



SFI Community Grant Request for Proposals Directions for 2023 Applications

1. Introduction

The Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI) provides **Conservation, Community, and Education Grants** in support of SFI's strategic priorities and to expand our reach and impact. As an independent, non-profit organization, SFI® collaborates with a diverse network to provide solutions to local and global sustainability challenges. Our network includes:

- SFI-certified organizations, who use the [SFI 2022 Standards](#);
- [SFI Implementation Committees \(SICs\)](#), comprising 34 state, provincial, and regional grassroots groups that help implement the SFI standards on the ground and support their local communities;
- [Project Learning Tree \(PLT\) network](#), consisting of 63 education leaders at the state, regional and local level that help implement PLT;
- [PLT Canada network](#), organizations that provide career and mentorship opportunities to grow future forest and conservation leaders;
- [Indigenous communities and businesses](#) that have certified their forestlands to SFI standards or have partnered with SFI;
- numerous other non-profit organizations, universities, public agencies, and others, who share our mission of advancing sustainability through forest-focused collaborations

SFI Community Grants supports collaborative projects between local communities and the SFI network to increase understanding of the values and benefits provided by sustainably managed forests. Since 2010, SFI has awarded 101 Community Grants, totaling more than \$950,000, in support of this goal. Learn more about past and current community grants [here](#).

2. Priorities

Proposed SFI Community Grant Projects must specify how they will address and lead to positive outcomes in at least one of the following **SFI priorities**:

1. SFI Implementation Committee (SIC) coordination on [SFI 2022 standard requirements](#) related to Climate Smart Forestry, Fire Resilience and Awareness, Conservation of Biological Diversity, and Recognize and Respect Indigenous Rights, with focus on training and best practices that can be replicated.
2. Community uptake of the new [SFI Urban and Community Forest Sustainability Standard](#), to further equitable access to human health and climate benefits, through support to municipalities, universities, and other entities that are preparing for certification audits or seeking progress on select objectives in the standard, such as Climate Smart Management or Human Health and Well-being.
3. Indigenous community uptake of the [SFI Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples and Families](#) through tool kits, administration support, training, and other methods.

4. SIC coordination with PLT partners on implementation and distribution of PLT resources and tools (e.g., the [Forest Literacy Framework](#), [Journeys of Black Professionals in Green Careers](#), and PLT Activity Collections, such as [Nature of Fire](#)) and [SFI standards](#).
5. Outreach to the architecture, engineering, and construction community about the environmental and social benefits associated with building with SFI-certified forest products.

3. Requirements for Proposals

Applicants must meet the following eligibility requirements to receive an SFI Community Grant:

1. The Lead Organization in the Project must be one of the following:
 - a. SFI Implementation Committee (SIC)
 - b. Registered, tax-exempt non-profit, and/or charitable organization (*for example, a 501(c) (3) in the US or registered with the Charities Directorate of the Canada Revenue Agency in Canada*). Applicants must submit a tax identification number as proof of tax-exempt status within the Online Application Form.
 - c. Indigenous Organization/Community
 - d. College/University
2. If an SIC is not the lead organization, Projects must include an SIC or SFI-certified organization as a Project Partner (see links below). Letters of support from an SIC or SFI-certified organization should be included with the application. You are encouraged to reach out to the SIC or SFI-certified organization with whom you intend to partner AT LEAST two weeks prior to the proposal deadline to ensure sufficient time to collaborate on the proposal.
 - o Find [SFI Implementation Committees](#) and contacts
 - o Find SFI-certified organizations with [Forest Management Certification](#)
 - o Find SFI-certified organizations with [Fiber Sourcing Certification](#)
 - o Find SFI-certified organizations with [Chain of Custody Certification](#)
3. The Project proposal must contain a communications component that clearly outlines opportunities for communicating key milestones, project results, and overall impact. Organizations are strongly encouraged to speak about the Project in public venues, including potentially SFI events and/or webinars, or other venues identified by SFI and the project partners. SFI is eager to support the Lead Organization and Project Partners on any publicity associated with the project.
4. The applicant must agree to authorize SFI to publicize the Project and to use their name, images, logos and information about the Project in such publicity.
5. Projects must be completed within 2 years of project agreement signing.
6. Requested funds should be in the range of \$5,000 to \$20,000 dollars, depending on the scale of the project and the associated impacts. SFI reserves the right to award a grant in an amount less than requested.
7. Projects must be located within Canada or the United States.
8. SFI Community Grant support may **not** be used for land acquisition, conservation easements, capital equipment purchases, or office/administration overhead costs.

4. Additional Considerations for Successful Proposals

Proposed Projects should be collaborative in nature and involve at least one Project Partner, in addition to the Lead Organization. Additional non-profit conservation or community partners may strengthen the Proposal.

While not mandatory, SFI will give preference to Projects in which the Lead Organization has secured matching or in-kind funds for the Project from its Partners and/or other outside funding sources. Applications without secured matching or in-kind funds may still be considered, however those demonstrating matching or in-kind funds of 1:1 or greater will be given stronger consideration.

SFI's goal is to further our positive impact in local communities. SFI Community Grant Projects will ideally include an evaluation aspect, outlining how the Lead Organization will measure the positive impacts (qualitative or quantitative) for communities through the project.

For all SFI grant opportunities, a proposal is strengthened by directly benefitting an underserved community in the United States or Canada, including projects created for and by Indigenous, Black, Francophone, Latino/a, and urban communities. Project proposals are not required to serve these communities, but those that do are preferred and greatly encouraged.

5. Application Process and Timeline

The proposal must be submitted via [ONLINE APPLICATION](#) no later than 11:59 pm Eastern Time on March 17, 2023. Late proposals will not be considered. Applicants will be notified via email that their application has been received.

SFI's online application imposes text limits within requested fields. You may also upload supporting documents as needed. To help you prepare for submission, you can view a sample application in **Appendix A**. Please consider drafting your application responses in a Word or alternate document to ensure you can save your work in the event of a technology issue.

You will be asked to submit a budget in your organization's home currency and indicate other sources of secured funding.

Timeline:

Key Steps	Date
Request for Proposals issued	January 9, 2023
Proposals due to SFI	March 17, 2023, by 11:59 pm Eastern Time
Lead Organizations advised of results	By April 21, 2023
Project start date	May 1, 2023 (or later, per project timeline)

6. Evaluation Process

SFI Community Grant applications will be evaluated against a variety of criteria, including:

- Strength of alignment with at least one of SFI's Priorities listed in Section 2
- Value and relevancy to the SFI network
- Level of involvement of SFI Implementation Committee(s) or SFI-certified organization(s)
- Achievability and specificity of impact
- Creativity and innovation
- Scalability or applicability in additional communities

7. Notifications and Accepted Proposal Requirements

SFI Community Grant applicants will be notified of the status of their application regardless of being approved or denied. If the application is accepted, the Lead Organization will be required to:

1. Attend a webinar to develop a clear understanding of reporting timelines, communications expectations, and other important facets of SFI Community Grants.
2. Participate in a “kickoff” call with the SFI Grant Manager to discuss details of the project, deliverables, plans for engagement of SFI Implementation Committee(s) or SFI Certified Organization(s), (if not the Lead Organization), external communications, and other relevant aspects of the project as soon as practical after the introductory webinar noted above.
3. Sign an agreement (the “Grant Agreement”) with SFI specifying reporting timelines, project deliverables, payment schedules, significant milestones and other specifics surrounding the project. All agreements should be completed within 60 days of application acceptance.
4. Submit progress reports to SFI as stipulated in the Grant Agreement, and hold briefing calls with the SFI Grant Manager during reporting periods, as deemed necessary. Progress reports should include qualitative and quantitative measures of impact.
5. Communicate promptly with the SFI Grant Manager on any unexpected difficulties or delays. The SFI Grant Manager will work closely with the Lead Organization to get the project back on track or redefine project expectations.
6. Work closely with SFI to identify communications opportunities and work cooperatively to craft outreach strategies appropriate to the project, in order to support dissemination of practices and findings to the SFI network and communities across the U.S. and Canada.

8. Terminology

The following terminology applies to this Request for Proposal:

- “Lead Organization” is an SFI Implementation Committee (SIC), conservation group, college or university, community organization, aboriginal or tribal group, or other non-profit that submits the application, oversees the project funding, and is responsible for reporting to SFI on the project progress (see Section 3 for eligibility of Lead Organizations).
- “SFI-certified organization” is an organization certified by an accredited certification body to be in conformance with the [SFI Forest Management Standard, Fiber Sourcing Standard, or Chain-of-Custody Standard](#).
- “SFI Implementation Committee” is a state, provincial, or regional committee organized by SFI Certified Organizations to facilitate or manage the programs and alliances supporting the growth of the SFI program, including sustainable forest management.
- “Project Partner” means an entity named in the Proposal in addition to the Lead Organization that has agreed to be involved in the implementation of the Project. Project Partners must include SFI-certified organization(s) or SFI Implementation Committee(s) if the Lead Organization is not in one of those categories.
- “Project” means the work described in the proposal.
- “Proposal” means a proposed project prepared and submitted in response to this Request for Proposal.
- The “Grant Agreement” will be developed collaboratively by SFI and the Lead Organization once a proposal is accepted. The Grant Agreement will stipulate reporting deadlines, payment schedules and milestones consistent with the project proposal.

- “SFI Grant Manager” is a member of the SFI staff who will serve as the primary point of contact with SFI on accepted applications.

9. Frequently Asked Questions

Question: Does our project require the involvement of an SFI Implementation Committee to be funded?

Answer: Projects must involve **either** an SFI Implementation Committee or an SFI-certified organization. SFI Implementation Committees may serve as the Lead Organization.

Question: How much money is available for my project? How much can I apply for?

Answer: Community Grant awards are in the range of \$5,000 to \$20,000 per year. Your application will be required to outline how your project would utilize SFI funds.

Question: What is the maximum allowable time frame for a project?

Answer: Community Grant projects are typically completed within a year of the initiation of the SFI funds but may be allowed for up to a two-year timeframe.

Question: Am I allowed to charge “overhead” for a project?

Answer: SFI will not grant funds to cover overhead or indirect costs, but such funds could be used to describe “matching” dollars considered desirable to the project.

Question: Can I use state, provincial or federal agency dollars to show as matching funds?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Should I mention pending matching funds from another organization?

Answer: You may indicate if matching funds are pending, but you should specifically indicate matching funds that are **secured** at the time of the application.

Question: Can grant funds be applied to projects outside of North America?

Answer: No, funding is limited to projects in the United States and Canada.

Question: What if my project will deliver on more than one of the priorities listed?

Answer: All projects must meet at least one of the priorities listed in Section 2. Applicants are encouraged to indicate all priorities that would be addressed through the project.

Question: What if I am not ready to apply this year, but want to be considered for a future grant?

Answer: SFI accepts applications only during the open RFP period. However, SFI would be pleased to help you plan a submission at any time. SFI can help you align your project with priorities, connect with SFI Implementation Committees or SFI Certified Organizations, and provide guidance as requested.

10. Inquiries and Resources

Inquiries related to this Request for Proposals can be directed to:

Gordy Mouw
 Director, SFI Network Relations
 Phone: 715-220-4132
 Email: gordy.mouw@forests.org

The SFI Community Grant RFP [webpage](#) has several resources to help you prepare for submission.

Appendix I – 2023 SFI Community Grant SAMPLE Application

The following questions are required for consideration of your SFI Community Grant application. Your application should be submitted through our [online application](#).

1. Lead Organization Information

- a. Organization Name:
- b. Organization Address:
- c. Mission Statement (50 words or less):
- d. Annual Operating Budget:
- e. U.S. Tax ID or Canada Revenue Agency Number (if not an SIC, Indigenous Community, or university):

2. Lead Organization Contacts

- a. Project Manager
 - i. Name:
 - ii. Title:
 - iii. Phone:
 - iv. E-mail:
- b. Communications Contact (if different than Project Manager)
 - i. Name:
 - ii. Title:
 - iii. Phone:
 - iv. E-mail:

3. Project Overview

- a. Project Title:
- b. Brief Project Summary (brief narrative describing the intended purpose and outcome of the project, and why it matters (75 words or less)):
- c. Project Completion Length (in whole months, from commencement to final reporting):
- d. Amount Requested from SFI Community Grants (\$5,000 - \$20,000):

4. SFI Priorities

- a. Please select which SFI Community Grant Priority your project supports (pull-down list)
 - i. SIC coordination on SFI 2022 Standard requirements
 - ii. Community uptake of the SFI Urban and Community Forest Sustainability Standard
 - iii. Indigenous community uptake of the SFI Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples and Families
 - iv. SIC coordination with PLT partners on implementation and distribution of PLT resources and tools
 - v. Outreach to the architecture, engineering, and construction community about the benefits associated with building with SFI-certified forest products
- b. Please explain how your project relates to the Community Grant Priority selected in 4a.

5. Project Deliverables, Timeline, and Reach

- a. Provide 2 to 3 deliverables for which you will report on over the course of your grant. At a minimum, you should have a deliverable part way through your grant and a final deliverable at the completion of your grant. Please provide the following for each deliverable:
 - i. Description of deliverable:
 - ii. Due date of deliverable:
 - iii. Anticipated outcome of deliverable (what is the impact you are trying to achieve?):
 - iv. Cost associated with deliverable:
- b. What communications activities will you and your project partners perform to promote the project progress, final project outcomes, and SFI involvement in the project?
- c. Does your project work with any underserved communities? If so, describe.

6. Project Budget

Download, complete, and upload the budget spreadsheet (found on the SFI Community Grants RFP [webpage](#)) as part of your online application.

7. Project Partners

Project Partners are defined as individuals, government agencies, corporations, non-profits, coalitions, or other entities named in the Proposal, in addition to the Lead Organization, who have agreed to be materially engaged in the implementation of the Project. If the Lead Organization is not an SFI Implementation Committee, project Partners must include at least one SFI Certified Organization and/or SFI Implementation Committee.

- a. Please provide the following for each project partner:
 - i. Project Partner Organization:
 - ii. Involvement or support provided to this project:
 - iii. Project Partner Main Contact (First and Last Name_):
 - iv. E-mail:
 - v. Phone:
- b. Upload letters of support from all partners