



Grand Challenges Canada®
Grands Défis Canada

Cost Directive for Grand Challenges Canada (GCC) applicable to Global Affairs Canada - Institutional Support Grant (ISG)

OUR COMMITMENT

GCC funds innovations to save and improve lives in low- and middle-income countries and Canada. GCC's funding comes primarily from the Government of Canada along with other governments, companies and organizations. Our commitment to our funders is to ensure that their funds deliver real impact and are used for their intended purposes.

GCC will ensure that you have the necessary resources and guidance you need to meet the terms and requirements outlined in your funding agreement including:

- Sample templates that can be used to monitor, track and report on expenses.
- Guidance on the types of supporting documentation that will help GCC understand and verify expenses.
- Information packages, including best practices, detailed instructions, FAQs and guidance on verifications conducted by GCC's Compliance team.
- Financial information sessions and recorded instructional videos.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding these resources, or the requirements outlined below, please reach out to your GCC contact for additional information.

COSTS

GCC will pay for eligible expenses that are incurred while implementing project activities. An expense is considered eligible if it is:

- Necessary to support the delivery of the Project,
- Included as part of the approved Project Budget, and
- Is expensed within the funding period.

Eligible expenses include both direct and indirect costs:

- **Direct costs** are expenses necessary to complete the Project that are associated with a specific Project activity.
 - All direct costs need to be reasonable and directly related to the Project.
 - Subsections 1.1 - 1.7 below provide more detail on each category of direct costs.
- **Indirect costs** are costs that cannot be directly traced to a direct project activity.
 - All indirect costs need to be reasonable but do not need to be directly related to the Project.
 - Subsection 1.8 provides further details on indirect costs.

Examples of ineligible expenses are included in Section 2.0 and include any costs that are not covered under subsections 1.1 – 1.8 below and those not included in the approved Project Budget. If you have questions about whether a cost is eligible, please confirm with your GCC contact before the expense is incurred.

1. Eligible Expenses

1.1. Remuneration

Remuneration includes salary, benefits (in accordance with internal policies), and daily wage rates paid to employees for work directly related to the Project. Salary and wage rates should be comparable to the local market for similar types of work.

Salaries paid by the Innovator to its employees may be increased in accordance with Global Affairs Canada's Policy on Salary Increases Under Contribution Agreements for the Delivery of International Development Assistance found at:

https://www.international.gc.ca/development-developpement/partners-partenaires/bt-0a/policy_salary_ida-politique_salariales_adi.aspx?lang=eng.

Innovators should be able to support remuneration charged to GCC using a timesheet or other time management system. Innovators without a time management system nor the capacity to manage timesheets should follow the guidance by Global Affairs Canada found at:

<https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/funding-financement/partners-timesheet-feuille-temps-partenaires.aspx?lang=eng>

1.2. Subcontractor Fees

Subcontractors are external individuals or groups who are engaged by an Innovator to provide goods and/or services as part of the Project. Payments are made under a subcontract agreement. The Innovator and the subcontractor must have an arm's length relationship to avoid real or perceived conflicts of interest.

Individual rates or amounts negotiated under a subcontract agreement must comply with the requirements of GCC's [Procurement Policy](#), and shall not exceed the fair market value for the service or good in question. Contracts over \$25,000 CAD for goods and over \$40,000 CAD for services in each fiscal year, should be tendered competitively, unless there is a valid reason not to, which would require prior approval from GCC.

Where multiple contracts are signed with the same vendor, the cumulative value of these contracts should be considered when applying the thresholds noted in the Procurement Policy.

Legal fees related directly to the GCC project are eligible subcontractor costs.

Subcontractor costs are subject to the same eligible and ineligible expense requirements applicable to the Innovator.

1.3. Travel Costs

Actual and reasonable travel costs directly related to the implementation of the Project and incurred by the Innovator's employees in accordance with the provisions of GCC's [Travel Policy](#) are eligible expenses. Travel costs must be incurred within the project period to be deemed eligible.

1.4. Goods and Supplies

Actual and reasonable costs arising from the purchase, rental, maintenance, transportation, and installation of goods, assets and supplies directly related to the Project, provided that such costs do not exceed the fair market value and are eligible expenses. Office administration expenses should be included in 1.6 Project Administration Costs.

1.5. Equipment Costs

"Equipment" is defined as a good with a useful life of more than one year and costs more than \$1,000 CAD per unit. The price paid for this expense must be reasonable compared to alternative options in the market. Costs may include the basic purchase price, freight, and installation of the equipment.

Innovators are required to submit a Disposal of Assets plan at the end of their Project. If equipment purchased for the project is still valuable at that time but will no longer be used towards project activities, GCC can request that the Innovator sell the equipment at fair value and refund GCC the proceeds from that sale.

Equipment which costs more than \$25,000 CAD in a given fiscal year should be tendered competitively in accordance with GCC's [Procurement Policy](#), unless there is a valid reason not to, which requires prior approval from GCC.

1.6. Project Administration Costs

Examples of actual and reasonable administrative costs directly related to the implementation of the Project include:

- Telecommunication expenses (internet, fax, cellular), mail and courier costs;
- Translation and word processing costs, printing and production costs associated with Project reporting and production of reading material;
- Meeting, workshops, conference costs (includes meal and travel costs for non-employee, non-contractor participants);
- Bank transfer fees;
- Costs related to office space and associated utilities, required to implement the Project;
- Publication fees during the funding period;
- Purchase of advertisement space to promote project activities;
- Hosting services, such as servers or databases required to implement the Project;
- Software subscription services directly required to implement the Project;
- Ethical approvals and review board costs;

- Patent costs required to implement the Project, as deemed reasonable by GCC;
- Other administrative type of expenditures relating directly to project activities.

1.7. Sub-grants

A sub-grantee is defined as an external organization that acts like a partner to provide key services required to complete the Project and cannot be easily replaced by a vendor or supplier. Sub-grantee costs are eligible expenses if the following requirements are met:

- Sub-grantees must be able to enter into legal agreements.
- Sub-grantees are subject to the same eligible expense requirements and policies as the Innovator.
- Sub-grantees must keep track of expenses incurred in a detailed general ledger and may be required to submit this detailed general ledger to GCC (where applicable). Refer to your funding agreement for details.

1.8. Indirect Costs

Innovators are entitled to indirect costs, calculated as a percentage to a maximum of 10% of all direct costs.

Innovators must consistently charge costs as either indirect or direct costs and must not double charge or inconsistently charge the same cost, or categories of costs, as both.

Examples of costs that could be considered as indirect under the Innovator's Project include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Advertising and promotion (non-project specific);
- Amortization/depreciation;
- Bank charges (non-project specific);
- Board activities;
- Business development activities (non-project specific);
- Capital taxes;
- Financing costs (e.g. interest expense, costs to obtain irrevocable letters of credit);
- General Staff training;
- Insurance (e.g. office, board of directors, liability, vehicle, travel);
- Internal or external audits of the organization;
- Office supplies and equipment of the Organization's office(s) (non-project specific);
- Professional fees relating to the administration of the organization (e.g. accounting);
- All legal costs other than those identified in Sections 1.2 and 1.6 above;
- Proposal preparation activities;
- Rent and utilities for shared office space (head office);
- Repairs and maintenance expenses (non-project specific);
- Salaries and fringe benefits relating to the administration of the organization (i.e. indirect staff);
- Recruitment fees and staff recruitment;
- Strategic planning activities;

- Employee bonuses;
- Maternity and paternity leaves;
- Administrative IT System (e.g. financial or HR system) (non-project specific);
- Workstations of indirect staff, including computers;
- Membership fees;
- Travel (non-program/Project specific);
- Severance;
- Immunizations and medications;
- Costs related to obtaining passports;
- Gratuities/tips;
- Other indirect/overhead type of expenditures relating to the organization's office(s) or employees deemed as indirect staff;
- Any other costs that GCC considers indirect cost elements.

2. Ineligible Expenses

Costs that are considered as ineligible under the Innovator's Project include, but are not limited to the following:

- Costs incurred before or after the effective date of the funding agreement for the Project;
- Entertainment expenses (non-project specific);
- Gifts (non-project specific);
- Costs related to non-authorized accompanying family members;
- Costs specifically disallowed under the Travel Policy included in section 1.3, above;
- Statutory fines, criminal fines or penalties;
- Bad debts;
- Costs related to replacing or refunding any funds lost to fraud, corruption, bribery, theft, terrorist financing or other misuse of funds;
- Foreign exchange gain or loss adjustments;
- Alcohol and Cannabis;
- Expenses previously paid for by another funder or another source of funds;
- Refundable deposits;
- Any other costs that GCC considers ineligible cost elements.

Last Updated: March 12, 2026