



Small Communities Fund (SCF)

Alberta Project Outcomes Report - 2023

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Background

Purpose of the Program

The Small Communities Fund (SCF) is a competitive program under the federal government's New Building Canada Plan. The SCF supports communities with populations under 100,000 and funds projects that address local priorities while contributing to national or regional objectives, supporting economic growth, a clean environment, and stronger communities. The program was designed to leverage the resources and existing processes of the provinces and territories in managing local projects, while ensuring federal accountability and oversight of the funding envelope.

Program Governance

In Alberta, the program is governed through an agreement between Canada and Alberta. Applicants chose projects that addressed local and/or regional priorities and submitted applications to Municipal Affairs, where they were evaluated against established criteria. Projects received final approval from the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Minister of Infrastructure Canada.

Outcomes Reporting Approach

The SCF funding agreement between Alberta and Canada requires the development of periodic Outcomes Reports. To fulfil this requirement, Municipal Affairs requested grant recipients to provide information on benefits realized from projects funded by the program through an SCF Project Reporting Form. The form was posted on the Municipal Affairs website and was also sent to municipalities upon request.

Municipalities were asked to review the form in order to familiarize themselves with the type of information they would be required to submit to Municipal Affairs, and to help them plan the collection of the required data. Municipal Affairs contacts a municipality requesting the submission of the form after their project has been completed.

Data Collection Tools

Municipal Affairs developed the SCF Project Reporting Form for collecting both the project outputs and outcomes. Outcomes and performance indicators used in the form were those proposed by the federal government and included in the program's *Guideline for Outcome Reports*. For both the project outputs and outcomes, grant recipients were required to select output(s) and outcome(s) that were relevant to their project(s). For outputs, they then had to fill in the right unit of measure value, while for outcomes they had to select the matching performance indicator(s) and fill in the respective performance measure value(s). This greatly helped in ensuring that all the outputs and outcomes from a given project, as described in the project application, were collected.

Report Compilation Methodology

The compilation of the report followed the reporting guideline provided by the federal government. In each project category, performance measurement indicators for the same output from different projects were aggregated to come up with one value, ultimately producing a list of category-specific performance indicators for each output.

The same procedure was used to compile project outcomes, which produced a list of category-specific outcome performance indicators, as well as the number of relevant projects, with results given in aggregate. Baseline data for all indicators are also reported.

Establishment of Performance Measurement Indicators

Municipal Affairs used performance indicators established for Infrastructure Canada's New Building Canada Fund Provincial-Territorial Infrastructure Component – Small Communities Fund. The department did not establish any new or additional performance indicators.

Baseline Establishment

Municipalities were able to capture baseline conditions at the start of each project. This is demonstrated by the municipalities' ability to provide the before and after project values in all of the outcomes they reported. Their success in capturing the baseline can be attributed to the early communication that was made by the department to municipalities informing them of the reporting

requirements, which included baseline capturing. Grant recipients reported their performance information after projects were completed.

Reporting Period and List of Completed Projects

This outcomes report covers the period from July 2020 to December 2023. A total of 20 completed projects from 20 municipalities are reported in this document. Including the twenty-four projects in the 2020 outcomes report, a total of 44 completed projects out of the 56 projects funded have now been captured. Table 1 presents a list of municipalities with their respective projects that were completed in the reporting period.

Table 1: List of municipalities and their completed projects.

S/No.	Municipality Name	Project Title
1	Big Lakes County	House Mountain Connector Road & Bridge Construction
2	City of Airdrie	40th Avenue - Phase 1 and 2
3	City of Medicine Hat	Industrial Avenue Overland Flow Protection Strategy
4	County of Grande Prairie No. 1	116 Street Trunk Sewer & Clairmont Lagoon Discharge
5	County of St. Paul No. 19	Ashmont Lagoon Expansion and Wastewater Transfer Station
6	County of Wetaskiwin No. 10	Alder Flats Wastewater Expansion
7	Municipal District of Bonnyville No. 87	Ardmore Underground Utilities Rehabilitation Project
8	Municipal District of Foothills No. 31	Millarville Water Supply Project
9	Strathcona County	Transit Fleet Replacement
10	Town of Blackfalds	East Area Stormwater Management Plan - Linear Wetland, Trunk and Outlet Project
11	Town of Drayton Valley	South Sanitary Trunk Sewer Twinning (SSTT)
12	Town of Innisfail	Wastewater System Improvement and Remediation Project
13	Town of Rainbow Lake	Water Distribution System Rehabilitation
14	Town of Rocky Mountain House	Rocky Mountain Regional Landfill New Waste Disposal Cell Construction
15	Town of Slave Lake	Wastewater Treatment Modernization
16	Town of Smoky Lake	Cast Iron Watermain Replacement Program
17	Town of Wainwright	Town of Wainwright Sewer Upgrade Project
18	Village of Consort	Wastewater System Upgrades - Force Main
19	Village of Empress	Water Distribution Pump Station Replacement
20	Westlock County	Water Treatment Plant and Supply System Upgrading - Hamlet of Jarvie

Summary of the Currently Completed Projects

Projects completed in this reporting period (listed above) fall under six categories. The categories are:

- Disaster Mitigation
- Drinking Water
- Highways and Major Roads
- Public Transit
- Solid Waste Management
- Wastewater

The total cost of completed projects was \$134,051,550, of which the total Federal SCF contribution was \$35,141,125. Table 2 provides details on category-specific project costs and contributions.

Table 2: Summary of Completed Projects

Project Category	Number of Completed Projects	Total Cost of Completed Projects	Total Federal PTIC-SCF Contribution on Completed Projects
Disaster Mitigation Infrastructure	1	\$6,000,000	\$1,500,000
Drinking Water Infrastructure	5	\$10,816,344	\$3,605,431
Highways and Major Roads Infrastructure	2	\$23,200,000	\$6,000,000
Public Transit Infrastructure	1	\$5,541,480	\$1,847,160
Solid Waste Management Infrastructure	1	\$3,300,000	\$1,000,000
Wastewater Infrastructure	10	\$85,193,726	\$21,188,534
Total	20	\$134,051,550	\$35,141,125

Project Results

Disaster Mitigation Infrastructure

For the current reporting period, only one Disaster Mitigation project was completed. A 1,100-metre berm was built as shown in Table 3. The project is reported to have protected properties worth \$87 million and increased the geographical area protected from disasters by 100 per cent, as per the outcomes' summary in Table 4.

Table 3: Disaster Mitigation Infrastructure Project Outputs

Output	Performance Measure	Result	Unit of Measure
Berm built	Length of berm	1,100	Metres

Table 4: Disaster Mitigation Infrastructure Projects Outcomes

Outcome	Number of Projects	Indicator	Baseline	Result	Per cent Change
Reducing the social, physical and/or economic risks	1	Estimated value of property protected (\$)	0	\$87,000,000	N/A

associated with natural hazards and/or adverse effects related to climate change.	Geographic area protected from natural disasters, i.e., flood, fire, etc. (km ²)	0	1.3	N/A
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Highways and Major Roads

For this reporting period, two Highway/Road projects were completed with an output of 24.51 lane kilometres of road and a 0.12 lane kilometer bridge, as shown in Table 5. The projects are reported to have increased access to remote areas by increasing the paved lanes by over 1,500 per cent, and reduced congestion at one interchange by 52 per cent by providing an alternative route, as well as reducing travel time, as per the outcomes' summary in Table 6.

Table 5: Highways and Major Roads Infrastructure Project Outputs

Output	Performance Measure	Result	Unit of Measure
Bridge built	Length of bridge	0.12	Lane kms
Road paved/built	Length of road	24.51	Lane kms

Table 6: Highways and Major Roads Infrastructure Projects Outcomes

Outcome	Number of Projects	Indicator	Baseline	Result	Per cent Change
Improving access for remote areas affected by resource development-related activity, and/or improved social and economic outcomes in affected communities.	1	Paved lane or new road where condition is rated as good to very good (# of kms)	1.6	26.5	1,556
Increasing efficiency and mobility by supporting efforts to reduce congestion, effectively manage traffic volume, and reduce travel time.	1	Average travel time from point A to point B (minutes)	10	4	-60
		Traffic volume over a period of time such as Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) (# of vehicles/day)	12,899	6,153	-52

Drinking Water Infrastructure

Under the Drinking Water Infrastructure category, five projects were completed. Major outputs from this category include the addition of water pumping capacity of 2.222 litres/second (192 cubic metres/day), the installation of 16,282 metres of water lines, and building reservoirs with a total water storage capacity of 76 cubic metres. Full drinking water output details are given in Table 7.

Table 7: Drinking Water Infrastructure Project Outputs

Output	Performance Measure	Result	Unit of Measure
Pumping capacity installed	Pumping capacity	2.222	Litres/second
Reservoirs built	No. of reservoirs	1	Number
Reservoirs built	Capacity of reservoirs	76	Cubic metres
Water control valves installed	Number of water control valves	1	Number

Water distribution pumps installed	Number of water distribution pumps	7	Number
Water line installed	Length of water line	16,282	Metres

Two of the drinking water projects resulted in improving the efficiency and service reliability of water treatment facilities and distribution systems. Under this outcome, a distribution system's water leakage/loss on an annual basis was reduced by 44 per cent and 26 per cent of the existing water system was upgraded and/or maintained by installation or repair of new pipes.

Another two projects resulted in the improvement of the quality of drinking water and alignment with the Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality, with one project upgrading 26 per cent of the existing water system by installation of new pipe and another project eliminating all five contaminants present in tap water by 100 per cent.

The last project increased the number of households, industries, commercial establishments, and institutions provided with access to safe drinking water by increasing the geographical area with new access to clean water, by 4,429 per cent. Full drinking water outcome details are presented in Table 8.

Major outputs from the drinking water infrastructure category include the installation of 16,282 metres of water lines and the addition of 192,000 litres per day pumping capacity.

Table 8: Drinking Water Infrastructure Projects Outcomes

Outcome	Number of Projects	Indicator	Baseline	Result	Per cent Change
Improving the efficiency and service reliability of water treatment facilities and distribution systems.	1	Distribution system's water leakage/loss on an annual basis (litres/year)	4,143	2,328	-44
	1	Existing water system upgraded or maintained by installation or repair of new pipe (m)	10,000	12,577	26
Improving the quality of drinking water and, where possible, alignment with the Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality.	1	Existing water system upgraded or maintained by installation or repair of new pipe (m)	0	162	N/A
	1	Number and type of contaminants present in tap water as a result of the project (# of contaminants)	5	0	-100
Increasing the number of households, industries, commercial establishments, and institutions provided with access to safe drinking water.	1	Geographic area with new access to clean water (km ²)	0.34	15.4	4,429

Public Transit Infrastructure

One Public Transit project was completed in this reporting period, through which a total of 11 buses were purchased as shown in Table 9. The project is reported to have improved mobility by increasing the portion of fleet that is accessible to persons with disabilities to 100 per cent. The project has also increased transit ridership by increasing transit passenger capacity from 204 to 448 seats, equivalent to 120 per cent, as per the outcomes' summary in Table 10.

Table 9: Public Transit Infrastructure Project Outputs

Output	Performance Measure	Result	Unit of Measure
Buses purchased or replaced	Number of buses	11	Number

Table 10: Public Transit Infrastructure Projects Outcomes

Outcome	Number of Projects	Indicator	Baseline	Result	Per cent Change
Improving mobility (e.g., improved access, reduced travel time).	1	Portion of fleet that is accessible to persons with disabilities (portion of fleet that is accessible in fraction or %)	96	100	4
Increasing transit ridership.		Transit passenger capacity (# of seats)	204	448	120

Solid Waste Management Infrastructure

There was one Solid Waste Management project completed in this reporting period. Through this project, a landfill with a capacity of 300,000 cubic metres was built, as shown in Table 11. The project is expected to reduce environmental impacts from landfills (e.g. greenhouse gas emissions, leaching of liquid waste soil contamination); and/or increase energy recovery from solid waste management activities. So far, the project has increased the volume of leachate managed/controlled on an annual basis from 4.7 million litres/year to 6.5 million (equivalent to 38 per cent increase), as shown in the outcomes' summary in Table 12.

Table 11: Solid Waste Management Infrastructure Project Outputs

Output	Performance Measure	Result	Unit of Measure
Landfill built	Capacity of landfill	300,000	Cubic meters

Table 12: Solid Waste Management Infrastructure Projects Outcomes

Outcome	Number of Projects	Indicator	Baseline	Result	Per cent Change
Reducing environmental impacts from landfills (e.g. greenhouse gas emissions, leaching of liquid waste soil contamination); or increasing energy recovery from solid waste management activities.	1	Volume of leachate managed/controlled on an annual basis (litres/year)	4,700,000	6,500,000	38

Wastewater Infrastructure

In the Wastewater Infrastructure category, 10 projects were completed. Major outputs from this category include the installation of 22,019 metres of wastewater lines, wastewater treatment capacity addition of 5.6 million litres per day, and the construction of a lagoon with a capacity of 195,175 cubic metres. Full wastewater output details are presented in Table 13.

Table 13: Wastewater Infrastructure Project Outputs

Output	Performance Measure	Result	Unit of Measure
Flow controls installed	Number of flow controls	10	Number
Lagoon built/capacity added	Lagoon capacity	195,175	Cubic meters
Lagoon land reclaimed	Size of lagoon land	34	Hectares
Manholes installed	Number of manholes	113	Number
Pumps/lift stations installed	Pumping capacity	553	Litres/second
Receiving station built/installed	Receiving station capacity	600	Cubic meters
Storm water line installed	Length of storm water line	5,400	Meters
Wastewater line installed	Length of wastewater line	22,019	Meters
Wastewater treatment plant installed	Wastewater treatment capacity	5.551	ML/d

Collectively, wastewater collection and treatment capacity has been increased from 6 million to 33.8 million litres per day. The geographic area connected to stormwater or wastewater treatment system has been increased by 814 per cent.

One project resulted in improving the quality of treated stormwater effluent, reducing the volume and incidents of discharge of untreated wastewater effluent. The project then increased the geographic area connected to stormwater/wastewater treatment system by more than 800 per cent.

Six projects improved the reliability or performance of the wastewater collection and/or treatment system. Three of those projects were able to reduce the number of impacted properties as a result of sanitary sewer and combined sewer overflow events on an annual basis by 98 per cent. The other three projects were able to increase the wastewater treatment and/or collection capacity by 261 per cent.

Two projects resulted in an increase in the number of households, industries, commercial establishments, and institutions with untreated wastewater connected to sanitary wastewater system. Under this outcome, one project increased the geographic area connected to stormwater/wastewater treatment system by 54 per cent and the other project had 2,815 homes connected to storm water or wastewater treatment systems.

One project resulted in reducing the volume and/or improvement in the level of treatment of wastewater by increasing the treatment and/or collection capacity from one million to 25 million litres/day. Combining this to the projects described above under the "Improving the reliability" outcome, the total wastewater treatment or collection capacity increased from six million to 33.8 million litres/day. Full wastewater outcome details are presented in Table 14.

Table 14: Wastewater Infrastructure Projects Outcomes

Outcome	Number of Projects	Indicator	Baseline	Result	Per cent Change
Improving the quality of treated stormwater effluent; reducing the volume and incidents of discharge of untreated wastewater effluent.	1	Geographic area connected to stormwater/wastewater treatment system (km ²)	0.5	4.57	814
	3	Impacted properties as a result of sanitary sewer and combined sewer overflow	116	1	-98

Improving the reliability or performance of the wastewater collection and/or treatment system.		events on an annual basis (# of properties impacted annually)			
	3	Treatment or collection capacity (litres/day)	5,000,044	8,813,283	261
Increasing the number of households, industries, commercial establishments, and institutions with untreated wastewater connected to sanitary wastewater system.	1	Geographic area connected to stormwater/wastewater treatment system (km2)	5.5	25.26	54
	1	Homes connected to stormwater/wastewater treatment system (# of homes)	0	2,815	N/A
Measurably and quantifiably reducing the volume and/or improvement in the level of treatment of wastewater effluent	1	Treatment or collection capacity (litres/day)	1,000,000	25,000,000	2,400

Conclusion

The SCF program has provided municipalities with the ability to address their infrastructural challenges and needs. The projects completed between July 2020 and December 2023 have had positive impacts on economic growth, cleaner environment and building stronger communities. For example, wastewater infrastructure projects have increased wastewater collection and treatment capacity from six million to 33.8 million litres/day, which is equivalent to 463 per cent. Additionally, drinking water projects have continued to geographically increase access to safe drinking water, and one project has increased that by more than 4,000 per cent.

These outcomes will continue to ensure safe and healthy communities, which in turn will lead to economic growth and stronger communities. As more projects from the program are completed, more beneficial outcomes are expected to continue to accrue.

Extracts from municipalities' reports on project benefits

City of Medicine Hat

The Industrial Avenue Overland Flow Protection Strategy provides flood protection to approximately 162 properties in the Flats community of Medicine Hat including the historical Medalta Clay District. The 1,100-metre earthen berm provides flood protection from a 100-year coincident flood event on the South Saskatchewan River, Industrial Avenue and Ross Creek. The completion of this project provides the residents of Medicine Hat with a sense of security during the spring and summer months when the flood threat is typically the highest.

Big Lakes County

The completed House Mountain Road project has established significant cost savings to operations in the House Mountain area for the oilfield industry, forestry and local producers when staging personnel and equipment from Highway 2 and Highway 33. This new route reduces travel time by up to 1.5 hours in each direction and provides an additional means of access in the event of emergency road closures or evacuations.

Municipal District of Bonnyville No. 87

Service interruptions (water breaks, sewer plugs, backups) due to the failing infrastructure were significantly reduced due to the installation of new collection and distribution lines. Pressure and volume in the water distribution lines has been increased and storm water effluent quality increased due to the enhancement of the storm water system.

Town of Rainbow Lake

This project served to replace 2,576.69 meters of the oldest section of the Town's water distribution system. This section of the Town is in our industrial area and serves all of the Town's industrial business sector. This area served to be the primary location of multiple water line breaks each year. The repair of these lines was continuing to increase and causing continuous disruptions to our local businesses. With the successful completion of this project we anticipate many years of peaceful enjoyment and no interruptions to our businesses.

Village of Empress

With the reduction of breaks and repairs, along with the cost of water treatment, and the increase in fire protection, this project was of great benefit to the Village. Small communities run on tight budgets, and anytime we can reduce the bottom-line costs, the better we are able to manage. Overall, this project would have been outside of our capacity to handle without the Small Community Fund grant that covered two thirds of the costs. The Village of Empress wish to convey our deep gratitude to both levels of government for partnering on this project.