



health
INNOVATION HUB



Innovation Pathway Program Guide *Climate Stream*

May 2024

Strategic Innovation Division, Ministry of Health

Innovation Pathway Program Guide – CLIMATE STREAM

Objective

The British Columbia Ministry of Health (the Ministry) works collaboratively with system partners to build on existing strengths and enable an innovation ecosystem that supports and advances innovation across the health system. Led by the Health Innovation Hub, *the Innovation Pathway program identifies and supports the testing and assessment of promising health sector innovations* and promotes a thriving and active innovation culture and environment in health authorities and the health system.

For 2024/25, the Health Innovation Hub has partnered with the Ministry's Climate Resilience Unit to trial a **new climate stream** of the Innovation Pathway program to support innovative approaches to strengthen health system climate resilience and to improve health outcomes in the context of British Columbia's changing climate. This guide is intended to provide a high-level overview of the Health Innovation Pathway program's climate stream and a roadmap of how to apply. Please be aware that the Ministry may modify this guide as the program evolves.

What is innovation?

- Innovation is a new or improved solution with potentially transformational ability to improve outcomes.
- Innovation in the health system could be an idea, product, policy, service, or care pathway with clear benefits when compared to what is currently done.

Under the Health Innovation Pathway program's climate stream, the Ministry will invest \$1.0-1.4M in the 2024/25 fiscal year to support the testing of climate innovations that have potential for broad system impact. While there is no maximum budget for each proposal, the average award is expected to be approximately \$50,000-100,000 for projects occurring within a single organization or department, or more for projects involving multiple departments, health authorities or regions. Collaboration with other internal or external organizations, departments, or health authorities is highly encouraged and receiving funding from other sources does not eliminate projects from consideration for program funding. Funds must be used in the fiscal year they are provided. Any unused funds must be returned to the Ministry.

The Health Innovation Pathway program uses a transparent and standardized process to intake and assess innovations that are proposed by health authorities and their partners. The Ministry is seeking climate innovations that address an existing gap or problem, benefit the system, have scientific merit, are aligned to [health system priorities](#), and have potential for broad system impact.

For the 2024/25 intake, the Ministry will prioritize climate innovations that reinforce health commitments under the provincial [Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy](#) (CPAS) to:

- Assess climate risks to health and the health system;
- Build knowledge and capacity within BC's health workforce to prepare and respond;
- Raise public awareness and equip people in BC with information to protect themselves and those in their care from the health risks of climate change;
- Promote cross-sectoral collaboration on innovative, evidence-based solutions grounded in cultural safety and health equity.

Proposals must clearly demonstrate alignment with CPAS commitments and guiding principles as well as their organization's strategy, plan or priorities for climate change, environmental sustainability and/or planetary health.

Eligibility

All innovation proposals require a health authority executive (Vice President-level) sponsor as well as a project lead to champion and oversee implementation and evaluation of the initiative. Health authorities will ensure a link to health system expertise, access to key partners, report to the Ministry on key indicators/ measures, and will provide oversight of the initiative. To qualify for funding, innovation proposals must:

- Be supported with evidence of a reasonable expectation of benefit realization.
- Demonstrate potential for broad system impact.
- Clearly indicate how Ministry funds will be used.
- Provide measurable objectives for the initiative that will be tested and assessed.
- To support the assessment of the innovation, proposals must identify and report on at least three performance indicators that will demonstrate the benefits of the innovation.
- Be aligned with health system priorities in the [Ministry Service Plan](#) and [CPAS](#).

Reporting to the Ministry on indicators/measures will occur on a regular basis and must be completed within two years of receiving funding. Measures identified can signal when there is a need to pivot the approach or possibly discontinue if/as appropriate and help form the basis for a business case for the spread of the innovation if results/outcomes are compelling.

Funding Mechanism

Funds will be transferred to health authorities through the quarterly budget transfer process. A letter of understanding will outline the project, budget, expectations of all partners, and measures which will be reported to the Ministry on a quarterly basis. Funding can generally be used for:

- Labour costs for individuals working directly on the project.
- Reasonable material costs.
- Equipment required for the project.
- Software or information databases.
- Subcontractors for direct project work or evaluation.
- Costs which the BC Ministry of Health preapproves in writing as an eligible expense.

How to Apply

1. Consult with your health authority's climate lead responsible for CPAS implementation (see contact list in Appendix A) to support coordination and alignment with other CPAS activities. Questions about the provincial CPAS can be directed to the Ministry of Health's Climate Resilience Unit at HealthClimateResilience@gov.bc.ca.
2. Complete the program [intake form](#) and submit to healthinnovation@gov.bc.ca no later than **July 26, 2024**.
3. To better understand the proposal and ensure alignment to priorities, the Health Innovation Hub and/or Climate Resilience Unit may contact the submitter and/or relevant Ministry program areas. The collection of additional information may be required.
4. Proposals will be considered using the criteria in the decision support tool (see Appendix B). While the proposal will be given a score, the purpose of the criteria is to understand the proposals better and determine fit for the program. The score itself is not the single determining factor for a funding recommendation.
5. The Health Innovation Hub and Climate Resilience Unit will prepare a package of materials containing gathered information, decision support scores, and recommendations for the Assistant Deputy Minister. Decisions will be communicated within 4-5 weeks from the date proposals are submitted to the Ministry of Health.
6. If funding is approved by the Assistant Deputy Minister, the Health Innovation Hub and/or Climate Resilience Unit will inform the submitter and work with them to generate a letter of understanding.
7. The letter of understanding will outline the funding amount transferred to the health authority and expectations of how Ministry funds will be used. It will also indicate timelines for submission of agreed upon measures for the initiative.
8. If funding is not approved, submitters will be notified by the Health Innovation Hub team.

The Ministry of Health reserves the right to conduct public communications, announcements, events, outreach, and promotional activities related to the Pathway program and innovations supported. The submitter agrees to connect with the Ministry to coordinate any planned communications about Pathway funded initiatives. Advance notice of at least 30 days is required.

Appendix A: Contact Information

Ministry Contacts

Health Innovation Hub

Strategic Innovation Division

BC Ministry of Health

Email: healthinnovation@gov.bc.ca

Climate Resilience Unit

Strategic Innovation Division

BC Ministry of Health

Email: healthclimateresilience@gov.bc.ca

Health Authority CPAS Leads

Organization	Contact	Email
Fraser Health Authority	Amy Lubik	Amy.Lubik@fraserhealth.ca
Interior Health Authority	Kady Hunter	Kady.Hunter@interiorhealth.ca
Island Health Authority	Paivi Abernethy	Paivi.Abernethy@islandhealth.ca
Northern Health Authority	Diana Kutzner	Diana.Kutzner@northernhealth.ca
Vancouver Coastal Health Authority	Craig Brown	Craig.Brown@vch.ca
Provincial Health Services Authority/ BC Centre for Disease Control	Angela Yao	Angela.Yao@bccdc.ca
First Nations Health Authority	Maery Kaplan-Hallam	Maery.Kaplan-Hallam@fnha.ca

Appendix B: Decision Support Tool

The purpose of this tool is to help consider the fit of proposals for the program/stream.

FIT AGAINST CRITERIA MATRIX					
Criteria <u>Scoring</u> 0 = None 1 = Minimal 2 = Moderate 3 = Substantial	Pass or Fail: _____				
	Substantial	Moderate	Minimal	None	SCORE
	3	2	1	0	3
1. Minimum Requirements					
1a. Innovation addresses an existing gap or problem related to health system climate resilience and/or climate-related health risks					
1b. Innovation aligns with health system priorities and Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy commitments and guiding principles					
1c. Project lead identified to oversee project					
1d. Project has health authority executive sponsor					
1e. Innovation is evidence-based					
2. Value and Impact Potential					
2a. Improves climate resilience/adaptation					
2b. Reduces GHG emissions or improves environmental sustainability					
2c. Improves patient and/or population health					
2d. Positive impact on health workforce					
2e. Supports Indigenous reconciliation and/or cultural safety					
2f. Positives impact on social determinants of health					
2g. Improves health equity					
2h. Enhances cross-system/sectoral collaboration and alignment					
2i. Potential for broad system impact (spread/scale)					
3. Relevance and Scientific Merit					
3a. Potential interest/uptake across health system					
3b. Reasonable expectation and ability to demonstrate impact/success					
3c. Study design is methodologically sound and generates quality evidence					
3d. Risks considered (and risk mitigation embedded) in study design					
3e. Suitability of project team and engagement of partners					