



Settlement Program

Service Delivery Improvements (SDI)

2017 FUNDING GUIDELINES



Foreword

Through Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)'s Settlement Program, IRCC works with many partners in the delivery of services to newcomers to Canada, and supports their integration into Canadian communities.

Service Delivery Improvement (SDI) funding is currently being made available under the Settlement Program via an Expression of Interest (EOI) process for projects that specifically address the priorities, principles and outcomes listed in these Funding Guidelines.

The anticipated start date for projects solicited under this current EOI will be April 1, 2018. Consideration will also be given to projects beginning in early 2018. All projects will end no later than March 31, 2021.

IRCC intends to undertake two (2) EOI processes each Fiscal Year (FY).

This document is intended to help applicants understand the EOI process and properly guide applicants in completing a letter of interest and subsequent proposal (if applicable) for SDI funding under the Settlement program.

In order to expand the Department's ability to innovate in the settlement and integration sector, we are looking to engage new and existing partners in developing innovative approaches to better meet the needs of newcomer clients and better support the integration process.

The amount of funding and scope of activities that will be supported by IRCC will be contingent on the satisfactory negotiation of a contribution agreement (CA). Any expenditure incurred prior to the signing of a CA by IRCC, or any costs related to the preparation of a proposal, will not be reimbursed.

For any clarification or questions concerning this process, please contact IRCC at CFP@cic.gc.ca.

Note: *Successful applicants will be required to comply with Canadian privacy laws such as the applicable federal/provincial/territorial privacy and access to information legislation and/or Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act. Applicants will also need to adhere to all physical and electronic security requirements as stipulated in a CA.*

1. The Expression of Interest (EOI) Process

The EOI process is intended to minimize the time and effort required by applicants to submit an application by requesting preliminary information via a letter of interest before requesting the submission of a full proposal. This EOI process is being used to address emerging program priorities and/or needs using a specific source of funds. The projects being sought through this process will allow IRCC to engage new and existing partners in addressing specific innovation and experimentation priorities that form part of the larger SDI initiative.

Only applicants whose submissions pass an initial screening stage (Letter of Interest assessment) will be invited to an initial consultation with IRCC officials to facilitate the development and eventual submission of a full proposal, in which they will be asked to describe

in detail the proposed activities, timelines, costs, project feasibility, evaluation methods and how the project meets SDI-specific criteria.

2. Service Delivery Improvements (SDI)

IRCC recognizes that establishing a new life in new country can be a challenging process and that services for newcomers should be delivered in a manner that reflects their dignity and strengths. To better support newcomers to Canada, IRCC would also like to improve communications to reach newcomers with the right information at the right time.

IRCC is therefore launching a dedicated funding stream for service delivery improvements to increase the **efficiency** and **effectiveness** of the Settlement Program, informed by **user-centred design** principles and approaches¹. This stream of funding is intended to improve our understanding of newcomer needs and our services delivery responses to them.

Specifically, IRCC is seeking information on the effectiveness of our current settlement services, as well as evidence-based methods for improving service delivery. IRCC officials will work closely with funding recipients throughout the lifespan of the project to ensure that there are the necessary supports for obtaining strong evidence on the current state of our service models and for reporting results, particularly when they are not as expected or favourable.

IRCC recognizes the significant value that will come from implementing projects that generate best practices, identify lessons learned, and encourage service improvements that can be applied across the settlement sector by various stakeholders, with a primary focus on Settlement Program clients.

Innovation through Experimentation

A portion of SDI funding will be allocated towards activities that are experimental in nature and that test new approaches to delivering settlement services and/or measuring the impact of specific services/models on Settlement Program clients. Experimental activities could feature:

- Testing and developing more client-centred programming;
- Developing or testing new service models;
- Achieving more targeted outcomes for specific client groups;
- Testing existing service delivery models in a new context or application; and
- Analyzing and reporting on positive, negative and neutral results.

¹ ***User-centred design** is about understanding users' needs, providing a better user experience, and improving operational efficiency of service delivery. It puts the service user or client's experience as the focus throughout the process of developing, testing, implementing, evaluating, and refining of a particular service. Involving the service users and seeking their feedback is encouraged at various points in this process.

3. Funding Requirements

3.1 Eligible Recipients

In order to fulfill IRCC's objective of promoting the successful integration of permanent residents into Canada, contribution agreements may be signed with the following **eligible recipients** for settlement services:

- Not for profit organizations including non-governmental organizations, non-profit corporations, community groups, umbrella organizations, and regulatory bodies and apprenticeship authorities;
- Educational institutions (including school boards, districts and divisions);
- Individuals;
- Businesses, including those that provide indirect services (e.g., employers hiring newcomers, private language schools, conference organizers, web or production firms for tool development);
- Provincial, territorial or municipal governments; and
- International organizations.

3.2 Eligible Clients

The following persons are eligible to receive settlement services:

- Permanent Residents of Canada;
- Protected Persons as defined in Section 95 of IRPA;
- Individuals who have been selected, inside or outside Canada, to become permanent residents (pending verifications) **and** who have been informed, by a letter from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada;
- Convention refugees and protected persons outside Canada who have been selected for resettlement in Canada by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada; and
- Temporary foreign workers who hold or received approval of a work permit under section 112 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations (IRPR) or received initial approval for permanent residence under section 113 of the IRPR.

Please refer to the [Settlement Programs Terms and Conditions](#) for additional details on client and recipient eligibility.

3.3 Priorities and Themes

SDI Priorities

The following are the priorities the Department is seeking to address through this EOI process via SDI funding and which projects will need to respond in order to be considered for funding:

- 1. Language acquisition**
Testing models of language instruction in the workplace, as well as other language interventions to better understand which are most effective and efficient for language learning.
- 2. Employment**
Supporting the economic integration of newcomers, in particular refugees, through interventions for improving newcomer employment outcomes and supporting the entrepreneurial spirit of newcomers.
- 3. Youth supports**
Facilitating newcomer youth integration, especially for vulnerable youth, in particular focusing on well-being and mental health, labour market entry, higher education access, and 360 degree supports.
- 4. Harnessing volunteers and supporting capacity building in the settlement sector**
Investments to support service provider organizations in harnessing volunteers and generating innovative approaches to improve service delivery efficiency and effectiveness, and to better respond to newcomer needs.
- 5. Pay-for-performance**
Testing of pay-for-performance models, in particular those focused on employment and language outcomes
- 6. Newcomer well-being and programming to support vulnerable clients**
Enhancing newcomer well-being, dignity and social connections, and other adapted programming to better meet the unique needs of vulnerable clients and communities (e.g., women, newcomers with disabilities, LGBTQ, seniors, visible minorities, etc.).
- 7. Research and analysis to drive innovation and/or understand user experience**
Research that contributes to innovative service design and delivery solutions and/or results in a better understanding of newcomers' needs (e.g., surveys, interviews, participant observations, ethnographies, quasi-experimental design, behavioural economics, and nudge theory, etc.).

When submitting a Letter of Interest and/or Proposal, applicants should consider scalability (capacity to change in size or scale) of activities regardless of the priority being addressed by the project. Applicants will be required to demonstrate the use of methodologies such as: partnership/capacity development, innovative approaches, user-centric design/ behavioural insights, innovative use of emerging technology, alternative service delivery, adaptive programming, research, randomized control trials.

Settlement Theme: Indirect Services

Although activities funded under SDI may offer services directly to clients, the overarching theme of these potential SDI projects should be indirect, with a focus on building knowledge and capacity around new and existing service delivery models. Rather than focusing on the outcome of one particular activity, emphasis will be placed on a project's ability to attribute the service delivery method used to the positive or negative outcome for a client, and deepen our understanding of clients' needs. There is also an interest in understanding how specific service delivery models could be useful to other parts of the settlement sector and ultimately benefit the overall Settlement Program. For this reason, SDI projects and activities are being considered under the Settlement Program's Indirect Services theme which includes:

- Opportunities and resources that assist communities, employers, public organizations/institutions and other levels of government to engage in settlement and integration, foster connections with newcomers and encourage the participation of immigrants in Canadian society and economy;
- Indirect Supports and tools to ensure that the settlement sector provides innovative and coordinated services to clients; and
- Adapting settlement services to more effectively meet specific needs of unique groups of immigrants or to the communities in which they settle (e.g., Francophone newcomers in Francophone minority communities).

Clients eligible for the Settlement Program should be the primary client group to benefit from all proposals.

3.4 SDI Principles

Below are a set of overarching principles that are intended to underpin SDI projects in conception, design and implementation. Although it is not expected that applicants speak to each of these principles in their Letters of Interest, they will inform IRCC's review of proposals, and should be given due consideration during project development and implementation. These principles will help guide IRCC when decisions relating to the development of new and existing mechanisms are needed.

Project Principle	Premise	Sample Probing Questions	Indicator
Innovation Imperative	Project makes use of innovative interventions and/or approaches for serving clients or building organizational capacity within the settlement sector in a way that has the potential to change the way settlement services are delivered at both the local and program level.	Does the evidence provided demonstrate clearly that the project uses new methods? Is the project potentially adaptable to wider application or replication? Does the project change the way the user/client experiences settlement services?	There is practical evidence to demonstrate innovation has been used to address real gaps and barriers in delivering services to newcomers.

User Orientation	Project design considers and responds to a variety of user perspectives and experiences including those of service providers, newcomer clients, as well as stakeholders across the sector.	Will the project be designed and adaptive to end users? How will this be demonstrated? Where are the feedback loops between users and service delivery approaches/adaptations?	Clear focus on user experience in design, implementation, and ongoing evaluation of the project.
Results Through Innovation	Service delivery improvements will be achieved through innovating, which may include a trial and error process and as such, insights and information on the process itself will be as essential as the activity itself.	What processes are in place to capture relevant information related to the methodologies being used? Will the information be relevant and easy to disseminate? Will the information be robust, and comprehensive such that IRCC could change the program as a result of this information?	Strong emphasis on conducting an ongoing evaluation of the project's methodology, identification of the potential and limitations of different processes and use of a strong reporting framework for communicating progress with IRCC.
Sound Stewardship	Innovative activities may result in unanticipated changes to some project goals and activities, however, evaluation and reporting methods will be a mandatory means of ensuring that funds are managed responsibly and appropriately, even as projects adapt.	Projects are adherent to financial management and reporting requirements as per the terms and conditions of the Contribution Agreement.	New and existing service providers are prepared and/or willing to make any needed changes to satisfy reporting requirements.
Outcomes Focus	There is a need to more effectively assess unique outcomes by specific client types, activity, and/or service model.	Are outcomes clearly distinguishable by client type/activity/service model? Can outcomes be clearly attributed to a specific intervention? Is information on client outcomes accessible and easily reported on? Are lessons learned along the way being documented?	Outcomes are specific to a particular client type, activity, service model or methodology and can be effectively reported on as such.
Collaboration and Relationship Building	Duplication of effort should be avoided and instead, a collaborative approach should be used to learn from the experience of new and existing partners.	Is there evidence of leveraging new and existing partnerships in order to increase a project's potential for success? What types of relationships were established or deepened over project lifespan? Were consultations used to inform changes to the project design from the onset as well as throughout?	Partnership building and collaboration is featured prominently throughout the life of the project.

Adaptability	Making a change to a project's direction or approach ('pivoting') is encouraged so long as the adjustment is warranted by well-documented evidence and particularly, if changes will: increase the projects probability of success; contribute to the depth of the project; and/or inform future IRCC projects funded through the Settlement Program.	How will the need for change be identified? How will the need be documented and reported? How will a potential failure to achieve anticipated outcomes be monitored? What will warrant changing a method or approach? How will this be communicated/reported to IRCC?	Projects have an ongoing monitoring process in place and as such, pivots are flagged to IRCC and 'failures' are documented as contributing to the evidence-base and proactively used to frame new objectives/outcomes to be achieved.
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3.5 SDI Project Outcomes

Ultimately, final project proposals submitted to IRCC must include clearly defined milestones, deliverables and performance indicators. All proposals selected for funding must be designed to work within a strong reporting and evaluation framework, in which evidence-based outcomes can be clearly identified and extracted.

- All proposals will be subject to the [Settlement Programs Terms and Conditions](#) and similarly, must include elements such as: a robust performance measurement and evaluation plan (use of independent evaluators is encouraged), and reflect value-for-money.

To receive funding, projects must also address one of the following Immediate Outcomes, and one Intermediate Outcome:

- Immediate Outcomes
 - Increased evidence of more effective or efficient service delivery models – including technologically based solutions
 - Increased knowledge about client populations / population-specific needs
 - Enhanced engagement of new and existing partners
 - Encourages an environment for innovation for sector & IRCC – may include funding flexibility, leveraging partners and user centric service design
- Intermediate Outcomes
 - Better service delivery models
 - More tailored interventions for specific client populations
 - Better partnerships
 - Increased capacity for continuous improvement and innovation.

4. Submitting your Application

Additional reference material

The [Settlement Programs Terms and Conditions](#) will provide you with information about the Program.

Stage 1

Step 1 - Create an Account

In order to submit a Letter of Interest towards this process you will first need to register and create an account via the [Grants and Contributions System \(GCS\) partner portal](#) and secure a GCS organization ID which will be used to complete your online Letter of Interest as well as submit a proposal if you are screened into the next stage of the process.

Step 2 – Complete your Letter of Interest

Once all reference materials have been reviewed and an IRCC online portal account has been created, you may proceed. [Submit a Letter of Interest](#). Using your Organization ID, follow the instructions on that page to complete and submit your letter of interest.

This form will be available online as of 8:00 am EST Monday, November 14, 2017, until 5:00 pm EST on November 28, 2017.

Upon submission you will no longer be able to resubmit or modify your Letter of Interest for this process.

Stage 2

Step 3 – Initial Consultation (if applicable)

Within seven days of being advised that you will be invited to submit a full proposal, you will be contacted by an IRCC Official for an initial consultation to facilitate the application/proposal. The intent of this consultation is to strengthen the alignment between activities being proposed and the outcomes that IRCC is hoping to achieve specific to SDI and to facilitate the completion of the online application. This exchange will also serve as an opportunity to manage expectations of both the applicants and IRCC given the unique nature of this funding process and the desired outcomes. The initial consultation is optional and as such, you may choose to proceed with your application without the engagement of an IRCC official.

Step 4 – Submit Full Application (if applicable)

Within three weeks of the initial notification, you will be required to submit a full proposal. You will be asked to return to the [GCS partner portal](#) and use your user name and password to login and follow instructions for creating a full application.

Each part of the online application through the partner portal must be complete before you can submit.

This includes:

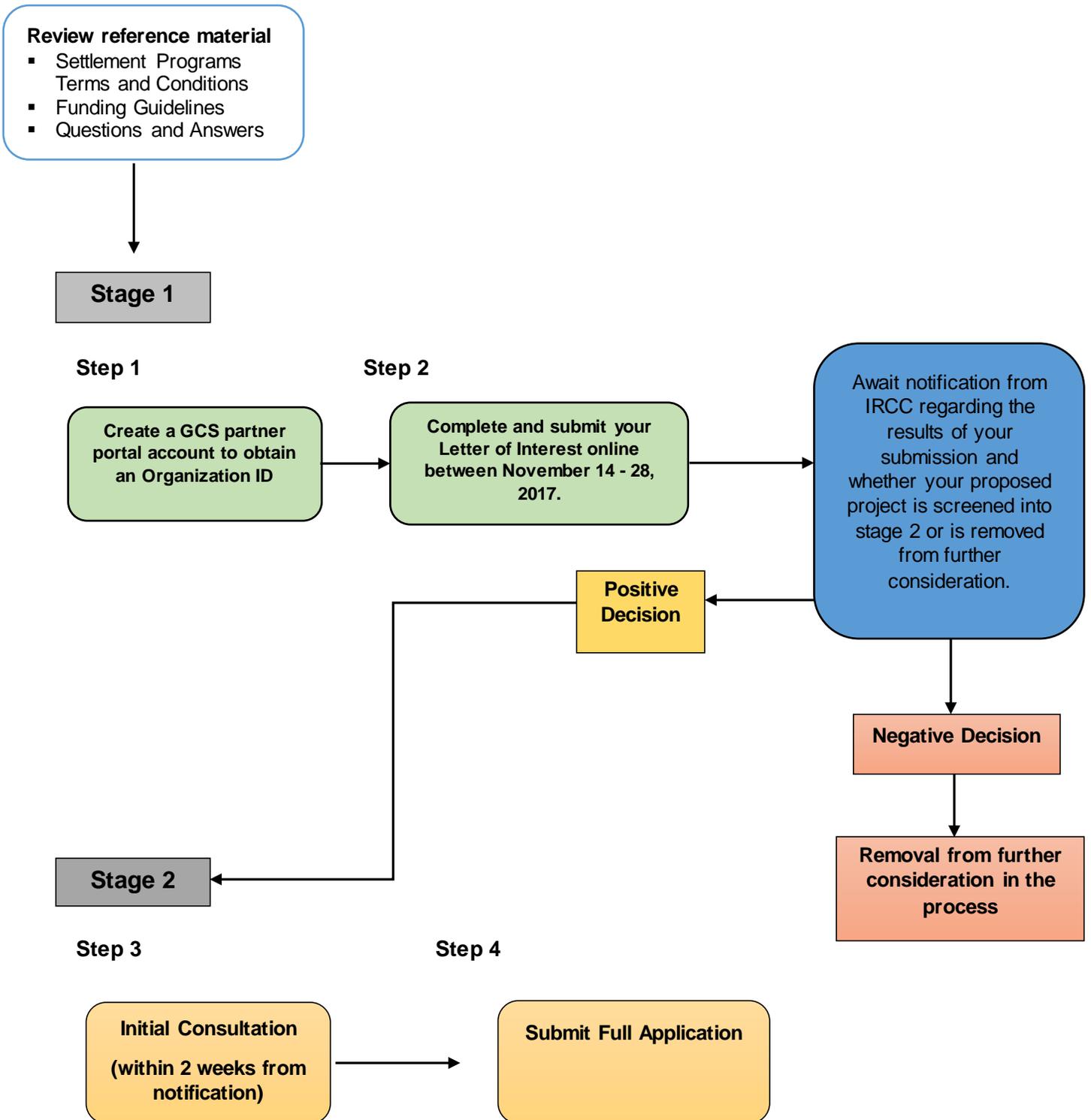
- [Information about your project](#) (which contains seven sections: Summary, Rationale, Activities, Outreach and Outcomes, Capacity, Evaluation and Budget);
- [Mandatory documents](#)

- You will be asked in the online application to attach mandatory documents specific to the type of applicant listed below:
 - Public institutions (such as a school board) and any non-federal levels of government:
 - letter of support from each financial partner
 - Other Organizations:
 - most recent Annual Report;
 - full financial statements including comparative information for the last two fiscal years (audited preferred)¹;
 - names of persons on your board of directors; and
 - at least one of the following: Constitution, By-law, Letter of Incorporation or similar instrument of governance;
 - letter of support from each financial partner.
 - Individuals:
 - your curriculum vitae; and
 - your proof of Canadian citizenship or permanent resident status;
 - letter of support from each financial partner.

Applicants should submit separate applications when:

- The breadth of activities and related outcomes are too divergent to explain clearly and logically in one submission.

Application Process



5. Assessment Process

All projects must include clearly defined milestones and deliverables. In addition, all proposals which are selected for funding must be designed to work within a strong reporting framework, in which evidence-based outcomes can be clearly identified.

Proposals will be assessed on overall capacity, alignment with priorities, relevance of project deliverables, quality of performance and outcome measurement strategy, evaluation plan, and value for money. However, sound stewardship will be complemented with an expanded risk tolerance recognizing the unique challenges of innovative projects.

Applicants must demonstrate capacity, knowledge and experience in at least one of the following areas:

- Settlement sector
- Innovation – user-centric design, experimental design, behavioural economics, and technology based solutions or services, etc.
- Research
- Partnership and connection development

5.1 Letter of Interest Review

Letters of interest will pass through a preliminary screening process to assess:

- the project's alignment with at least one of the SDI priorities;
- the projects alignment with at least one immediate and one intermediate outcome required for SDI;
- the overall need for the project/activities described;
- whether activities proposed are relevant to newcomers and the Settlement Program;
- the applicant's overall capacity to implement the project;
- the feasibility of implementing the project within the given timelines;
- the appropriateness of techniques and methodology described;
- the project's potential for innovation in settlement programming; and
- the project's potential for adding value to IRCC's knowledge and evidence base for increasing effectiveness and efficiency within the Settlement Program.

5.2 Full Proposal Assessment

Full applications (stage 2) submitted for SDI funding will be assessed on the following criteria:

Project Relevance: 40% of overall score

- The need for and alignment of the project with SDI priorities is clear and supported by evidence. There are feasible project goal(s) with clear link(s) to IRCC's Indirect Services theme.

- Project activities address all aspects of the project, showing no major gaps, and activities are all relevant to the successful completion of the project.
- Project effectively addresses one or more of the priorities for this funding process.
- Project outcomes align to one or more of the IRCC outcomes identified for the SDI initiative.

Potential for Success: 35% of overall score

- Applicant has the capacity, experience, contextual knowledge and appropriate partners (if applicable) to carry out the project.
- Strategy to engage target clients is sufficient and appropriate.
- Each outcome is measurable and supported by an effective performance measurement plan.
- A plan is in place to monitor the overall project performance and assess the project results.
- Applicant experience: organization has been in existence for over two years or individual has at least three years of experience, which qualifies them to carry out the project.

Project Cost-Effectiveness: 25% of overall score

- Proposed budget is balanced. All costs as well as revenues related to the project have been itemized and explained.
- Project costs are in line with average costs for similar services. The applicant demonstrates proper and responsible use of funds related to both administration and program delivery.

The following will also be considered throughout the overall assessment of the proposal:

Organizational capacity - The applicant demonstrates the necessary organizational capacity and appropriate administrative and governance systems in place to undertake the proposed project.

Past experience - The applicant has a background and expertise in managing projects similar in scope and feasibility, and proposed activities.

Funding recommendations and decisions will be based on a proposal’s total assessment score and departmental considerations, such as service coverage based on listed priorities, geographic distribution, innovation and available funding.

6. Service Standards and Communication with IRCC

IRCC will keep applicants informed on the processing of their submission through each stage of the EOI process and in accordance to the following standards:

Acknowledgment

With 7 days from the close of process: Upon submission of your Letter of Interest, you will receive acknowledgement of your submission.

Eligibility to Proceed

Within 25 days from the close of process (Stage 1): IRCC will send written confirmation via email informing you whether your Letter of Interest has passed the initial screening stage or not.

With 60 days from the close of process (Stage 2): Upon submission of a full proposal, IRCC will send an automatic notification confirming that your full proposal has been received.

Decision

With 110 days from the close of process (Stage 2): IRCC will send written notification to applicants advising whether the Department is or is not interested in entering into negotiations with the applicant, or whether IRCC needs more time before issuing a positive or negative decision.

Unless otherwise noted, these confirmations will be communicated electronically. For additional questions or clarifications, contact IRCC at CFP@cic.gc.ca