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FAQ
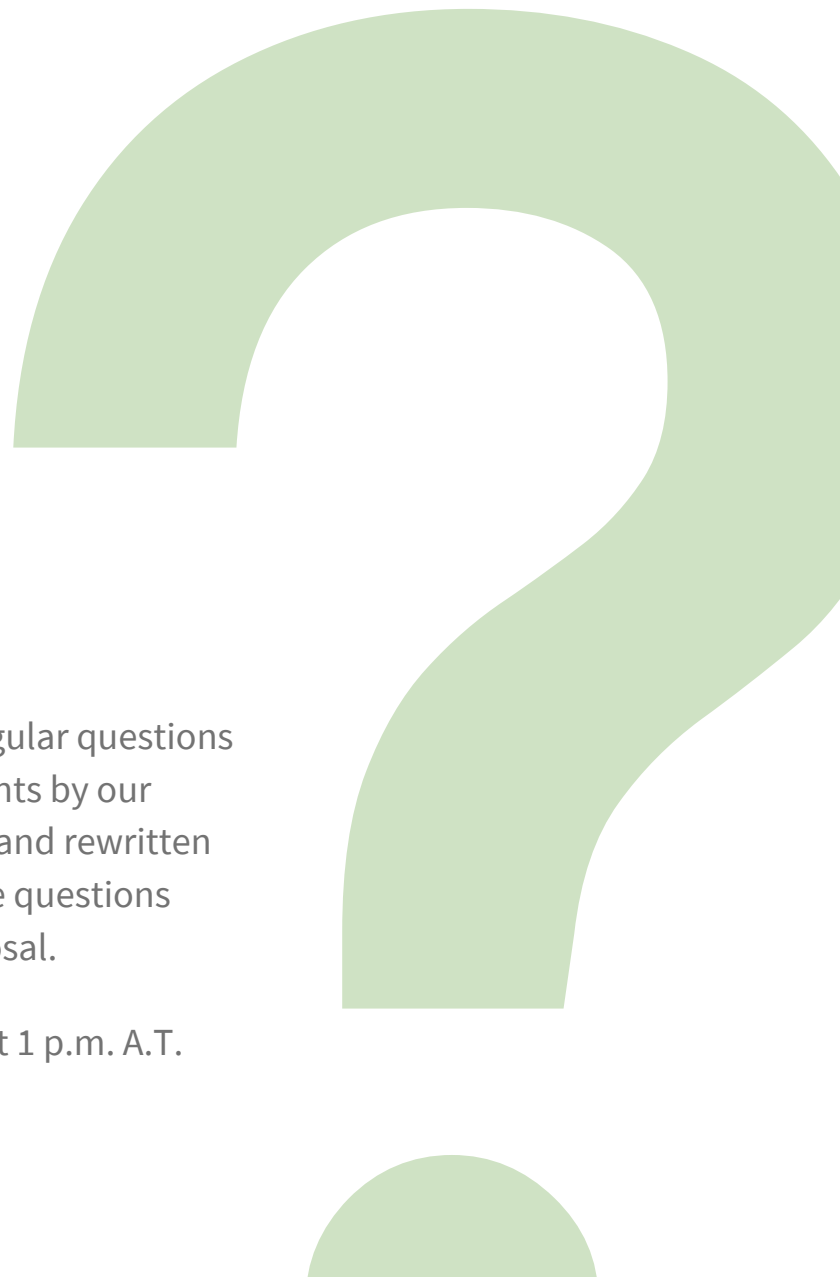
Emerging Concepts & Technologies Research Program - Prince Edward Island: Clean Technology Challenge

Last updated: March 31, 2025

The proceeding list of frequent and singular questions were received from potential respondents by our program team. They have anonymized and rewritten for broad application. Please review the questions and answers as you prepare your proposal.

Question period: Until April 25, 2025, at 1 p.m. A.T.

Contents

ECT FAQs:

Abbreviations and terms:

- Emerging Concepts and Technologies (ECT)
- Net Zero Atlantic (NZA)
- Innovate PEI (IPEI)
- Priority Research Theme (PRT)
- The terms proponent, Lead Applicant, Lead Researcher, and Principal Investigator are used interchangeably.

Recent Questions

(Note: Questions submitted since the last update are answered and posted in this section.)

1. **If a business is federally registered but operations are in PEI, are they eligible to apply?**

   Yes. If you are eligible to do business in PEI, then you are eligible to apply.

2. **What if your project intersects between multiple themes?**

   Your proposal should clearly describe a primary connection to one theme. You may mention the connection to other themes but in the past, clear alignment to a primary theme and a focused scope / knowledge gap has been a strength in successful applications.

3. **Can the lead applicant be an indigenous institution?**

   Yes, Indigenous applications are welcome.

4. **Can a professor from UNB, whose project results is applicable to all Atlantic Region apply?**

   Yes, if you consider that the desired outcome for this call is economic development for PEI. If the clear connection to benefits for PEI and the PI can register for business in PEI, there is no limitation on where the applicant is located.

5. **Can enterprises from other province or countries come to register in PEI as a business? What is the time of incorporation for new companies applying?**

   It may take several business days to register a Company in PEI and registration can be undertaken on line at https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/topic/business-name-registration

6. **How many collaborators are allowed per project? Is there a limit or a number for profit? Non-profit? Academic?**

No. There is no limit on number of collaborators

7. **As municipalities are ineligible to apply, would a private company partnering with a municipality be viewed as a negative?**

Generally, no, but this might be determined on a case-by-case basis. Please contact info@netzeratlantic.ca to book a consultation for more clarification on this**.**

8. **Is there feedback from the application process?**

NZA does not provide the grade/scoring for the applications, but we do provide feedback after the call is closed based on request.

9. **Are sole proprietorships or new business eligible to apply?**

Yes.

10. **Do you allow for retroactive cost claim? What is the earliest we could claim cost?**

We put our faith in the recipients that the funds are going towards the project needs. Therefore, we do not ask for timecards or purchase receipts. Milestone payments are made based on milestone achievements and production of deliverables. The first payment will be made after the contract is fully signed (milestone 1). We will only come looking for details and receipts should there be a cause for concern.

General Information

11. What is Net Zero Atlantic?

Net Zero Atlantic (NZA) is a not-for-profit energy research organization that works to advance Atlantic Canada's transition to a carbon neutral society by coordinating independent energy sector research for a variety of end users. NZA's purpose is to advance a sustainable and inclusive transition to a carbon-neutral Atlantic Canada by providing credible and objective research and support services. NZA identifies critical knowledge and data gaps, assembles research and delivery teams, and leads applied research projects to close these gaps.

12. Who can I contact with questions?

Please send any inquiries about the ECT Research Program to info@netzeroatlantic.ca. If warranted, questions and responses will be posted on an updated FAQ – so please refer back to the most recent version of this document before completing your proposal.

13. How many applications can an applicant submit?

There is no limit to the number of applications a Lead Applicant can submit. We may limit the number of applications per Applicant in future calls.

14. **Are the ECT webinars posted to YouTube?**

NZA does not have a YouTube presence. The recorded webinars have been posted to our website here while the direct vimeo link for ECT-PEI is Introducing ECT PEI: Clean Technology Challenge on Vimeo

15. **When will the projects from this call begin?**

The start date for the projects is projected for Summer 2025. We hope to award the projects in June and proceed right into contracting. The project duration begins from the date the contract is signed.

16. **When is the submission deadline and also could you send me the link where I can submit the application?**

The Applications for ECT-PEI call are due May 1st, 2025. Pls refer to this link → How to Apply to ECT | Net Zero Atlantic for instructions and resources pertaining to the ECT-PEI call. Submission upload link can be found in the "How to Apply" section of the applicant guide.

Applications are to be uploaded to ShareFIle. The upload link is located in the Applicant Guide.

17. **Can the project timeline be extended beyond the set duration?**

Projects that request an extension after work has begun, will have to go through a formal contract amendment process with NZA. Extensions are not guaranteed.

18. **For submissions to the ECT program, is there a submit button in the portal, or is it considered submitted when it shows as "uploaded"?**

Your proposal is considered submitted once it is uploaded. You should receive a confirmation email within 48 hours of uploading.

Requirements/Objectives

19. **Is the development of technology and/or intellectual property (IP) a required outcome of proposed projects?**

No, technology and IP development are not required outcomes by the end of the project duration. However, they are long-term goals for the program. Proposals should explain how their projects aim to reduce Prince Edward Island's hard-to-abate GHG emissions and what economic benefits to the province may be derived from their proposed R&D project. Technology and IP development are two desired outcomes from both objectives.

20. **What are the reporting requirements with a successful proposal? Will there be milestones established to correlate with the projected funding?**

Yes, payments will be disbursed on a milestone basis over the course of the project (typically 3-4 payments depending on project size and duration). An initial payment will be made following the contract signing. Subsequent payments would be made at key milestones and tied to the provision of milestone deliverables to NZA. For this reason, applicants are advised to describe work packages clearly describing the work done per package in the proposals. Key milestones will be scheduled during the contracting phase for the successful applicants.

21. **Do the objectives have to include a direct reduction of emissions? Or can it be an indirect reduction? For example, diverting food waste from landfills, sustainable agriculture practices.**

Indirect reduction of emissions could be appropriate should the proponent clearly align their project to one of the Priority Research Themes identified in the Applicant Guide.

22. **Do the project objectives have to be measured by how many emissions were reduced? Or can the objectives be measured using other metrics?**

NZA does not have prescribed metrics for measuring emission reductions to which ultimate recipients must use.

23. **If we outsource is there any (political) weighting applied depending on the country, we outsource to?**

No. However given the trade negotiations, NZA encourages research teams to procure local goods and services where possible.

24. **Is greater weight given to a research partner in academia vs. a working professional?**

No. Scoring will be related to the potential impact of the project's results on the PEI industry and emissions levels, irrespective of academia vs. private sector.

25. **Do you have an estimate of number of projects you may be able to fund?**

NZA is looking to award up to 4 projects for this funding round.

26. **Are there target word counts or other length limits for sections other than section 1 (that has a 300-word limit)? Is there an overall proposal page count limit?**

Where there is no specified word limit, feel free to be as comprehensive as you wish. We ask proponents to use effective and efficient explanations but acknowledge that the words required to do so will be dependant on the project specifics. There is no proposal page count limit.

27. **Would you like to see references cited as appropriate and if so, should their full citation be included at the end of each section where they were referenced or somewhere else?**

If the proponents are referencing knowledge or work that is not their own, citations would be required. It is up to the proponent to determine the best method to communicate the references (ex. If references are only used in one section, it may make sense to list the citations at the bottom of that section).

Eligibility

28. **Are companies that do not have an office in PEI eligible to receive funding?**

    The Lead Applicant must be registered, or willing to register for business in PEI. Partner organizations may be registered or based elsewhere in Canada or internationally. Please see the Applicant Guide for more information.

29. **Am I eligible to apply for the new call for the Net Zero Emerging Concepts and Technologies Research Program, as I currently have an active project from the previous call?**

    You are eligible to apply again in this call provided that your new project is not dependent on the outcomes of the currently active one as this would pose a problem should the current one experience any setbacks. Feel free to submit as many applications as you have the capacity for.

Partnerships/Lead Applicant

30. **Can an independent member (outside an organisation) submit a proposal?**

    Yes, the Program is open to sole proprietors on the understanding that NZA Program Managers may require specific assurances and documentation to prove that funds are appropriately managed and HST/GST taxes remitted if applicable.

31. **Are you accepting applications from one single organization or are we required to have a partner involved in the project we are proposing?**

    Yes, we are happy to accept applications from single organizations. Partnerships are not a requirement.

32. **If I am listed as a collaborator (or team member) on another project application for an ECT Call, am I eligible to submit another application in the same ECT Call as the Principal Investigator? There is no overlap of concepts.**

    There is no concern if you are lead on one project and contributor on another. We welcome both proposals.

33. **In the application, we are asked to specify a lead researcher/ institution. Can our collaboration partner be another private company and not an academic or research institution?**

    The lead researcher/ institution can be anyone registered in PEI. You are not required to collaborate with an academic or research institution, and you can apply with a partner from a private company.

Funding/MITACS/Budget

34. **For Mitacs funding, are college students or high school students eligible or just students enrolled into an undergraduate program?**

Post-secondary students are eligible for Mitacs funding.

35. Can ECT support the "company portion" of Mitacs project costs?

Yes, NZA is considered a private partner by Mitacs, thus ECT funding would be matched by Mitacs.

36. If an applicant requests Mitacs funding and identifies Net Zero Atlantic as the anticipated partner providing funds, should the partner funds requested by NZA be included in the project budget at this stage? My understanding of the guidelines is that these funds should not be included, and Mitacs funds could be included under the cash from other sources (not yet secured).

Correct. Mitacs funding would be listed under cash from other sources (not yet secured).

37. Is a separate application required for accessing matching funds from MITACS?

Yes. For proposals which have indicated the necessity of Mitacs funds, NZA will arrange for completion of a Mitacs application by the proponent during the contracting phase.

38. For the Mitacs funding, do we need to have a student by the application deadline, or can we find a student later?

In the proposal it is not required that a student be named, but it needs to provide a commitment to having the student in place at the time of contracting. The lack of a student identified will be considered a project risk that will need to be defined, and mitigation addressed in the proposal.

39. Is taking advantage of the MITACS program explicitly factored into the evaluation criteria? i.e., will this be considered as leverage?

Yes, using the Mitacs opportunity is considered leverage and is explicitly factored into the evaluation criteria, but in a comparatively minor way. Please see the Evaluation Criteria section in the Applicant Guide to review the weighting criteria.

40. It is likely that ECT projects will also be SR&ED (Scientific Research & Experimental Development tax credit program) eligible. Other funding (such as ECT) must be included to reduce a company's SR&ED claim to the extent that it is for SR&ED / covers SR&ED eligible costs. Some of the ECT eligible costs (such as salaries, contractors (if in Canada), overheads) are SR&ED eligible cost types and so ECT funding for those costs would reduce the SR&ED claim. However, other ECT costs may not be SR&ED eligible (capital, results dissemination, any contractors from outside Canada) and so funding for those costs may not have to be netted from the SR&ED claim.

My question is, can the ECT funding be directed at specific cost types (targeting costs ineligible for SR&ED) to allow for optimizing total funding? This would need to be supported by ECT claim documentation to avoid CRA applying 100% of the ECT funding against the SR&ED claim.

Yes, we are open to creating tailored contracts with successful proponents that permit the maximization of total SR&ED funding.

41. Can the Mitacs funds be used to support post-doctoral fellows (PDFs)?

Yes, Mitacs supports Post Doctoral Fellows. They can have up to 3-year (9 units) projects. To be eligible, they must be within 5 years of PhD graduation at the start of the project.

42. **Is Mitacs billed separately or within the project budget?**

In the contracting period we will distinguish the funds that you would like to be diverted to Mitacs. NZA will send funds directly to Mitacs, but these funds are to be factored into your project budget.

43. **Are there total percentages limiting how many funds are allocated to salaries/wages, capital equipment, and travel expenses?**

No, there is no cap on salary/wages. Please review the applicant guide for more details.

44. **Is the "cash from other sources" column supposed to deduct from the total ask from the ECT?**

The "cash from other sources" is to capture any leveraged funds. This does not subtract from ECT award value.

45. **Is overhead supposed to be around 15%?**

Overhead can be a maximum of 15%.

46. **Rate/Day or Explanatory Notes refers to the person hourly rate for a day or could we put their hourly rate with a note as to why they are included? For the explanation is it easier to note their role in each task/subtask?**

Yes, you can use a day or hourly rate. It is recommended to put the estimated number hours or days that lead to the total line-item value. You do not need to explain why the staff is included in the budget form.

47. **If I request the maximum allowable funding for expenses, is there a possibility of receiving a reduced amount, or will the full requested amount be granted?**

The full amount of the award will be granted to awardees.

48. **Is there a policy indicating the percentage of funding that must be spent within PEI?**

There is no financial limitation on what needs to be spent in PEI. However, the lead applicant should be registered in PEI, and the application should make a connection on how the research is working to close a knowledge gap needed in PEI as well as the potential economic development, should the project advance.

49. **How will funds be released?**

Funds will be released on a milestone basis over the course of the project (typically 3-4 payments depending on project stream and duration). An initial payment will be made following the contract signing (Milestone 1). Subsequent payments would be made at key milestones and tied to the provision of milestone deliverables to NZA. There is no "claims process" as such, just simple lump sum invoices that are typically tied to project milestones. For context, contracts signed by awarded

recipients will include milestone payments spread out over the project duration, at the discretion of the recipient. The indicated sum for each milestone will be paid after the deliverable specific to that milestone has been provided to NZA. The budget form does not require separation into project milestones, this will be done at the contracting phase. Payments do not need to be equally distributed either, it can be broken down based on foreseeable expenses incurred per time.

50. **What level of detail is required for the budget? For example, do you want expenses itemized and supported by quotes?**

The budget form may be filled to the level of detail requested in the form using the budget categories. Quotes do not need to be submitted.

It is recommended for the budget to be comprehensive and reflect the level of effort outlined in the project work plan.

Priority Research Themes (PRT)

51. **Does the project have to be strictly inside in one of the Priority Research Themes?**

The set Priority Research Themes are not intended to be restrictive to these issues alone. Projects proposed by the Applicant will be considered as long as the applicant can make a clear connection on how the knowledge gap they intend to close will support one of the PRTs. For projects that touch on more than one Theme, Applicants are asked to pick the one Theme that is most representative of their project. Feel free to suggest new themes by contacting us at info@netzeroatlantic.ca and we will consider adding it to future intakes.

52. **About Priority Research Theme 5, how do you define long-term energy storage? Are we talking minutes, hours, days, months? (*redacted*) It is just a matter of getting a better sense of what you consider "long-term".**

NZA in agreement with published literatures defines long-term energy storage as storage for up to 10 hours or more. We welcome any energy storage project idea that aligns with the overall Program Objectives, Priority Research Themes and funding Streams.

Evaluation/Feedback

53. **How will successful proposals be selected? Will NZA Program administrators provide debriefs to unsuccessful applicants?**

Evaluation criteria are listed in the Applicant Guide. Proposals will be assessed by the Net Zero ECT Program's Proposal Review Committee, a Research Management Committee, and Subject Matter Experts of respective themes. The debrief process for unsuccessful applicants will be dependant on the number of applications received.

54. **Could you share who will be involved in the evaluation of the proposals?**

Proposals will be evaluated by staff at Net Zero Atlantic, the Province of Prince Edward Island, and external subject matter experts (SMEs) recruited for the evaluation committee.

55. **How long is the application review?**

The review window may vary depending on the number of applications. The anticipated award date will be in June.

56. **How technical should the proposal be written?**

The proposals will be reviewed by committee members comprised of subject matter experts as well as non-technical persons. We suggest striking a balance between clear understanding of what the project is about and the work plan to meet the program objectives, as well as demonstrating technical feasibility of the project.