PROGRAM GUIDES

INNOVATIVE BMPS

BIOLOGICAL INOCULANTS

On-Farm Climate Action Fund

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Not Accepting Applications

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PROGRAM AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Ontario Soil & Crop Improvement Association

T: 519-826-4214 **E:** oscia@ontariosoilcrop.org

View Program Online →

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Ontario On-Farm Climate Action Fund (OFCAF) provides cost-share funding to support the implementation of beneficial management practices (BMPs) to tackle climate change through reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and increasing carbon sequestration. To date, cost-share funding has been made available to farmers under three project categories: nitrogen management, cover cropping, and rotational grazing systems.

As part of a new opportunity, offered under the OFCAF Expansion Phase, the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA) is pleased to offer cost-share funding to support the merit-based adoption of:

- Biological inoculant product application for nitrogen fixation in cropping systems, and

The application of biological inoculants aims to introduce nitrogen fixing bacteria into field crops, supporting the conversion of atmospheric nitrogen (N2) into plant available nitrogen compounds (i.e., ammonia), reducing nitrogen fertilizer requirements and GHG emissions. This program is supported by Agriculture and Agrifood Canada (AAFC). While there is limited Canadian research and development focusing on these BMPs, this is an opportunity for producers to contribute to testing and monitoring that will enhance the adoption of innovative management practices across Ontario's agricultural industry.

INTAKE DATES

INTAKE	INTAKE DATES	ELIGIBLE PROJECT START DATE (INVOICE DATE)	ELIGIBLE PROJECT COMPLETION DATE	CLAIM DEADLINE	PREVIOUS INTAKE GUIDE
1	Intake open date: January 26, 2026 at 9:00 am EST Intake close date: February 17, 2026 at 9:00 am EST	April 1, 2026	March 31, 2027 for 2026-2027 projects February 15, 2028 for 2027-2028 projects	March 31, 2027 for 2026-2027 projects February 15, 2028 for 2027-2028 projects	

OFCAF cost-share funding is available to support up to 85% of a producers costs for an innovative BMP listed above. The OFCAF program offers up to $100,000 in cost-share funding per farm business – this includes any funding received or approved for nitrogen management, cover cropping, or rotational grazing projects from 2022- 2028. Eligible costs can be purchases anytime after March 1st, 2026.

As part of analyzing effects of innovative BMPs on GHG emissions and carbon sequestration, this project will also include frequent soil sampling and gas monitoring at no cost to the participant.

COST SHARE SUMMARY

85% cost-share funding up to a maximum of $100,000 per project application

PROGRAM DETAILS

Who is Eligible to Apply?

The OFCAF innovative BMP project will run from 2025 – 2028, with approved participants applying treatments in 2026 and 2027. Treatment application factors (e.g., application field, rate, method, etc.) can be changed between the two years, however, participants must make OSCIA staff aware of any changes. Participants should identify proposed costs for the complete project period within their application. Start and end dates for eligible costs and claims from approved projects for each program year are as follows:

- Program Year: 2026-2027
- Start Date: 2026-04-01
- End Date: 2027-03-31

- Program Year: 2027-2028
- Start Date: 2026-04-01
- End Date: 2028-02-15

As part of exploring and collecting data on innovative practices, participants must provide detailed records on their operational practices (e.g., application timing, equipment used, application rates, incorporation depth, etc.), agronomic data (e.g., following crop yields), and opinion on the BMP (e.g. general satisfaction, challenges or concerns, practices they would revise, etc.). This information will be collected annually through in-person or virtual meetings with OSCIA staff. Operational and agronomic data will be used for data analysis. Opinion

data will be collected with the purpose of understanding the barriers surrounding innovative BMP adoption and directing future research and funding opportunities. Aggregated data will be shared anonymously with AAFC, farmers and other agricultural stakeholders. Participants who are interested may be asked to directly support knowledge sharing events (KSE) to further communicate their experiences with their own projects.

Participants must be open to having OSCIA staff or contracted service providers access their field regularly before and after product application for the purpose of soil sampling and GHG monitoring. Greenhouse gas monitoring will require several medium sized collars (45 cm diameter) to be installed and left in the field for approximately 2 months. Four collars will be installed in the field receiving the product application, and four collars to be installed in a neighbouring field not receiving the product. OSCIA will work with participants to manage land access and communication throughout the project.

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Eligible Activities and Costs

- The cost of biological inoculant.
- Product delivery fees.
- Custom application costs for material application and incorporation. These costs must be in line with local custom rates, available through the Ontario Professional Agri-Contractors Association (OPACA): Custom Rates - Ontario Professional Agri-Contractors Association OR the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness (OMAFA): https://opaca.net/wp-content/uploads/2024ONCustomFarmworkRates-1.pdf.
- In-kind contributions of labor and farm equipment. These costs must be in line with local custom rates, available through the Ontario Professional Agri-Contractors Association (OPACA): Custom Rates - Ontario Professional Agri-Contractors Association OR the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness (OMAFA): https://opaca.net/wp-content/uploads/2024ONCustomFarmworkRates-1.pdf.
- Equipment rental costs for material application and incorporation.
- Fees for agronomic services in support of adjusting or creating a crop nutrient plan to include the approved innovative BMP, prepared by a qualified consultant (e.g. CCA, P.Ag., NASM Plan Developer).

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Ineligible Activities and Costs

- Any cost not set out as an eligible cost listed above or not specifically required for the execution of the approved project.
- Equipment purchased for the purpose of applying or transporting material.
- Costs related to incorporating other source materials (e.g., manure or compost) when applying biological inoculants to fields.
- Costs related to applying other materials (e.g., pesticides or fertilizer) when applying biological inoculants to fields.
- Invoices and/or proof of payment not issued in the approved applicant's name.
- Extended warranties, taxes, legal fees, financing charges, loan interest payments, bank fees.
- Materials or products produced by the applicant's farm business.
- Materials or services purchased outside of invoice dates outlined in the letter of approval.
- Typical farm equipment (e.g., tractors, skid steers, combines, grain carts) and related accessories or attachments (unless specified as an Eligible Activity and Cost).
- Any cost purchased from a supplier who is not at arm's length from the applicant (i.e., businesses owned the same individual(s), or by siblings or parents, through blood or marriage).
- Costs related to activities that directly influence or lobby any level of the Government.
- Lease of land, buildings or facilities, or new building construction.
- Costs of travel, hospitality, meals, and/or accommodations.
- Permits and approvals.
- Multi-use items (e.g., items that can reach beyond the scope of the project such as computers, printers, hand or power tools and attachments etc.).

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How Do I Submit My Application?

The application form is available on the OSCIA OFCAF website. Project applications must be submitted as a PDF ofcaf@ontariosoilcrop.org. Be sure to review the program guide in its entirety before completing the application. If an application is approved for a cost-share allocation, written confirmation will be provided by OSCIA. If a perspective applicant has any questions regarding the project or application process, they can contact the OSCIA at ofcaf@ontariosoilcrop.org.

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How Do I Submit a Claim?

To receive cost-share funding for eligible costs, approved applicants must submit a claim through the OSCIA portal by the eligible end-dates (detailed in the table above) for each program year. Once an end date has passed an eligible cost cannot be approved by OSCIA (e.g., a claim for purchases in October 2026 cannot be approved after March 2027). Only one claim can be processed for each program year, i.e. if a project includes multiple costs, please wait until all costs are incurred and the treatment is completed for the year before submitting a claim.

As part of an eligible project, every claimed cost must be supported by an invoice in the name of the applicant farm business. All costs being claimed must be paid for by the applicant farm business. Proof of payment must verify who paid, who received payment, the amount paid, and the date of payment. Proof of payment may be any one of the following:

- Copy of front and back of a cancelled cheque.
- Electronic image of a processed cheque.
- E-Transfer confirmation, which includes the word ‘Deposited’ or ‘Auto deposited’.
- Bill Payment confirmation from a banking institution.
- Statement from banking institution indicating to whom the processed cheque was written, or electronic payment made, and for what amount.
- Credit card or debit card receipt clearly identifying the amount and to whom the payment was made. Credit card or debit card numbers and other information, including costs that are unrelated

to the project, should be blacked out.

Cash payments for project costs are strongly discouraged, as they may not meet requirements for proof of payment. If proof of payment is not provided, OSCIA cannot support the cost. OSCIA may request any additional information from the applicant that OSCIA deems necessary (e.g., copies of any audit reports, plans or permits obtained by the applicant in conducting the project) to support a claim.

Cost-share payments are made by electronic funds transfer (EFT) in the name of the legal farm business. All cost-share funding is considered taxable income to the farm business.

OSCIA will issue a tax form (AGR-1) and report the amount paid to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA); this is why an applicant's Social Insurance Number (SIN) is collected if the applicant does not have a CRA Business Number.

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