- Confirmation of alignment with program eligibility.
- Evaluation against the AWP Stream 4 Evaluation Criteria in Appendix A.

Applications will also be shared with Ministry of Agriculture and Food staff for input.

IAF anticipates having screening results by March 31, 2026, and will act promptly to provide application decisions.

Only the applications that meet the evaluation criteria threshold will be invited to complete a full application. Applicants will be notified by email of results via the [IAF Client Portal](#).

Applications that are not successful (i.e., do not meet the evaluation criteria threshold) will not be brought forward for any future application intakes. Should another intake occur, applicants will need to reapply for future consideration.

Should a full application invitation be extended, applicants will have up to 2 years to complete the application and any required prerequisites (i.e., Plans, Technical Assessments, or Engineered Designs).

Full Application Review

Upon receipt of a submitted application, projects are screened by the IAF Team. This review entails:

- Detailed review of application completeness, including required permits/documents for each project activity.
- Detailed project/budget eligibility check.
- Evaluation against Evaluation Criteria, see Appendix B for details.

If permits are pending/under review but the application is otherwise complete, IAF will proceed to review the application. However, any approval will be conditional for a maximum of 18 months until all required



documentation is received. Conditional offers/approvals will not receive contracts or be able to incur expenses and/or begin activities in their application until their project has met the conditions of approval.

Upon successful completion of the initial application review, projects will be sent to a Technical Review Committee for secondary review and endorsement. This review entails:

- Secondary review of application completeness and confirm project meets all technical, environmental, and regulatory standards and/or requirements (as applicable)
- Technical review of project/budget, including but not limited to
 - Sufficiency of resources/capacity to achieve in the timeframe permitted.
 - Project management and technical/human resources.
 - Highlight technical/permitting considerations needing further review or approval (if applicable).
- Evaluation based on criteria set by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food.
 - See Evaluation Criteria Appendix B for details.

During the Application Review, if the IAF or Technical Review Committee determines a further technical review is required for the project, then the entire project, or specific components of a project, may undergo additional review. This review is performed by a technical expert/specialist with expertise in the field most applicable to the project in question. The intent of the review is to:

- Clarify, confirm, or provide feedback on the proposed activities, methodology, or budget item(s) that may be in question.
- Address technical, legal, or permitting questions.
- Validate claims of sector benefit.
- Confirm/clarify prioritization (if applicable).

Once identified, members of the IAF Team may work in consultation with funding partners to confirm the need for additional review and identify an appropriate specialist to conduct the review.

Funding Decision

IAF will work to provide funding decisions within 10-12 weeks of receipt of the completed application submission. Please note, IAF will act promptly to provide funding decisions, but cannot determine how long the Technical Review Committee or subsequent technical reviews will take to complete.

Applicants will be notified by email of funding decisions via the [IAF Client Portal](#).

Unsuccessful applications will not be brought forward for any future application intakes. Should another intake occur, applicants will need to reapply for future consideration. Upon request, applicants who are not successful in their funding application will be provided information on areas where future applications could be strengthened based on their evaluation and any considerations/suggestions noted in review.

All adjudication decisions are final. The applicant can view the status of their application on the [IAF Client Portal](#) at any time.



NOTIFICATIONS AND OBLIGATIONS

Funding Notifications and Contracts

If the project is approved, IAF will inform the applicant of the details of the decision and any associated terms and conditions via email. The applicant then agrees with IAF, which outlines the obligations of each party.

Funding is application and project-specific and must be used for the approved project and related expenses. Funds are non-transferable.

Project activities requiring financial resources cannot commence until the contribution agreement has been signed by both the applicant and IAF.

Projects receiving funding through Stream 4: Strategic Projects of the Agriculture Water Infrastructure Program can begin upon approval and must be completed within five years or by January 15, 2032, whichever is first. Projects may carry over between fiscal years.

Funding limits are set per stream per project. Applicants can apply to multiple streams; however, they will need to apply for each stream separately. They can have more than one Agriculture Water Infrastructure Program (2024-2032) project in any stream underway at once if their projects have no prerequisite requirements (e.g., if a Stream 3 project is not a prerequisite of a Stream 1 project because they are unrelated, the applicant can have a Stream 3 project and a Stream 1 project underway concurrently). There is no lifetime maximum funding limit per applicant; however, IAF may make discretionary funding decisions based on factors such as the ability of an applicant to complete multiple projects within the program timeframe.

If the project is not approved, the applicant will receive a written response from IAF via email and via the [IAF Client Portal](#).

Funding Details

An initial payment (up to 50%) may be made by IAF upon signing of a contribution agreement or submission of the first progress report; however, IAF may reduce this advance based on project/applicant risk. Interim and final payments will not be initiated by IAF until reporting requirements are satisfactorily met by the client. These requirements may include one or more progress reports or a single final report at the end of a project, based on the amount of funding approved, length of project, and project complexity/risk.

Interim and final payments will be made based on actual expenses reported, and payments will be made in arrears. All projects will require a final report, and a minimum of 20% of approved funding will be retained by IAF, pending submission of final reporting.

Funding Acknowledgements

This program is funded by the Government of BC; as such acknowledgement of funding is required when publicly communicating about a project and/or funding. To ensure appropriate acknowledgement, all communications and marketing materials, including public announcements or social media posts, must be pre-approved by the IAF Communications Team. Materials can be submitted via the [IAF Client Portal](#).



Reporting Requirements

Successful applicants must complete a final report and audit (if applicable) before receiving final payment from the program and may be required to submit interim activity and financial reporting. All required reports must be filled out and submitted via the [IAF Client Portal](#) to be considered for funding reimbursement. Reports must be submitted on time and with all required information. Please retain all invoices and receipts; you may be asked to submit some or all receipts/invoices following a review of your report(s) by the IAF Team. Expenses will be reimbursed based on audited receipts, the financial report, and the approved project budget. All reporting will be completed via the [IAF Client Portal](#).

Changes to Contracted Projects

If you are not able to complete your project according to the approved work plan, please inform the IAF Team as soon as possible using the [IAF Client Portal](#).

APPENDIX A: Evaluation Criteria for Step 1 – Expression of Interest

Considerations for Evaluation of the Expression of Interest:

Water Issues & Water Supply Source (27%)

- What is the severity of water constraint or risk for the watershed that serves as the main supply source for the project?
 - Applicants can view the [map](#) and list under Geographic Prioritization to determine which watershed serves as the main water supply source for their project, and its priority tier.
 - For questions on water supply sources, please contact [FrontCounter BC](#):
 - Phone: 1-877-855-3222
 - Email: FrontCounterBC@gov.bc.ca
 - [Video Conferencing](#), or visit [FrontCounter BC regional office locations](#).

Project Benefits (55%)

- How significantly does the project benefit agricultural production in the area?
- How significantly does the project benefit agricultural water users in the area?
- Does the project promote the development or use of a sustainable water supply with long, medium, or short-term solutions?

Project Readiness & Collaboration (18%)

- What level of community support and collaboration has the project secured?

APPENDIX B: Evaluation Criteria for Step 2 – Full Application

Considerations for Evaluation of the Full Application:

Water Issues & Water Supply Source (26%)

- Is the applicant aware of the regulatory requirements for the project other than water licences or dam safety authorizations?
 - Not all permits need to be in place prior to obtaining a water licence, but all permits must be in place before beginning construction.
 - Other types of permits or permissions required to install water infrastructure may include, but are not limited to:
 - Permits to cross roads governed by the Ministry of Transportation and Transit (MOTT), the Ministry of Forests (FOR), or municipal governments.
 - Permission to cross utility Right-of-Ways (ROWs).
 - Easements or permission to cross private property.
 - Permission to join a shared waterworks system.
 - BC Hydro permits to run power to pumps.
 - Permits/approvals from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO).
- What is the severity of water constraint or risk for the watershed that serves as the main supply source for the project?
 - Applicants can view the [map](#) and list under Geographic Prioritization to determine which watershed serves as the main water supply source for their project, and its priority tier.
- Is the project located in a region or watershed where it is possible to develop additional or alternate water supply sources?
 - Assessment of this criterion will include a review of water allocation notations. Water allocation notations provide an indication of the potential lack of water availability on a source and are used to inform statutory decisions on water allocations.
 - For more information regarding water allocation notifications and the potential to develop water supply source(s), please refer to the [Water Allocation Notations](#) and [Registered Water Allocation Notations](#) documents provided by the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship.

For questions on water supply sources and regulatory requirements, please contact [FrontCounter BC](#):

- Phone: 1-877-855-3222
- Email: FrontCounterBC@gov.bc.ca
- [Video Conferencing](#), or visit [FrontCounter BC regional office locations](#).



Project Benefits (39%)

- How significantly will the project improve water use efficiency and/or storage?
- How significantly does the project benefit agricultural production in the area?
- How significantly does the project benefit agricultural water users in the area?
- Does the project promote the development or use of a sustainable water supply with long, medium, or short-term solutions?

Project Readiness & Collaboration (9%)

- What level of community support and collaboration has the project secured?

Technical Review (26%)

- Does the approach address water issues based on professional standards?
- Is the project plan provided comprehensive, and does it clearly demonstrate the scientific rationale, merits, impacts of the approach to the project, and mitigation measures?
- Is the conclusion reasonable, and does it make sense?
- Are the outcomes reasonable based on the approach taken?