

UPDATED GRANT APPLICATION GUIDE

PROGRAM STREAM: REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT (RTE)

1. About the Program

The Economic Trust of the Southern Interior BC (ETSI-BC) recognizes the continued challenges that residents of the Southern Interior face in accessing safe, reliable passenger transportation options. This funding is made available thanks to financial support from the Province of BC, through the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI).

The ETSI-BC Regional Transportation Enhancement (RTE) Program provides non-repayable grants to support strategic investments that will enhance transportation plans, partnerships, technology, service communication and seasonal connections between communities in the Southern Interior of BC. The primary focus of this funding program is enhancing transportation opportunities in Indigenous, smaller and more rural communities that may currently have little or no transportation access.

A total of \$650,000.00 is available to fund projects delivered between January 1, 2024 and October 15, 2024. The following three funding streams form part of the RTE Program (additional information provided in Section 6 – Eligible Projects):

RTE 1 – Planning & Partnership Development

- Supports planning studies and partnership development in support of improving transportation options and addressing transportation gaps.

RTE 2 – Technology & Service Communication

- Supports the delivery of technology and service communication initiatives to improve how transportation options are operated and or communicated.

RTE 3 – Seasonal Service Delivery/Expansion

- Supports the delivery of seasonal service and/or expansion to existing local, regional, or inter-regional ground passenger transportation services within the Southern Interior.
- ETSI-BC is currently working with MoTI and BC Transit to understand the applicability of this stream to existing BC Transit and Health Connection services in the region. Please contact our project consultant if you are considering this stream and have questions.
- If you are considering piloting a change to a BC Transit or Health Connection services, please contact your BC Transit Government Relations Manager to discuss the feasibility of the project.

2. Program Objectives

The RTE Funding Program seeks to address a portion of the funding recommendations identified in the [BC Southern Interior Regional Ground Transportation Study final report](#). Specifically, we hope to

- Address local, regional, or inter-regional gaps in seasonal service.
- Assist First Nations communities and other small communities located at a distance from services and amenities that are located in larger hub communities or off major highway corridors.
- Build on Health and Tourism transportation services already offered to the general public in the Southern Interior.
- Contribute to strengthening and diversifying the economy of the Southern Interior through enhanced connections.

3. Who Can Apply

Applicants must be located in the [ETSI-BC service area](#). The applicant must be financially solvent and current with their annual Federal and/or Provincial filings. The types of organizations eligible to apply for ETSI-BC funding include:

- Registered First Nations bands, wholly owned Indigenous development corporations, tribal councils and Metis organizations
- Local governments (municipalities and regional districts) and their associated economic development organizations
- Registered non-profit organizations serving the region, such as:
 - Chambers of Commerce, Community Futures
 - Indigenous business support organizations
 - Industry associations (eg tourism groups)
 - Other community organizations (eg volunteer driver programs, car shares)
- Post-secondary institutions, as long as they partner with another eligible applicant from the list above.
- Incorporated for-profit businesses or transportation providers, as long as they partner with an eligible applicant from the list above for the project (eg ski resorts, businesses with employee shuttles).

NOTES:

- If you are not sure whether your organization is eligible to apply for funding from ETSI-BC, please contact our Transportation Project Consultant
- Private individuals, sole proprietorships and religious institutions are not eligible to apply for ETSI-BC funding.

4. Key Project Requirements

A total of \$650,000.00 is available to fund projects to be carried out between January 1, 2024 and October 15, 2024. The three RTE funding streams have the following maximum funding limit and leveraging requirements:

- RTE 1 – Planning & Partnership Development – up to a maximum of \$25K, 100% funded.*
- RTE 2 – Technology & Service Communication – up to a maximum of \$25K, 100% funded.*
- RTE 3 – Seasonal Service Delivery/Expansion – up to a maximum of \$65K, 80% funded.*

**These maximum funding amounts may be increased based on demonstration of need. Please contact us if this is the case in your community.*

Other key project requirements:

- Where additional funds are required to cover project costs, leveraging of additional funding through partner and/or in-kind contributions is encouraged.
- Individual organizations (Applicant) can only submit one application; however, a community may submit more than one initiative for consideration with multiple organizations.
- Multiple projects may be considered from a single community, provided that leveraging is in place commensurate with the combined size of the projects, which cannot exceed \$65,000.
- Eligible and qualified projects will be reviewed by the ETSI-BC for a decision in the first half of December 2023.
- Funds will be released in full as of January 1, 2024 to successful applicants for RTE 1 and 2. For RTE 3, 80% of funds will be released as of January 1, 2024, with the final 20% released upon submission of the final report.
- Applicants or their project partner (if required) under RTE 3 must possess an existing passenger transportation license to operate the proposed service.

5. Application Intake Deadlines

The RTE Program will be delivered through a single intake. Applicants must complete and submit the funding application by October 18th, 2023. Any applications received after this date will not be considered.

Supporting documentation, particularly for applications submitted under RTE 3, may be provided after October 18th, 2024.

Information sessions were held on September 12 and September 13, 2023.** [CLICK HERE to view the recording.](#) **

6. Eligible Projects

The following types of activities are eligible to be funded by the RTE Program :

RTE 1 – Planning & Partnership Development

This funding stream is intended to provide capacity for planning studies and partnership development in support of improving transportation options and addressing transportation gaps. This stream funds 100% of eligible costs up to a maximum of \$25,000.

Leveraging of additional funding is encouraged. Should the funding intake be oversubscribed, priority will be given to projects with higher leveraging, and it will also be prioritized to eligible projects which will positively impact First Nations Communities, smaller communities located at a distance from hub communities or off major highway corridors, and projects aimed to support healthcare access and tourism in the Southern Interior.

Examples of projects under the RTE 1 stream include but are not limited to:

- Explore the feasibility of ride-hailing and on-demand transit solutions in smaller and lower density communities.
- Undertake a study to determine options for how to make airport taxi and/or shuttle services more viable to support residents and visitors.
- Develop transportation funding and decision-making partnerships in a particular community or region, such as by undertaking a partnership development process and undertaking meetings and outreach required to develop partnership strategies related to more collaboratively planning funding, coordinating, operating, communicating and marketing improved transportation options.
- Undertake a collaborative process which includes organizing and administering a series of meetings with critical partners to review Governance of service delivery, discuss strategies to better position communities for funding opportunities and confirm major gaps in service within the Region.

RTE 2 – Technology & Service Communication

This program stream is intended to provide capacity for the delivery of technology and service communication initiatives to improve how transportation options are operated and or communicated. These may apply to existing or new transportation options. may be existing or new. The stream funds 100% of eligible costs up to a maximum of \$25,000.

Leveraging of additional funding is encouraged. Should the funding intake be oversubscribed, priority will be given to projects with higher leveraging, and it will also be prioritized to eligible projects which will positively impact First Nations Communities, smaller communities located at a distance from hub communities or off major highway corridors, and projects aimed to support healthcare access and tourism in the Southern Interior.

Examples of projects under RTE 2 stream include but are not limited to:

- Technology platforms that would enable a service provider to better coordinate and communicate services.

- Marketing and promotion of services to increase public awareness of available transportation options, including marketing tools and campaigns as well as minor infrastructure improvements like signage and wayfinding.
- Technology platforms that would enhance customer experience, such as booking, accessing and coordinating travel.

RTE 3 – Seasonal Service Delivery/Expansion

This program stream is intended to provide capacity for the delivery of seasonal service or expansion to existing local, regional, or inter-regional services within the Southern Interior. This stream funds up to 80% of eligible costs up to a maximum of \$65,000.

Should the funding intake be oversubscribed, priority will be given to projects with higher leveraging, and it will prioritize eligible projects which address the local, regional, or inter-regional gaps in service defined in the Regional Ground Transportation Study of the Southern Interior. It will also prioritize eligible projects which will positively impact First Nations Communities, smaller communities located at a distance from hub communities or off major highway corridors, and projects aimed to support healthcare access and tourism in the Southern Interior.

Applicants or their project partner (if required) under RTE 3 must possess an existing passenger transportation license to operate the proposed service. Preference will be given to applicants/partners who have a minimum of one (1) year experience operating transportation services within British Columbia and who have existing passenger transportation licenses.

Applicants requiring a project partner as per Section 3 will be required to demonstrate how each partner will:

- Support the application.
- Participate in the planning and execution of the service.
- Contribute to the service, either financially or through in-kind contributions.
- Benefit from the service.

Examples of projects under RTE 3 stream include but are not limited to:

- Expansion of service frequency where services are operating on a limited basis, such as by operating more trips per day or more days per week.
- Improved transportation options (community shuttles, volunteer driver programs, scheduled services, etc.) to increase access to medical services, nearby larger centres, airports or tourism destinations.
- Improved transportation options (community shuttles, volunteer driver programs, scheduled services, etc.) to connect currently-unserved communities to other existing transportation links, such as from a rural area or smaller community to a highway corridor or larger centre where inter-regional services operate.

Ineligible Projects

The following projects are not eligible for funding:

- Exclusively capital projects
- Projects that benefit a narrow geographic area or have a limited impact
- Projects that are not ground transportation related (i.e. air or water)

7. Eligible & Ineligible Costs

Eligible Costs

RTE 1 Planning & Partnership Development Projects:

- Incremental Staff Expenses: Salary and benefits for ongoing work to undertake the proposed project (within the specified timeframe).
- Third Party Services: Third party project-related costs including consulting fees, travel expenses, reports, printing, postage, or data.
- Legal services: Project-related costs for drafting agreements.
- Marketing/Promotion: Marketing or promotion-related costs, collateral, and outreach (e.g., awareness program)
- Meeting / Workshop Related: Minor costs related to hosting and facilitating any larger meetings, workshops or public engagement directly related to the project, such as space rental, materials, etc.
- Other: Project-related technology - computer, communications and audio or video equipment rental.

RTE 2 – Technology & Service Communication Projects:

- Technology Implementation Costs: Costs associated with implementation of a technology platform (i.e., mobile apps, web services, telephone booking systems).
- Incremental Staff Expenses: Salary and benefits for ongoing work to undertake the proposed project (within the specified timeframe).
- Third Party Services: Third party project-related costs including consulting fees, travel expenses, reports, printing, postage, or data.
- Legal services: Project-related costs for drafting agreements.
- Marketing/Promotion: Marketing or promotion-related costs, collateral, and outreach (e.g., awareness program, signage, printing, meeting costs etc.)
- Other: Project-related technology - computer, communications and audio or video equipment rental.

RTE 3 – Seasonal Service Delivery/Expansion Projects:

- Incremental Staff Expenses: Wages and benefits for drivers delivering the transportation services (within the specified project timeframe) as well as staff costs for those in supporting

roles that may be required, such as dispatch, administration, etc.

- **Vehicle Operating Costs:** Vehicle-related operating costs for the service, including tires, fuel and insurance, maintenance (labour, parts, inspections), vehicle cleaning and any costs associated with vehicle lease or usage fees.
- **Other Operating Costs:** Lease or rental fees associated with space required to operate the service (office, vehicle storage), driver training, radios/communications.
- **Rental equipment:** Rented equipment required to deliver services.
- **Third Party Services:** Third party project-related costs including consulting fees to assist in the design and implementation of service, travel expenses, reports, printing, postage, or data.
- **Legal services:** Includes costs for drafting agreements.
- **Marketing/Promotion:** Marketing or promotion-related costs, collateral, and outreach (e.g., awareness program, printing, signage, meeting costs)
- **Other:** Project-related technology – computer, communications and audio or video equipment rental.

NOTE:

- Applicants should seek confirmation of eligibility of costs if not specified in this list prior to submission.

Ineligible Costs - ALL FUNDING STREAMS:

- Wages for existing staff or staff funded through other government programs
- Supplementary wages/contract fees on an existing contract
- Office equipment (i.e., desk, computer, cell phone), other than those specifically related to transportation dispatch and driver communication in RTE 3)
- Living expenses or car allowance
- Hospitality costs – alcohol
- Purchase of equipment or tools
- Costs incurred prior to the project approval date set out in the Contribution Agreement
- Costs not specifically approved in the project budget
- Project administration costs that exceed 10% of approved project budget

NOTE:

In-kind contributions are not eligible for funding or reimbursement but can be included in the total project costs and therefore included in the leveraged dollar calculation. They should be noted in the Project Participant section of the application to demonstrate commitment from other partners.

8. Application and Program Requirements

The completed Application Form MUST be submitted by 4 pm Pacific time on October 18, 2023, with other supplemental materials ideally provided by that time or as a follow up. Only applications that meet all requirements will be processed. Funding will not be disbursed for any successful projects until all supplementary materials are provided and accepted by ETSI-BC. The following components are part of the application:

- Completed Application Form (available on the ETSI-BC website as of September 18, 2023)
- Detailed project budget using the ETSI-BC Project Budget Template
- Verification of approval from other funding sources (copy of approval letter or contract).
- Most recent annual financial statements may be required
- Society certificate of incorporation (required for non-profit applicants).
- If applicable: Detailed quotes for consultant services, software costs, etc.
- If applicable: Letters of support from community organizations.
- If applicable: Copy of passenger transportation license.
- If applicable: Lease agreement/or user agreement.
- If applicable: Financial plan, business case or other market research.
- If applicable: Partnership agreement(s) outlining each partner's responsibilities.

NOTES:

- Applications approved for funding under RTE 3 will be required to provide proof of commercial vehicle insurance through ICBC to trigger initial payment. Once operational, successful applicants will also need to supply to ETSI-BC copies of driver's licenses.
- All personal information provided by the applicant will be protected by ETSI-BC as per all relevant privacy regulations as outlined in our [Privacy Statement](#).

9. Assessment Criteria

Some of the key criteria on which applications will be assessed include:

- Identified need/opportunity
- Quality of workplan
- Collaboration with other organizations, including First Nations and local government
- Project is supported by prior planning and research
- Coordination with the economic development function in your community, as well as community social initiatives and planning
- Leveraging of other funding
- Applicant's capacity to manage staff and oversee project
- Project's ability to maximize social and/or economic benefits, including employment creation

- Inclusivity and accessibility, including the project’s potential to accommodate youth, seniors, persons with disabilities, and other diverse equity groups
- Regional impact, geographic dispersion of services throughout the Southern Interior
- Direct economic benefit to smaller communities and First Nations
- Degree of coordination with other transportation modes and connections (in the case of RTE 3).

10. Project Communication and Reporting

Applicants will be required to attend the reporting Info Session and adhere to the following communication and project reporting activities as a condition of grant approval:

FUNDING STREAM	REPORT	FREQUENCY/DUE DATE
ALL	ETSI-BC Reporting Info Session	Date TBD, early 2024
RTE 1 – Planning & Partnership Development	Interim Project Report (to March 31, 2024)	April 15, 2024
	Final Cumulative Project Report	October 30, 2024
RTE 2 – Technology & Service Communication	Interim Project Report	April 15, 2024
	Final Cumulative Project Report	October 30, 2024
RTE 3 – Seasonal Service Delivery/Expansion	Monthly Service Summary Report	First Monday of each calendar month
	Interim Project Report	April 15, 2024
	Final Cumulative Project Report	October 30, 2024

NOTES:

- Should an incident occur during the approved project, a written description of the incident and actions taken must be forwarded to ETSI-BC within 48 hours.
- Acknowledge ETSI-BC in any public communication about the project
- Successful applicants will be expected to complete a short mandatory training session on project reporting before an initial payment is released.

11. Required Affirmations

Applicants will be required to provide affirmations and attest that:

- The information is accurate and complete, and that the project proposal, including plans and budgets, are fairly presented.
- The project application is signed by an authorized signatory of the applicant organization.
- Affirmation that the organization is financially solvent, is compliant with all relevant federal and provincial filings, and has the capacity to carry out the project.
- Once funding is approved, the applicant agrees that changes to the project will require prior approval of ETSI-BC.
- Information provided in the application form may be shared with ETSI-BC Board, Committee and staff members, Province of BC, and/or the public in the ETSI-BC Annual Report and other publications.

- The applicant authorizes ETSI-BC to make enquiries of persons, firms, corporations, federal and provincial government agencies/departments and non-profit organizations operating in the organization's field of activities, to collect and share information with them, as ETSI-BC deems necessary, in order to reach a decision on the application, to administer and monitor the implementation of the project and to evaluate results after project completion.
- The applicant agrees to submit project updates, financial reporting and photos as required by ETSI-BC on the funded project.
- The applicant authorizes ETSI-BC to use photos and information about the project on their website and in their publications.
- Commitment to publicly acknowledge funding and assistance by ETSI-BC.
- Affirmation that the organization has a policy of supporting Indigenous reconciliation and partnerships, diversity, and inclusion.
- Name and email of authorized signatory and banking information will be provided on a timely basis to expedite disbursement of funding.

QUESTIONS BEFORE APPLYING?

Email: info@etsi-bc.ca

Phone: 236.420.3680

Website: www.etsi-bc.ca