



United for a Stronger Trail System

Guidelines for Completing Grant Applications

OVERVIEW

The National Trails Coalition (NTC) is the operating name for the Coalition of Canadian Trails Organizations, a federally incorporated not-for-profit organization. Its members are: **Canadian Council of Snowmobile Organizations (CCSO)**, **Canadian Off-Highway Vehicle Distributors Council (COHV)**, and **Canadian Trails Federation (CTF)**. The NTC was founded in 2007 based on a common belief that cooperative approaches and support at the national level would facilitate trail building and refurbishment activities; be beneficial to the long term sustainability of all forms of trail-based activities; and stimulate economic activity and development in communities across the country.

The NTC received a \$10 million dollar investment from the Government of Canada in **Budget 2014: Canada's Economic Action Plan**. These federal dollars must be matched by cash contributions from NTC member organizations or their partners.

Aside from delivering a much needed boost to the recreational trails sector in Canada, this program is intended to create jobs in the near term and a lasting platform upon which more jobs can be created in the future.

The purpose of this document is to provide member organizations with information that will be helpful when preparing their grant application.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is my organization eligible?

In order to be eligible for the NTC Grant Program, an organization must be a member in good standing of one of the following organizations:

- A provincial-territorial organization recognized by the Canadian Council of Snowmobile Organizations (CCSO) or one of its members' clubs;
- A provincial-territorial rider federation recognized by the Canadian Off-Highway Vehicle Distributors' Council and/or of the Motorcyclists Confederation of Canada (MCC) or the ATV & Quad Council of Canada (AQCC), or one of its provincial-territorial affiliates; and
- The Canadian Trails Federation (CTF) or one of its provincial territorial members.

For a list of the members of the above organizations in each province and territory, please go to the NTC website: www.ntc-canada.ca

Does my project meet the eligibility criteria?

Projects involving construction, upgrade, renovation or rehabilitation of multi-purpose trails, non-motorized trails, snowmobile trails and all-terrain vehicle / off-road motorcycle trails are eligible. More specifically these projects include:

- New trail construction;
- Trail upgrade/improvement;
- Bridge and water crossing installation and upgrade;
- Trail signage installation;
- Trail surveying and tracking; and,
- Trail rehabilitation.

Can my project be completed by December 31, 2015?

This funding program applies to the 2014-2016 fiscal years. As such, projects should be “shovel ready” and of a scope and size that can be completed within these fiscal years by the successful applicant.

Projects that have an overall timeline of more than the 2014-2016 timeframe may be partially eligible if a clearly identified phase of the overall project can be started and completed within the timelines of this funding program.

Does my application meet the mandatory requirements listed on the application form?

Applicants must meet the mandatory requirements set out on the application form including the following:

- Evidence that project proponent's incorporation status is in good standing;
- Proof of Directors & Officers insurance;
- Proof of Comprehensive General Liability insurance;
- Evidence that all legislated environmental assessment and protection requirements have been satisfied;
- Letter of support from the provincial trail organization related to the trail project category selected.

Why do I need to specify a category for my trail project?

The NTC has committed to the Government of Canada that it will strive to invest one-third of the funding in each of the following categories: snowmobile, ATV/ORM and non-motorized trail projects. Therefore it is important to select which pot of money you wish to apply for.

There may be an opportunity to apportion your project to both the snowmobile and ATV/ORM categories if your trail project permits both of these uses and if you obtain letters of support from the provincial trails organizations related to both of those categories. However, the non-motorized category will be generally for non-motorized trail projects.

What happens if the total amount requested for project funding is greater than there is funding available in the category we selected?

All projects will be ranked in order within their category. In the event that there are insufficient funds allocated to meet all of the needs in a particular category, the NTC Board of Directors has the authority to re-allocate funds from another category where there are surplus funds. In this case the next project in order would be approved for funding.

Why do I need a Letter of Support from a provincial / territorial trails organization?

It is important that you communicate with the appropriate provincial or territorial trails organization that relates to the category for your project. These organizations are aware of trail activities throughout your province or territory and they will be able to assist you in assessing the strategic significance of your project. Their letter of support will be a strong endorsement for your project.

What sources of matching funds are eligible?

The maximum amount of funding for this program from the federal government is 50%. If your project has other funding commitments from federal government sources then that federal funding will reduce the amount that your project may receive under this program. However, funding from other levels of government is eligible as matching funds including provincial / territorial and municipal governments. Foundations, corporations and individual donors are other potential sources of matching funds.

Are in-kind contributions considered eligible contributions?

In-kind contributions can be attributed to the overall value of a project and should therefore be included in your application. However, in-kind contributions will not qualify as matching funds.

What costs are eligible?

Eligible costs include only the following:

- a) the capital costs of constructing, rehabilitating, upgrading or renovating trails;
- b) the costs of joint communication activities (press releases, press conferences, translation, etc.) and signage recognition;
- c) the costs of surveying, engineering, architectural supervision, testing and management consulting services, including but not limited to fees paid to professionals, technical personnel, consultants and contractors;
- d) the costs of labour, materials, licenses or permits and equipment rental, for the refurbishment and construction of trails;
- e) the costs of labour, materials, licenses or permits and equipment rental, for the refurbishment and construction of water crossings, including but not limited to bridges;
- f) the costs of engineering and environmental reviews, including environmental assessments and follow-up programs as defined in the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act 2012* and the costs of remedial activities, mitigation measures and follow-up identified in any environmental assessment;
- g) the costs of economic impact studies;
- h) costs of purchasing and installing signage for trails, including regulatory, safety, directional, interpretive, and trailhead signage;
- i) costs of Aboriginal consultation; and,
- j) other costs that are considered by NTC to be direct and necessary for the successful implementation of your project.

Eligible Expenditures can begin to accrue effective as of the signing date of a Contribution Agreement but must be incurred on or before the Project Completion Date.

What costs are ineligible?

The following costs are ineligible:

- costs incurred prior to the signing date of your approved Contribution Agreement;
- costs incurred after the project completion date;
- the cost of developing a business case or proposal for funding;
- the cost of purchasing land and associated real estate and other fees;
- financing charges and interest payments on loans;
- leasing land, buildings and other facilities;
- the purchase or long-term lease of snowmobiles, ATVs, trail grooming machines, construction equipment or other recreational vehicles;
- the cost of any goods and services which are received through donations or in kind;
- costs relating to services delivered directly by permanent employees of the applicant, except in cases where the applicant can demonstrate value for money and that the costs are incremental;
- provincial / territorial sales tax and GST / HST, for which the applicant is eligible for a rebate, and any other costs eligible for rebates; and
- legal fees.

How will my application be assessed?

Consistent national criteria have been formulated to assist the members of Regional Advisory Committees (RACs) to rank projects in a fair manner when compared to other projects within each of the three categories (snowmobile, ATV/ORM and non-motorized). National Program Administrators (NPAs) will assist the members of the RACs. Each RAC will meet to determine which projects from each of the three categories for their province or territory will be recommended to the NTC Board of Directors for funding approval.

When will I hear about the result of my application?

NTC will make every effort to complete the assessment of applications and advise all applicants by mid to late September 2014.

APPLICATION SCREENING & ASSESSMENT PROCESS

To ensure that applications meet the overall program objectives of NTC, a Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) will be formed in each province and territory to act as a peer review mechanism. RACs will prioritize and recommend projects to the NTC Board of Directors for funding approval.

Applicants should note that there is no guarantee that your project will be approved. It is important that your application is clear and complete. The NPA for your organization is available to assist you if you have any questions during the application process. Applications will be reviewed, points will be assessed and projects will be ranked within each category based on the criteria listed below.

Project Ranking Criteria

Below is a summary of the criteria that will be used to assess your application. All non-motorized projects will be compared only with other non-motorized projects so that we will be comparing “apples with apples”. Each item is addressed in more detail in the balance of this section.

	<u>Maximum Points</u>
1. Trail management expertise;	20
2. Emphasis on employment;	15
3. Other funds raised as a percentage of total project costs;	5
4. Demonstration of economic benefits;	10
5. Respect for the environment and sustainable trail development;	10
6. Preference for shared and mixed use trail projects;	10
7. Significance of trail system; and	10
8. Overall assessment of the project.	<u>10</u>
Total:	90

1. Trail Management Expertise (20 points)

This program is designed for projects that can be completed by December 31, 2015 at the latest. Accordingly it is important that applicants are experienced in trail construction, upgrading, renovation and rehabilitation. Applications that demonstrate previous experience in managing trail construction and refurbishment projects will receive points accordingly. Consideration will also be given to applications that demonstrate a commitment to long-term management of the trail. Volunteer efforts will also be considered as a key part of this guideline.

Management Rating Chart

Years of Experience	Points
10 or more	20
9	18
8	16
7	14
6	12
5	10
4	8
3	6
2	4
1	2

2. Emphasis on Employment (15 points)

One objective of this program is job creation. Points will be awarded according to the percentage of total project costs that are represented by wages or contracts that employ people. The following table will be used as a guideline:

Employment Cost as a % of Total Costs	Points
60% or more	15
50 to 59%	12
40 to 49%	9
30 to 39%	6
20 to 29%	3
less than 20%	1

3. Other Funds Raised as a Percentage of Total Project Costs (5 points)

Note: This is an incentive for maximizing the matching contributions for your project.

Under this program the maximum percentage of total project costs that may be contributed by the Government of Canada is 50%. The objective of this program is to maximize the investment in top quality projects. Accordingly points will be awarded to those projects where the funding that is obtained from other sources is greater than 50%, thereby reducing the project grant amount requested.

The following table lists the guidelines for this criteria:

Other Funds Raised as a % of Total Project Costs	Points
50%	1
51-60%	2
61-70%	3
71-80%	4
81% or greater	5

4. Demonstration of Economic Benefits (10 points)

Across Canada trails are stimulating tourism and recreation-related spending. Local trail users and visitors provide direct economic benefits to hotels, restaurants, retailers, gas stations and other businesses as a result of increases in trail activities. Spending on durable goods such as bicycles, skates, hiking boots and motorized recreation equipment are all direct benefits to local retailers. This activity attracts and revitalizes businesses, creates jobs and increases public revenues. Accordingly, points will be awarded to those projects that demonstrate the economic benefits that will be created in their local communities.

5. Respect for the Environment and Sustainable Trail Development (10 points)

Sustainability means using, developing and protecting resources in a manner that enables people to meet current needs and at the same time provides for the needs of future generations from the joint perspective of environmental, economic and community objectives.

6. Preference for Shared and Mixed Use Trail Projects (10 points)

Shared and mixed use trails permit more than one user group to use the trail. Shared use trails can be motorized or non-motorized. Mixed use trails include a mix of motorized and non-motorized trail uses. Points will be awarded to projects based upon proposed trail uses as follows:

6a. Single Use Trail Projects (3 points)

Single Use Non-motorized: A project primarily intended to benefit only one mode of non-motorized recreational trail use, such as pedestrian only, or equestrian only. Projects serving various pedestrian uses (such as walking, hiking, wheelchair use, running, bird-watching, nature interpretation, backpacking, etc.) constitute a single use for the purposes of this category. *Note: wheelchair use by mobility-impaired people, whether operated manually or powered, constitutes pedestrian use, not motorized trail use.* Projects serving various non-motorized human-powered snow uses (such as skiing, snowshoeing, etc.) constitute a single use for this category.

Single Use Motorized: A project primarily intended to benefit only one mode of motorized recreational use, such as renovating a snowmobile trail. A project may be classified in this category if the project also benefits some non-motorized uses (it is not necessary to exclude non-motorized uses), but the primary intent is for the benefit of motorized use.

6b. Shared Use Trail Projects (5 to 7 points)

There are two types of shared use trails: motorized and non-motorized. Projects that combine both motorized and non-motorized are categorized as Mixed Use Trails (see 6c below).

Shared Use Non-motorized: A project primarily intended to benefit more than one mode of non-motorized recreational trail use such as: walking, bicycling, and skating; combined pedestrian and equestrian use; or pedestrian use in summer and cross-country skiing in winter.

Shared Use Motorized: A project primarily intended to benefit more than one mode of motorized recreational use, such as: motorcycle and ATV use; or ATV use in summer and snowmobile use in winter. A project may be classified in this category if the project also benefits non-motorized uses (it is not necessary to exclude non-motorized uses), but the primary intent must be for the benefit of motorized use.

Projects that are designed to accommodate shared uses will receive additional points. Applicants must identify on the grant application form which trail uses will be permitted. The following table will be used as a guideline to assign points:

Potential Trail Uses	Points
2	5
3	6
4 or more	7

6c. Mixed Use Trail Projects (10 points)

Mixed Use (both motorized and non-motorized uses): A project intended to benefit both non-motorized recreational trail use and motorized recreational trail use. This category includes projects where motorized use is permitted, but is not the predominant beneficiary. This category includes projects where motorized and non-motorized uses are separated by season, such as equestrian use in summer and snowmobile use in winter.

Following is the list of trail uses that will qualify for designation as a Shared Use or Mixed Use Trail Project:

Trail User Groups:

Motorized

ATV riders
Off-road motorcyclists
Snowmobilers

Non-Motorized

Hikers (including walkers, runners, backpackers)
Cyclists (road, touring and mountain bikers)
Equestrian
Cross country skiers
Other: (wheeled uses: inline skaters, rollerbladers, wheelchairs)
(water uses: canoers, kayakers, etc.)

7. Significance of Trail System (10 points)

A fundamental objective of the NTC Grants Program is to foster development of connections between existing trails within regions and between regional trail systems to create province or territory-wide systems for all types of shared use trails. If a strategic trail plan has been developed for your region, you should note how your project fits into that plan. Applications will be awarded points for demonstrating the importance of their project to enhance connections with existing trail networks.

8. Overall Assessment of the Project (Discretionary Criteria) (10 points)

The members of the RACs represent a broad range of motorized and non-motorized trail builders and users in their provinces and territories. This discretionary criteria enables committee members to bring their knowledge of regional and province/territory-wide recreation uses and needs into consideration. The determination of points awarded is an

individual decision, based upon informed judgment. Reviewers may award the project additional points based upon their subjective overall evaluation of the project. Consideration may include items such as: quality of the proposal and the financial projections, site suitability, commitment to long-term management of the trail, superior design, special needs, superior leveraging of partnerships including the use of volunteers, heritage context, potential for legacy, cultural significance and tourism benefits.

The points awarded by reviewers will be compiled by the National Program Administrators (NPAs) and an average score will be calculated for each project. These scores will then be compared against the scores for other projects within the applicable category to arrive at a prioritized ranking in each category based upon the average score for each project.

The National Coordinator will coordinate the application process through the NPAs and the RACs to ensure a fair and consistent application of the guidelines across the country.

FUNDING SCHEDULE

Successful applicants will receive funding on the following basis:

- 50% project commencement grant upon signing a funding agreement
- 20% upon demonstration of significant progress with the project
- 20% upon demonstration of substantial completion of the project
- 10% holdback pending final reporting and inspection including a final audit of this national program (**estimated in June, 2016**)

Grant submission deadline: **August 15, 2014**