Okanagan Basin
WATER BOARD

WATER CONSERVATION & QUALITY IMPROVMENT GRANTS
PROGRAM GUIDE

Revised 2024 Grant Year

Contents

1. Program Overview

1.1 Welcome

The Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB) has created this guide for applicants to the Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grant Program. We are happy to provide support and information throughout all stages of the granting process.

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OBWB Grants

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P: 250-469-6270

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1.2 Purpose

The OBWB recognizes the importance of enabling projects that enhance water quality and conserve water in the Okanagan Valley. This program is intended to:

- encourage a collaborative approach to water management;
- promote more uniform standards and best practices throughout the valley;
- increase knowledge sharing;
- support innovative solutions;
- help local organizations address water issues and enhance valley-wide sustainable water use; and
- assist projects that might otherwise lack funds to move forward in a timely manner.

1.3 Amount of Grant

Successful projects will receive between $3,000 and $30,000 (maximum $30,000 per project, even with multiple partnering organizations). A total of $350,000 is made available annually by the OBWB for this valley-wide program.

1.4 Before You Apply

Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact grants@obwb.ca with any questions about the eligibility of their project or organization, or with any questions or concerns about the grant program. Any other source of information may be incorrect and can lead to ineligible applications.

Applicants MUST contact the local government where the project will occur well in advance of the grant deadline for a letter of support (see section 3.5 for more detail). Applicants should contact the local government **at least four weeks ahead of the application deadline** to ensure they receive a letter of support before the deadline. Applications without the support of a local government will not be considered for funding.

2. Eligibility

2.1 Eligible Organizations
Eligible applicants include Okanagan:

- Municipalities
- Regional districts
- Irrigation/improvement districts (must be water suppliers and recognized under the Local Government Act and Community Charter)
- Okanagan First Nations
- Non-profit community organizations

2.2 Ineligible Organizations
Ineligible applicants include:

- Senior government agencies (i.e. provincial or federal)
- Consulting firms (or consultant-led projects)
- Businesses

2.3 Eligible Projects
Eligible projects must:

- Demonstrate water savings or improvements to water quality
- Be supported by a local government through a letter of support (see Section 3.5)
- Be consistent with water management objectives in their respective jurisdictions

2.4 Eligible Activities
Eligible projects can include, but are not limited to, the following activities:

- **Drought and Flood Preparedness** – Projects that assist communities in creating drought plans and drought and flood preparedness such as floodplain mapping.
- **Education** – Projects that educate to increase public knowledge and encourage action around water conservation or quality improvement.
- **Irrigation** – Projects that aim to increase irrigation efficiency, reduce leaks, reduce water use and create system improvements.
- **Groundwater Studies** – Projects that lend to the protection of groundwater quality or quantity through research, or direct action.
- **Mapping** – Projects that gather mapping data, such as sensitive habitat inventories, foreshore inventories, aquatic habitat indices, and cultural mapping to inform better riparian and shoreline management.
- **Metering** – Projects that install or upgrade domestic, agricultural, industrial or institutional meters for the purpose of increasing water use efficiency, or conserving water. May also include water audits and leak detection projects.

- **Source Water Protection** – Projects that undertake planning initiatives or action for the protection of source water, either surface or ground. This includes risk assessment for source areas to identify potential and current impacts on water quality.
- **System Improvement** – Projects that improve water delivery systems through more efficient use of water, or by enhancing water quality in the system. Cannot be used for capital projects or infrastructure repair.
- **Water Treatment Study** – Projects that aim to improve water treatment through a better understanding of current or innovative new technologies and practices.
- **Water Management Planning** – Projects that develop and implement conservation or efficiency planning initiatives including domestic water conservation plans, water use plans, and/or new water conservation policy including domestic irrigation standards or volume-based pricing bylaws.
- **Water Quality Assessments** – Projects that assess source water quality in order to support improved management and protection.
- **Xeriscape** – Projects that demonstrate enhanced water conservation in outdoor landscaping areas in residential, agricultural, industrial or institutional settings.
- **Water Flow Monitoring** – Projects that collect stream or hydrological data, such as stream flow monitoring and water quality data.
- **Restoration** - Projects that restore or enhance riparian, stream, wetland, or foreshore areas to improve water quality or enhance natural flow-related ecosystem services, including flood control.
- **Other Projects** see http://www.obwb.ca/wcqi_project/ for a database of previously funded projects.

2.5 Ineligible Projects

Ineligible projects include, but are not limited to:

- Bylaw compliance and enforcement programs
- Capital projects that are growth driven and should be funded by development cost charges
- Work for private water utilities
- Projects that were completed in the past/previously undertaken work
- Research/development projects that are associated with 'for-profit' business activities
- Projects outside of the Okanagan Basin

3. Application Process

3.1 Application Limit

Organizations may submit more than one application, but each application must be accompanied by a separate letter of support from the local government in the project area, or a letter clearly stating all the projects that are being supported. Multi-year projects are eligible

for funding, but a new application must be submitted for each year of additional funding, and ongoing funding is not guaranteed.

3.2 How to Apply. New this year!

1. Carefully read the WCQI Grant Program Guide to determine whether your project is eligible.
2. Complete the WCQI application form and save the file.
3. Obtain a letter of support for the project from the municipality or regional district where the project is located (see section 3.5).
4. Gather all supporting documents well in advance of the application deadline.
5. Go to https://obwb.ca/overview-grants/wcqi/application-information/ scroll down until the end of the page and click on:" 2024 WCQI Application Portal" to submit your application. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact: grants@obwb.ca

3.4 Application Deadline

Applications must be received no later than 4 p.m. on the deadline. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted. Annual deadlines can be found here:

http://www.obwb.ca/overview-grants/wcqi/application-information/

3.5 Required Letter of Support

All applications must be accompanied by a letter of support from the local government (municipality or regional district) where the project will occur (this includes projects submitted by local government staff). Organizations should contact the local government well in advance of the WCQI application deadline. If you are unclear about how to obtain a letter of support, please contact your local government.

Each local government may have different processes for submitting a letter of support, but the letter must be signed by an officer (CO, CAO, or CFO) of the local government **or** the mayor of a municipality or Chairperson of a regional district. A formal council or board resolution of support is also acceptable, and maybe part of the process required by a local government but is not a requirement for OBWB funding provided the other criteria listed here are met.

A letter of support ensures that the project is consistent with water management objectives in local jurisdictions and provides local governments a role in the screening process. It also informs officials so they are aware of proposed projects in their community, and ensures that they have endorsed those applications coming from their own organization.

When providing a letter of support for this program, **the OBWB asks local governments to consider:**

- whether the application is consistent with water-related objectives in their jurisdiction;

- whether the applicant and suggested project reflect the values of the community; and

- other subjective criteria that would go into any letter of support provided by the local government.

We ask local governments to not base their decision on perceived competition for available funding, or other criteria which will be reviewed by the OBWB at a later stage in the grant review process.

3.6 Application Review

Applications are reviewed and ranked according to the Selection Criteria (see 3.7) by OBWB staff and brought before the OBWB Board of Directors. All funding decisions are approved by the Board, which may award full funding, partial funding, or no funding to projects.

3.7 Selection Criteria

Projects are evaluated according to the following scoring criteria:

- Method Appropriate for Objectives   15%
- Outcome on Water Quality or Conservation   20%
- Basin-Wide Benefit   20%
- Use and Promotion of Best Practices   10%
- Collaboration   10%
- Budget and Timeline   15%
- Quality of Proposal   10%

    Total   100%

- Annual Theme Bonus*   up to 10%

* Bonus points up to 10% may be applied based on the degree to which a project addresses board-approved annual priorities. These bonus areas are described each year in the call for applications and can be found on our website.

3.8 Partial Funding and Unspent Funds

In many cases, partial OBWB funding may be awarded to a project. In the case that this partial funding results in changes to the project scope or cancellation of the project, grants@obwb.ca must be notified immediately. Written permission must be given by OBWB for changes to the project scope or for timeline extensions.

If a WCQI-funded project is completed with an excess of funds (under budget), remaining funds must be returned to OBWB. Any excess funding goes back into the grant fund for future years.

4. Guide to the Application

4.1 Sections of the Application

The application is a fillable, saveable Microsoft Word form. Please be clear and concise, respecting the word limits. Read the information on the front of the application.

<u>Enter Grant Application Year</u> – refer to the call for applications for the grant year. Select a date in the grant year you are applying for and the form will populate with that year.

1. PROJECT DETAILS

<u>Organization</u> – State the name of the primary organization behind the project.

<u>Project Title</u> – Provide a descriptive title that encompasses both the scope and area of the project.

<u>Supporting Local Government</u> – Select one of the local governments from the drop-down menu. If your project is not within the jurisdiction of a local government listed in the menu, contact grants@obwb.ca.

<u>Total Project Budget</u> – State the estimated budget of the project, including both in-kind and direct funding. If the application is for one phase of a multi-phase/multi-year project, include the total budget for all phases and all years. In the Budget and Timeline section you will be asked to only enter the budget details for the current phase of the project.

<u>Grant Requested</u> – State the amount of money requested from the OBWB grant program. Maximum $30,000 is available per project per year (even where there are multiple partnering organizations applying). Matching (in-kind or cash) funding is not required but helps to demonstrate the strength of partnerships.

<u>Project Category</u> – Select the category that best matches your proposed project or select 'other.'

2. PROJECT CONTACT

Provide the details of the primary contact for the project. The primary contact will be responsible for ensuring that the organization meets all agreed terms for funds received, including grant reporting and data sharing.

3. METHOD APPROPRIATE FOR OBJECTIVES (15%)

a. Give a short summary of the project (250-word limit)

EXAMPLE: This project will restore a 300 m section of XX river by removing a concrete flume, re-naturalizing the riverbed with gravel, and reintroducing native plant species to the banks. The final project will include permanent educational signage, a community open

house-style grand opening, and a fully resourced five-year monitoring and maintenance plan.

b. Describe the method (specific steps) you will use to achieve your objectives, from project initiation to completion. (250-word limit)

EXAMPLE (does not need to be numbered steps): 1. Hire an engineering consultant to plan the removal of the concrete flume;

2. In coordination with local government and First Nations, design the re-naturalized river bed including native plant selection;

3. Obtain the necessary permits to complete the project;

4. Works to remove the concrete;

5. Works to re-naturalize the river;

6. Educational signage installed and community open house/grand opening planned;

7. Ongoing monitoring and maintenance for 5 years.

c. Describe how the OBWB WCQI grant funding will be allocated within the project.

EXAMPLE: OBWB funding will be used to create and install the educational signage and fund the community open house.

d. If this application is for one phase of a multi-phase project, describe all phases of the project and how the outcome of the current phase impacts future phases. (250-word limit)

If this is not a multi-phase project, leave section blank.

EXAMPLE: This is the final year (except monitoring and maintenance) of a three-phase project. Phase one included the design, consultation, and permit work. Phase 2 included the removal of the concrete flume and re-naturalization of the river including native plantings. During this phase we will host a community open house and recruit community members to join in the monitoring and maintenance work by gathering contact details and organizing future dates for site maintenance events like invasive plant removal and garbage clean-up. Community member recruitment is key to the final monitoring and maintenance program to ensure the re-naturalization process is successful. This will also build community knowledge and spark an interest in future water quality projects.

NOTE: The example above is 114 words.

4. OUTCOME ON WATER QUALITY OR CONSERVATION (20%)

a. Describe how the project will directly or indirectly affect water conservation or water quality improvement in the Okanagan? (500-word limit)

EXAMPLE: River restoration can allow sediments and pollutants to settle out of the water, while native replanting can also have a filtering effect, and can act as biochemical reactors removing pollutants in groundwater. Appropriate riparian planting can also provide shading for fish and a cooling effect for the water and increase biodiversity. This project will also help with flood mitigation as the naturalized streambed will allow infiltration into ground water, and the riparian area will act as a sponge, slowing the flow of water downstream. Etc.

b. Quantify or describe the anticipated scale/scope of the conservation or quality improvement from the project; (350-word limit)

EXAMPLE: This project should directly reduce pollutants flowing downstream into XX lake, providing habitat and water quality benefits, especially in the north end. The City of XX has a shallow water intake in the north end, near the mouth of XX river, and we expect a direct benefit to the quality of source water entering their municipal intake. In the first year, we anticipate some increased turbidity as the restored section settles, but each year following the project, we anticipate the benefits will grow as the riparian area becomes better established and sediment transport is reduced. Long-term, we anticipate a significant improvement in municipal source water, reducing the need for added treatment and filtering, and therefore, reducing cost. Etc.

c. What are the indicators of success for how this project affects water conservation or quality? (250-word limit)

These can be qualitative or quantitative but should directly relate to your expected outcome on water conservation or quality improvement. If the indicators of success will not be measurable/demonstrable within the timeline of your project, describe what long-term changes would demonstrate that your project was successful.

EXAMPLE: We will take baseline water quality samples at the beginning of the project, and post-project samples at six months and one year to clearly demonstrate water quality improvements. Once we have the results, we will also add a water-quality graphic to the educational signage on-site, showing the longitudinal benefits of the project.

We will also measure success in terms of community engagement, and long-term volunteer participation in project monitoring and maintenance.

5. BASIN-WIDE BENEFIT (20%)

a. Recognizing that the Okanagan is one valley with one water, how does this project benefit the valley as a whole? (250-word limit)

EXAMPLE: This project is located in the main river channel of XX river, supplying water to the southern half of the valley. It runs directly along the main highway, and will be a highly visible project, showcasing the benefits of river restoration work. The flood mitigation benefits of the project will reduce flood risk to homeowners along the shoreline of XX Lake and will protect municipal infrastructure in the communities of XX, XXY and XXL downstream, which have all been affected by recent floods.

The water quality benefits of the project will most directly affect the City of XX's water intake in XX Lake but will also provide ecosystem services for adjacent and downstream communities, increase biodiversity and fish habitat, supporting the recovery of native salmon species, which culturally and economically benefit all communities in the Okanagan. Finally, this project is part of a larger effort to restore many stream sections in the valley and will lead both to a larger cumulative impact with similar projects, and to an increased water protection ethic within the communities of the valley.

b. Describe how your project can inform, inspire, or influence other similar work or projects in the Okanagan. (150-word limit)

EXAMPLE: The project scope, deliverables and monitoring can serve as a guide for other similar projects throughout the valley, and this information will be made publicly available through posting on the OBWB website. The education signage, including the longitudinal water monitoring story will help to inspire this ethic and future work in other areas. We are also collaborating with several partners who work at a regional and valley-wide scale. This network of partners is already discussing similar future works at three other high-priority sites throughout the valley.

c. Describe how this project complements current OBWB programs, projects, or activities. (150-word limit)

Visit obwb.ca to learn more about ongoing OBWB programs, projects, or activities, and review the OBWB Strategic Plan or Okanagan Water Sustainability Strategy to identify alignment with your project. https://www.obwb.ca/obwb-strategic-plan-2020-2024/

6. USE AND PROMOTION OF BEST PRACTICES (10%)

a. What are the best practices that will be used or promoted during this project? List the Sources of the Best Practices. (300-word limit)

In point-form, list the name and source of the best practice, and relate how it will be applied to the program. i.e., professional organizations, academic literature, government regulation? Include links where possible.

EXAMPLE: - US Department of Agriculture Guidance for Stream Restoration: https://www.fs.fed.us/biology/nsaec/assets/yochumusfs-nsaec-tn102-4guidancestreamrestoration.pdf This Guide will be used as a primary source of information

on the multiple considerations for planning and executing this restoration project. It is a comprehensive technical guide which will inform all aspects of the project, as it is one of the newest versions of a stream restoration guide provided by a senior government agency in North America. The Best Practices will be adapted to suit the Okanagan, and this specific project.

7. COLLABORATION (10%)

a. How does this project illustrate collaboration with other agencies or jurisdictions? (250-word limit)

EXAMPLE: This project has been ongoing for three years, with multiple agencies collaborating throughout that time. The project brought together a technical advisory committee representing local and senior government, First Nations, community groups, academia and other technical specialists who guided each stage of project development. The project objectives considered the stated goals of multiple partnering agencies, and the plan was developed with these goals in mind. Where any conflicting goals arose, partners were brought together to identify the best path forward. This final two stages of the project - involving signage, community engagement and ongoing monitoring and maintenance – will continue to be guide by the Technical Advisory Committee, with member organizations contributing as needed.

b. List project partners and indicate if they are committed or pending.

This section should be a simple point-form list with any clarifying remarks as necessary.

EXAMPLE: Project lead organization – Committed

Provincial Ministry of Water – Restoration Section - Committed

Federal Department of Water – Committed

City of XX – Committed

XX First Nation – Committed

XX Junior High School – Senior Science Class – Pending (must confirm each school year)

Lake XX Water Quality Society – Pending (members will sign up during open house)

Lake XX Fishing Club – Committed

8. BUDGET AND TIMELINE (15%)

a. Project Expenses
If this application is for one phase of a multi-phase project, list budget, funding, and timeline for the current phase only.

For each section, i – ix, simply list the rounded dollar amount anticipated. The amount listed in i should equal the sum of the amounts listed in ii – ix.

Please describe any expenses from ix. 'Other' in the text box provided.

b. Project funding

List all sources and amounts of anticipated project funding (in-kind and cash) and indicate if funding is pending or confirmed. This section should be a simple point-form list with any clarifying remarks as necessary. Note: matching cash funding or in-kind support is not required, but it does help to demonstrate partnerships.

c. Project/Current Timeline

If the project is multi-phase, list the timeline for the current phase only. Where applicable, Milestone dates should coincide with the Specific Steps listed in section 3.b., although it is up to the applicant to detail the timeline in a logical manner. List all major milestones under item ii.

Once your application is complete, please submit an electronic copy along with the required letter of support from local government and any other supporting documents to:

grants@obwb.ca

Applications must be received by 4:00 p.m. on the deadline date found on our website. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted. Please save and print a copy of the application for your records.

5. Terms and Payment of Grants

5.1 Successful Applicants
The OBWB may award partial funds to projects. Successful applicants will be notified in April and receive a Contribution Agreement that sets out the terms and conditions of the grant, including the amount awarded. The contribution agreement must be signed by a statutory officer or authorized financial signing authority of the organization and returned to grants@obwb.ca.

5.2 Terms and Conditions
- All grants are project-specific. Funds may not be transferred between projects or used for activities not outlined on the project application.
- Reporting requirements (see 5.3) must be met before funds can be disbursed.
- Significant delays or departures from the timeline submitted in the project application must be reported to grants@obwb.ca.

- Projects should be completed, including reporting requirements, by March 31 of the grant year. Projects which cannot be completed on this timeline must obtain a written extension in advance by contacting grants@obwb.ca or risk losing grant funding.

5.3 Reporting Requirements

Grant recipients are required to submit two reports in addition to any deliverables agreed upon in the contribution agreement:

- a mid-point report, due on or before September 30th of the grant year;
- final report, due on or before March 31 of the grant year; and
- if a project is granted an extension beyond the March 31st deadline, a second mid-point report is required by March 31st, with a final report due at project completion.

The WCQI grant program is funded with public money. The reporting requirements provide an opportunity for the public to see the progress of WCQI projects. Failure to adequately complete the reporting requirements may lead to delayed disbursement of funds and difficulty in receiving future grants. All report forms are available at https://www.obwb.ca/overview-grants/wcqi/application-information/.

5.4 Data Standards/Sharing Protocol

Projects that involve data collection or inventory must use the data standards provided by the Resource Information Standards Committee (RISC), a multi-agency committee responsible for establishing standards for natural resource inventories.

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/natural-resource-stewardship/laws-policies-standards-guidance/inventory-standards

All data must be made publicly available upon project completion.

5.5 Public Outreach Requirements

All grant recipients will be required to submit at least one news release about the grant, including acknowledgement of OBWB funding, to local news media, and forward the release to the grants@obwb.ca.

Recipients are encouraged to maintain a high public profile for their project throughout the process. The OBWB sees communication with residents of the valley as an important step in fostering a valley-wide water ethic. Recipients should pursue traditional (newspapers, radio, TV) and non-traditional media (online media, social media, etc.) when publicizing the project. Acknowledgement of OBWB funds helps get the word out regarding the grant program, encouraging future applications.

Please contact the OBWB if you would like additional background information on preparing press releases or outreach material.

5.6 Payment of Grants

Recipients may invoice the WCQI for the full amount upon completion of the project, or as follows:

- 25% at the start of the project, upon OBWB's receipt of the signed contribution agreement
- 25% (or 50% if the first 25% was not invoiced prior) upon submitting a satisfactory mid-point report
- 50% at the completion of the project, upon submission of a satisfactory final report and any deliverables agreed on in the contribution agreement

All invoicing for projects must be done using the standard WCQI invoice form. All forms are available at:

http://www.obwb.ca/overview-grants/wcqi/application-information/

FOR ANY QUESTIONS OR FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE WCQI GRANTS PROGRAM, CONTACT 250-469-6270 OR GRANTS@OBWB.CA.