1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for the reporting of the community employment benefits achieved by implicated infrastructure projects receiving funding under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program.

The Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program, delivered through Integrated Bilateral Agreements with provinces and territories, provides long-term, predictable funding for infrastructure priorities. Projects supported by this funding offer an opportunity to promote increased employment opportunities for a broader array of Canadians. Through the implementation of this initiative, the Government of Canada aims to complement efforts across Canada to increase the supply and retention of diverse workers in infrastructure-related industries like construction, as well as broader federal employment initiatives like the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program and the Veterans Education and Training Benefit.

The initiative is designed to allow for flexibility for provinces and territories to identify appropriate targets for the achievement of community employment benefits by larger projects receiving funding under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program. Information collected on implicated projects will be made public.

1.1 What is the community employment benefits initiative?

The Community Employment Benefits initiative provides a framework for establishing project targets and reporting on results. Participation in the initiative is not an eligibility criterion for the approval of project funding under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program.

Implicated projects are to provide employment and/or procurement opportunities for at least three of the groups targeted by the initiative: apprentices; Indigenous peoples; women; persons with disabilities; veterans; youth; recent immigrants; and small-sized, medium-sized and social enterprises. Provinces and territories will establish specific targets for each project, allowing for flexibility to consider various factors such as complementarity with existing local and regional employment initiatives or local labour market dynamics. The employment and procurement opportunities achieved against the project targets will be reported on an annual basis over the course of the project.

Provinces and territories are also asked to develop a community employment benefits approach and to establish associated targets in the three-year infrastructure plans they will be developing under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program.
1.2 Why implement the initiative?

The Government of Canada has committed to providing sustained economic growth; building stronger, more inclusive communities; and creating meaningful jobs for more Canadians. The Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program’s significant long-term investment provides opportunities across the country to promote expanded employment, training, and procurement opportunities for federal target groups while building the cities of the 21st century and providing communities across the country with the tools they need to prosper and innovate.

Community employment benefits initiatives for infrastructure projects are emerging as an innovative practice in Canada, and around the world. At the provincial and municipal levels, many jurisdictions across Canada are experimenting with innovative approaches to leverage infrastructure investments and public procurement for positive social outcomes.

The inclusions of this initiative under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program seeks to encourage project planners and communities across the country to take advantage of their infrastructure projects to support the diversification of recruitment, training and procurement practices. The reporting of project achievements will help capture data on best practices across the country, highlighting the opportunities and challenges being faced by the construction industry and related sectors in this regard, and be used to report out to Canadians on the additional benefits to be gained from infrastructure projects.

1.3 Threshold for project participation

The initiative applies to all projects funded under the Investing in Canada Plan over the total eligible costs threshold negotiated by the jurisdiction where the project is located. The cost thresholds negotiated with the province or territory are identified in the Integrated Bilateral Agreements available on the Infrastructure Canada website.

Provinces and territories have the flexibility to apply the requirement to smaller projects in addition, if they so choose.

Provinces and territories may also, on a case-by-case basis, decide that certain projects meeting or exceeding their jurisdiction’s threshold are not suitable for participating in the initiative.

In that case, the province or territory in question will provide Infrastructure Canada with their rationale for exempting the project from the community
employment benefits initiative. This rationale will be made publically available as part of broader project reporting including in the project level updates on the Investing in Canada Plan Project Map. It is the responsibility of the province or territory to determine what constitutes a valid rationale for non-participation by a particular project; Infrastructure Canada will not be adjudicating the merits of the rationale provided.

2. WHEN AND HOW TO REPORT

2.1 Reporting required at the time of project submission

At the time of submission of a project proposal to Infrastructure Canada for a funding decision, provinces and territories must indicate whether or not the project will be participating in the community employment benefits initiative.

If a province or territory indicates that the project will be participating in the initiative, then a specific target for the benefits that will be provided for at least three of the federal target groups (apprentices; Indigenous peoples; women; persons with disabilities; veterans; youth; recent immigrants; and small-sized, medium-sized and social enterprises) will be required for the project. This project-level target does not need to be provided at the time of submission, but should follow as soon as possible after the funding decision. As noted above, in establishing targets for each participating project, provinces and territories have the flexibility to consider what would be most appropriate in the context of that specific project, considering various factors such as complementarity with existing local and regional employment initiatives or local labour market dynamics.

In cases where a province or territory decides that a project meeting or exceeding their provincial or territorial threshold in total estimated eligible costs will not be participating in the initiative, the province or territory must provide a rationale for why that project will not be participating. The rationale needs to be provided at the time of project submission. Infrastructure Canada will make the rationale provided by the province and territory publicly available. A decision by a province or territory that a particular project will not be participating in the community employment benefits initiative will not affect the eligibility of that project for federal funding under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program.

2.2 Annual reporting on progress against project targets

Projects subject to the requirement must report annually on progress made against the target set by the province or territory for that project.
Data points requested are the number of hours worked by a target population and/or the value of contracts provided to small-sized, medium-sized or social enterprises as applicable to the targets set for that project. A qualitative narrative around the progress to date by the project in meeting its targets is also requested. This narrative could identify both key successes as well as any challenges encountered by the project in attempting to meet the project targets. This qualitative information will help to identify both best practices as well as the practical challenges faced by industry in seeking to offer more diversified employment and procurement opportunities.

2.3 Provincial/territorial three-year infrastructure plans

Provincial and territorial three-year rolling infrastructure plans are a new program design element to support Infrastructure Canada’s project assessment and selection process under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program. In addition to identifying provincial and territorial priority projects under the program, these plans provide an opportunity for provinces and territories to indicate how they intend to advance the promotion of community employment benefits under the program. Specifically, provinces and territories will include aggregate aspirational goals for each of the federal target groups in their three-year plans, and report annually on progress toward achieving those aspirational targets.

3. DISASTER MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION FUND

Please note that under the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund (DMAF), applicants will be required to identify targets as part of the full application. In cases where an applicant will not participate in the initiative, a rationale must be provided by the applicant and will be made public in the case where the project is approved. For additional information please consult the DMAF Applicant’s guide available at the following link: http://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/dmaf-faac/application-eng.html.

4. SMART CITIES CHALLENGE

Under the Smart Cities Challenge, finalists will be required to identify how they will fulfill the CEB reporting requirements in their final proposal. In cases where this is not appropriate due to the nature of the project, finalists will be required to provide a rationale which could be made public in the case where they become Smart Cities Challenge winners in their prize categories.