

Applicant Guide

Indigenous Ministerial Arrangements Regulations (IMARs)

(Effective as of July 11, 2025)

1. Overview

The Indigenous Ministerial Arrangements Regulations (IMARs) is a component in the successful achievement of the Government of Canada's reconciliation objectives. It provides the opportunity for Indigenous governing bodies to participate in the regulatory process of federally regulated energy projects that fall under the *Canadian Energy Regulator Act (CERA)*. Sections 77 and 78 of the *CERA* state that the Minister of Natural Resources may enter into arrangements with Indigenous governing bodies for carrying out the purposes of this *Act* and may authorize any Indigenous governing body with whom an arrangement is entered into to exercise the powers or perform the duties and functions under this *Act* that are specified in the arrangement.

2. Ultimate Outcomes

- Enhancing Canada's regulatory efficiency by including Indigenous governing bodies in a meaningful way throughout the project lifecycle;
- Continuing to improve upon authentic and meaningful engagement led by Natural Resources Canada (NRCan);
- Contributing to Canada's commitments in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* Action Plan by creating opportunities to work in consultation and cooperation with First Nation, Métis, and Inuit communities, governments and organizations while developing the proposed IMARs; and
- Leveraging and aligning with partner organizations by exploring opportunities to enhance Indigenous governing bodies' participation in decision-making processes.

3. Objective

The objective of this funding is designed to provide financial supports and access to technical expertise to Indigenous groups that are interested in participating in the regulatory development process for IMARs.

Over the course of IMARs Phase 2 Engagement and Regulatory Design, NRCan will continue to gather input and feedback on the proposed regulations.

Applicants can expect that participation in the IMARs process will include but is not limited to the following activities:

- Participating in discussions to inform the scope of proposed regulations;
- Sharing written submissions or comments to NRCan; and
- Providing input to help inform the proposed regulations.

IMARs has **\$2,000,000** of funding from April 1, 2025, until March 31, 2026, available for participant funding as part of the planned engagement. NRCan receives a fixed annual budget for IMARs and

administers it to provide limited financial contributions to eligible recipients in a fair and transparent manner.

NRCan may not be able to cover all expenses incurred and participants are encouraged to investigate other sources of funding or in-kind support, such as collaborating with other Indigenous groups to share costs. Additional details regarding eligible recipients and expenditures can be found below in Section 6 – Eligibility.

4. Expected Results

The development of IMARs is following a five-phased approach, where Phase 1 was completed in 2022-2023. IMARs is in Phase 2 - Engagement and Regulatory Design whereby NRCan is seeking to engage with Indigenous groups to determine the extent to which they want to be involved in the regulatory development process and the overall considerations to help inform the development of regulations. For further details on each of the phases, please visit: [Proposed Indigenous Ministerial Arrangements Regulations – Phases of engagement - Natural Resources Canada](#).

5. IMARs 2025-2026 Engagement Plan

The development of IMARs relies on ongoing engagement and dialogue with Indigenous groups. Recipients are responsible to effectively carry out their obligations under these guidelines and their contribution agreements.

Funding Streams and Eligible Activities

Recipients must:

- Ensure that expenditures are in accordance with the eligible activities found in the table below. Eligible expenditures are set out in Section 6 of the Applicant Guide and stated in their respective contribution agreement.

NRCan is offering **three streams** of funding for participation in engagement activities in fiscal year 2025-26 as part of Phase 2 to remain flexible with Indigenous groups' engagement needs and processes:

Stream 1	Stream 2	Stream 3
(Up to \$25,000)	(Up to \$35,000)	(Up to \$100,000)
<u>Eligible Activities:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel to and/or participate in NRCan-hosted sessions to discuss IMARs; • Obtain professional services (e.g., legal or technical specialists, consultants); • Other activities (e.g. build community capacity), upon approval, deemed necessary to ensure 	<u>Eligible Activities:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel to and/or participate in NRCan-hosted sessions to discuss IMARs; • Host session(s) and/or other form(s) of engagement (e.g. surveys, etc.) for less than 10 Indigenous groups OR for your own community and/or invite neighbouring groups; 	<u>Eligible Activities:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host large regional session(s) (minimum of 10 Indigenous groups invited); • Obtain professional services (e.g., legal or technical specialists, consultants); • Other activities (e.g. build community capacity), upon approval, deemed necessary to ensure

meaningful participation in the potential development of IMARs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain professional services (e.g., legal or technical specialists, consultants); • Other activities (e.g. build community capacity), upon approval, deemed necessary to ensure meaningful participation in the potential development of IMARs. 	meaningful participation in the potential development of IMARs.
<u>Expected Commitments from Recipients:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend NRCan-hosted sessions • Share a written submission • Provide input to help inform the proposed regulations 	<u>Expected Commitments from Recipients:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend NRCan-hosted sessions • Host session(s) and/or other forms(s) of engagement (e.g., surveys, etc.) • Share a written submission • Provide input to help inform the proposed regulations • Develop a Meeting Record/Summary for community-hosted meeting 	<u>Expected Commitments from Recipients:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host large regional session(s) • Lead on coordination and facilitation of session • Lead on communications with participants • Provide input to help inform the proposed regulations • Regular status update meetings with NRCan • Develop a detailed Meeting Summary • Share a written submission

IMARs 2025-2026 Engagement Schedule

NRCan plans to hold the following engagement activities in 2025-26:

Date	Location and Time	Type of Session	Audience
November 4, 2025	Ottawa (9-4pm EST)	In-person	Chief and Council, Leadership and NRCan senior management
Week of November 10, 2025	MS Teams (12-3pm EST)	Virtual	All
Week of November 17, 2025	MS Teams (12-3pm EST)	Virtual	All

December 2, 2025	Regina (9-4pm CST)	In-person	All
Week of January 5, 2026	Edmonton (9-4pm MST)	In-person	All
Week of January 5, 2026	Edmonton Métis Session (9-4pm MST)	In-person	All interested Métis groups
Week of January 12, 2026	Vancouver (9-4pm PST)	In-person	All

Please note that all in-person sessions are expected to follow a similar format though there may be adjustments based on feedback heard from Indigenous groups. All virtual sessions are also expected to follow a similar format.

IMARs 2025-2026 Timeline

Quarter 2 (July – September 2025)	Quarter 3 (October – December 2025)	Quarter 4 (January – March 2026)
Application Period: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> July 11 – September 26, 2025 Application Assessment Period: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> July 11 – October 10, 2025 IMARs Funding Information Sessions (virtual): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> July 24: Register here Aug. 21: Register here Sept. 9: Register here 	Finalize CAs for Signature <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sept. 29 – Oct. 24, 2025 Engagement Period <ul style="list-style-type: none"> November 2025 – Early January 2026 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 in-person sessions 2 virtual sessions Comment Period (to submit written feedback) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early November 2025 – Late January 2026 	Comment Period (to submit written feedback) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early November 2025 – Late January 2026 Provide input to help inform the regulatory proposal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> March 9-31, 2026 Eligible Expenditure Period for Contribution Agreements Ends <ul style="list-style-type: none"> March 31, 2026 Final Reporting Period <ul style="list-style-type: none"> March 31 – May 31, 2026

Preparing a Written Submission for NRCan

All recipients of the IMARs Participant Funding program will be asked to prepare and share a written submission with NRCan to provide feedback that could inform the proposed regulations.

NRCan will provide recipients with an official written submission template to complete in advance of the Comment Period (Early-November 2025 – Late January 2026).

6. Eligibility

Please review this section of the applicant guide to ensure that you are an **eligible recipient**, and to read more on the **eligible activities** and **eligible expenditures**.

Eligible Recipients

Eligible recipients include:

- Indigenous communities or governments;
- Tribal Councils or entities that fulfill a similar function (e.g., general council);
- National and regional Indigenous councils, and tribal organizations; and
- Indigenous (majority owned and controlled by Indigenous people) for-profit and not-for-profit organizations.

Eligible Expenditures

Eligible expenditures include:

1. Travel expenses, including accommodation meal and incidental allowances, based on [National Joint Council rates](#);
2. Professional fees (including legal fees);
3. Salaries and wages;
 - Salaries and wages typically refers to time spent working on IMARs by salaried employees that is over and above regular daily activities;
4. Rental of office space/meeting rooms;
5. Telecommunication charges;
6. Communication materials;
7. Hospitality, honoraria and ceremonial costs;
 - Honoraria and ceremonial costs typically refers to costs associated with providing Indigenous traditional or community knowledge relevant to the engagement activity;
 - *The recipient to whom honoraria is provided cannot be in receipt of a salary or any other direct income for the activity for which an honorarium is claimed;*
8. Purchase, lease or rental of equipment (including monitoring equipment, computer/IT equipment and software), including all related and necessary costs;
9. GST, PST or HST, net of any tax rebate to which the recipient is entitled;
10. Overhead expenditures, provided that they are directly related to the conduct of IMARs work and can be attributed to it. Overhead expenditures may be included in the total project costs to a maximum of 15% of eligible expenditures.
 - Overhead expenditures include:
 - Administrative support provided directly to the project by the recipients employee(s), valued on the same basis as professional staff time;
 - Overhead expenditures typically refers to administrative work required to participate in IMARs (e.g., financial tracking/reporting, communication, and logistics); and
 - Heat, hydro and office operating costs (e.g. Internet, telephone).

Ineligible Expenditures

Costs that are not eligible include:

- Costs and expenses incurred prior to April 1, 2025;
- Costs related to on-going business; and
- Costs related to lobbying.

7. Assessment Criteria

Applications will be individually assessed based on specific criteria and information provided. NRCan will assess all applications based on applicant eligibility, eligible activities and the merit criteria listed below when making funding decisions.

Applications will be assessed based on the following criteria:

- Alignment with objectives of Phase 2 of IMARs (as outlined in Section 3 - Objectives);
- Alignment with eligibility requirements (as outlined in Section 6 - Eligibility)
- Feasibility of proposed activities (timelines, number of individuals and/or groups involved);
- Financial viability (value for contribution, reasonable costs);
- Risk (complexity of proposed activities, timelines); and
- Availability of contributions budget.

8. Required Information

In order to adequately assess applications, NRCan requires the following information to render a funding decision:

- a) A completed IMARs Participant Application Form
- b) Supporting documentation, if required
- c) Completed reporting requirements from 2024-25 IMARs Contribution Agreement, if applicable

Supporting documentation can include:

- Documentation that shows confirmation and/or support if you are submitting a funding application on behalf of a partnership (e.g., a Band Council Resolution, Letter of Support, etc.)
 - **NOTE:** This documentation is **only required if** you selected “yes” for Question 3A in the IMARs Participant Application Form

9. Application Instructions and Approvals Process

To apply to the IMARs engagement participant funding, please follow the step-by-step instructions below:

- 1) Submit your completed application form via email to imar-rama@nrcan-rncan.gc.ca **no later than September 26, 2025. Application forms can be found online here: [hyperlink].**

- 2) NRCan will review the application form and contact you for further information if needed. Please ensure to have your contact details up to date in your application.
- 3) Funding decisions will be finalized once the application period is over, and all applications have been assessed.
- 4) Approved projects will be published on the [Proactive disclosure](#) webpage on Canada.ca.

If you wish to attend an “IMARs 2025-26 Virtual Funding Information Session”, you may register to any of the following workshops:

- July 24, 2025: [Register here](#), 1-2pm EST
- August 21, 2025: [Register here](#), 1-2pm EST
- September 9, 2025: [Register here](#), 1-2pm EST

Note: If you have an active IMARs Contribution Agreement in 2024-25, please ensure to complete all final reporting requirements to be eligible for a new Contribution Agreement in 2025-26.

10. Payment & Reporting Information

Should funding be approved, the applicant will be notified by NRCan via email. The notification will include information detailing the total amount of approved funding and next steps to finalize a Contribution Agreement. A Contribution Agreement is a document that outlines the amount of funding NRCan will provide towards eligible project costs as well as the recipient's responsibilities and obligations.

The Contribution Agreement includes conditions of payment. There are three ways that funds can be provided to the Recipient: advance payments, reimbursement/final payments, or retroactive payments.

Advance Payments

Advance payments may be provided to recipients where they can demonstrate a cash flow requirement for funding to be provided prior to incurring eligible expenditures.

Reimbursements/Final Payments

Reimbursement/final payments can only be issued once all work plan activities have been completed and upon receipt and acceptance of all required final reports, which includes a financial summary report that outlines eligible costs incurred and a narrative report. Please note that no new IMARs Contribution Agreement for the following year can be signed until all final reports have been accepted by NRCan.

Retroactive Payments

Recipients can begin to incur eligible expenditures once notification of IMARs Phase 2 funding has been received, however eligible expenditures can only be reimbursed once a Contribution Agreement is signed. Retroactive expenditures will be reimbursed up to 100% of the contribution in that fiscal year (April 1, 2025 – March 31, 2026) when deemed appropriate. The claims for retroactive payment must include supporting documentation.

All eligible expenditures listed in the section entitled “Eligible Expenditures” will be eligible for

retroactive payment. NRCan will issue payments once it is satisfied that the retroactive expenditures are directly related to the costs incurred for the development of IMARs. **Only applications that proceed to Contribution Agreements will be eligible to claim retroactive eligible expenditures incurred.**

Monitoring & Reporting Mechanisms

The Recipient may be requested to submit claim forms and reports in sufficient detail to enable the Department to:

- carry out the post-completion monitoring called for in the funding arrangement; and
- evaluate the effectiveness of the contributions.

These claim forms and reports typically consist of:

- 1) Financial Summary Report; and
- 2) Final Narrative Report.

NRCan provides templates to recipients once a Contribution Agreement has been approved and shared for signature.

Recipients are required to keep their claim forms and reports for three years from the time they incur their expenses as stipulated in the contribution agreement.

11. Contact Information

NRCan is accepting applications between July 11, 2025, and September 26, 2025.

To find out more, please visit the Indigenous Ministerial Arrangements Regulations web page (<http://natural-resources.canada.ca/indigenous-regulations>).

Should you need additional information or have specific questions regarding IMARs Participant Funding, you can also write to:

Indigenous Ministerial Arrangements Regulations – Règlement sur les accords ministériels autochtones

imar-rama@nrcan-rncan.gc.ca

12. Definitions

“Indigenous” is understood to include Inuit, Métis, First Nation, Status Indian and non-Status Indian individuals or any combination thereof.

“Indigenous governing body” Under the *CER Act*, an Indigenous governing body is defined as a council, government or other entity that is authorized to act on behalf of an Indigenous group, community, or people that holds rights recognized and affirmed by section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, [Canadian Energy Regulator Act \(justice.gc.ca\)](http://www.justice.gc.ca/cear/cear.html)

“Recipient” refers to a successful applicant that has entered into a contribution agreement with NRCan.