Call for Innovation: Wildfire Tech

2025 Applicant Guide

NORTHX CLIMATE TECH
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NorthX 2025 Call for Innovation – Wildfire Tech

About NorthX

NorthX backs the builders of climate hard tech, pinpointing the critical moment when potential is immense, but capital is scarce – where our strategic investments turn local strengths into global climate solutions.

Rooted in British Columbia (BC) but global in vision, we fund climate hard tech that transforms industries and builds lasting prosperity. We unite visionaries, investors, and partners to scale technologies that drive deep decarbonization and economic growth for Canada. NorthX is where the future gets built**.**

NorthX impact to date

Since its inception in 2021, NorthX Climate Tech (formerly the BC Centre for Innovation and Clean Energy) has become the largest early-stage funder of technology that focuses on decarbonizing a majority of British Columbia's largest emitting sectors. In four short years, NorthX has generated tangible economic impact in BC and across Canada— funding 74 projects with more than $45 million in capital while catalyzing over $480 million in follow-on investment.

These investments are fueling the creation of over 880 jobs, more than 75 patents and trade secrets, and the advancement of technologies with the potential to abate 46 megatonnes of emissions per year at scale in 2035. Collectively, they will strengthen competitiveness for industries in BC and support the growth and trade diversification of our core sectors.

NorthX is also ensuring its approach to backing the builders of climate tech brings all our talent to the table. Over 65% of our portfolio companies are led and managed by underrepresented groups, while 21% include Indigenous participation at the core of their company leadership and/or business model. To accelerate commercialization, over 30% of our funding has supported university spin-outs, bridging the gap from research to market.

2024 call summary

In 2024, NorthX completed a first-of-its-kind Wildfire Tech Call for Innovation, committing $3.5 million across six groundbreaking companies advancing wildfire management and mitigation in BC. This initiative built on NorthX's 2022 research showing that the 2023 Canadian wildfires released an estimated 2.3 gigatonnes (Gt) of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions – more than three times Canada's annual emissions (694 megatonnes of CO_2e). The urgency is clear: Insurance Bureau of Canada (IBC) declared that 2024 was Canada's costliest year for severe weather, with over $8.5 billion in insured losses from wildfires, floods, and hailstorms. Beyond financial damages, these disasters forced mass evacuations, displaced tens of thousands, and inflicted fatalities and lasting trauma, highlighting the rising human and economic costs of climate-driven extremes.

The 2024 Wildfire Tech innovation call sought to directly address this urgent issue underscored by both our research and the devastating impact of wildfires on Canadian's lives and livelihoods. The six recipients and their climate tech solutions demonstrate substantial progress in wildfire detection, mitigation, and prevention across BC. Still, ongoing efforts are vital to ensure the province – and the country – can fully realize the potential of innovative wildfire management.

The opportunity

Insights from NorthX's ongoing research underscore the urgent need for Canada to adapt to wildfires as a natural and enduring element of its landscape and climate reality. In fact, according to the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre (CIFFC), this year's wildfires are already the second-worst on record in Canada, only topped by the devastating 2023 season.

Canada's extensive expertise in wildfire science and technology presents a strong foundation for forward-looking strategies that integrate cutting-edge tools with ecological stewardship. Central to these efforts are strong and intentional partnerships with First Nations communities and Indigenous rights holders whose intergenerational, place-based knowledge of fire stewardship and land management are integral to understanding and managing Canada's forests.

These traditional practices – disrupted by colonial fire suppression policies, land use changes, and climate pressures – offer invaluable guidance for restoring ecological balance. By embracing Indigenous fire stewardship and combining it with modern

innovations, Canada can enhance its wildfire resilience and develop more effective, sustainable approaches to managing wildfires across diverse ecosystems.

First Nations and Indigenous Leadership in Wildfire Resiliency and Innovation

Indigenous stewardship is a cornerstone of nature-based wildfire resilience. Cultural burning practices, rooted in generations of land-based knowledge, offer proven ecological benefits: reducing fuel loads, restoring biodiversity, and renewing ecosystems. These practices must be revitalized and structurally embedded into Canada's wildfire management strategies.

Traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) provides a systems-level understanding of land, water, air, and community interdependence. When integrated with western science and hard-tech innovation, TEK enables adaptive, place-based solutions that are both ecologically sound and socially just.

To support Indigenous-led innovation, wildfire risk platforms must be governed by FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) and CARE (Collective Benefit, Authority to Control, Responsibility, Ethics) principles. These frameworks ensure that Indigenous communities retain control over forest health data, and that governance systems respect oral traditions, localized knowledge, and sovereignty-based data sharing.

Despite their critical contributions, Indigenous communities remain underfunded and face prohibitive costs for wildfire management. Capacity-building investments are urgently needed to support leadership development, evacuation readiness, technical training, and access to monitoring technologies. Supporting Indigenous communities with the tools, capital, and decision-making authority to lead wildfire innovation is not only a matter of equity—it is a strategic imperative for Canada's climate resilience.

Building off the success of our 2024 BC-focused opportunity, NorthX is now expanding our reach to identify, fund, and scale technologies across Canada. Simultaneously, Canada has an opportunity to leverage its extensive expertise in wildfire science and technology to develop and deploy innovative solutions. Collaboratively, Canada can enhance its wildfire resilience, integrating technological advancements with Indigenous knowledge to create more effective, sustainable wildfire management strategies.

Community outreach for partnership & innovation

NorthX encourages communities – including Indigenous groups, local governments and other stakeholders – to proactively reach out and express interest in partnering and/or leading on wildfire resiliency and wildfire management initiatives. Those interested in

collaborating with NorthX to advance or co-develop technologies at the intersection of wildfire resilience and innovation please reach out to wildfiretech@northx.ca.

NorthX is committed to supporting partnerships that integrate community-driven priorities, Indigenous leadership, and technological innovation. By fostering open dialogue and collaboration, NorthX aims to accelerate the development and deployment of solutions that strengthen wildfire resilience across Canada.

2025 Wildfire Tech Call for Innovation Details

General information

Timeline

- Launch and open expression of interest (EOI) intake: October 22, 2025
- Deadline for EOIs: 5pm PST, November 27, 2025,
- Inform candidates that have successfully moved to Stage 2 (detailed proposals): December 18, 2025
- Deadline for detailed proposal: January 27, 2026
- Inform Candidates that have successfully moved to Stage 3 (legal review and project funding agreements): March 13, 2026
- Finalize project funding agreements: March 20, 2026

Application and evaluation:

- Stage 1: Applications include a 5-minute video and a short, written expression of interest.
- Stage 2: Successful applicants will advance to Stage 2, submitting a detailed proposal for competitive evaluation through NorthX's existing systems and processes.
- Stage 3: Projects undergo final due diligence. Those approved will sign project funding agreements and receive non-dilutive, milestone-based reimbursement funding from NorthX.

Funding amount: NorthX's goal is to invest up to $3 million CAD in total across multiple projects. While proponents may request up to $3 million CAD for a single project, NorthX aims to balance investments across a range of solutions and will prioritize proposals that contribute to this objective.

Eligibility

NorthX will fund Canadian companies advancing wildfire tech solutions. While projects may be conducted outside Canada, preference will be given to those demonstrating the greatest impact in BC and contributing across Canada.

Considerations

To comply with NorthX requirements, technologies being advanced within the project will fall between Technology Readiness Level (TRL) 4-9. Proposals where the entire project scope consists solely of studies or reports (including feasibility or FEED studies) will not be considered. Projects may, however, include studies or reports as part of a broader project scope. Consortium projects must be led by a single Canadian-based applicant, preferably the technology developer. Preference will be given to projects that demonstrate strong Indigenous participation and contribute to enhancing Indigenous fire stewardship and economic reconciliation in Canada.

Funding details

How NorthX funds are used

Funding is provided on a project level basis. NorthX provides reimbursements to costs incurred during the project. Each project will have various milestones in which committed capital will be disbursed. Milestones are negotiated between NorthX and the proponent in the final stage of the application process.

Only project costs are eligible for funding. Please ensure you segment project costs from general corporate and company-related costs. Applicants should be prepared to provide accurate estimates of project costs to NorthX upon request.

Timeline restrictions on NorthX funds

Projects must start within 6 months of the signing of a project funding agreement starting March 2026 for this application timeline. Projects can be no longer than 2-years in total length – projects are estimated to conclude by March 2028.

Capital at risk with NorthX funds

It is expected that applicants either have secured or can secure at least 50% of funding for the project through internal funding or external funding sources. Cash and in-kind funding are considered towards capital at risk based on the level of commitment and amount from funders and/or partners including future commitments.

General project evaluation criteria

Projects activities may include, but are not limited to, demonstrations and pilot projects, innovative implementation solutions, novel linkage of system components, mitigation or monitoring technologies and business model innovations.

Projects will be evaluated by NorthX staff and subject matter experts. The following lists the seven major decision criteria which will be applied to project proposals:

Strategic alignment

The project furthers the commercialization of a technology or business model innovation with potential to significantly reduce GHG emissions in the province and achieve substantial global GHG reductions when scaled. The technology or business model innovation is validated, developed and commercialized by either a Canadian-based company or through a project completed in Canada.

Mandate match

To be eligible, projects must be led by a Canadian-incorporated company and demonstrate a clear impact in Canada.

Team strength

Applicants present a strong team with the required skills for growth aspiration. The team possesses a depth of knowledge on what is required to successfully scale their solution.

Technology viability

The plan for technology development is realistic. Barriers have been identified and plans to overcome barriers have clear and measurable targets. Regulatory, permitting, and IP ownership issues are addressed to enable project implementation.

Corporate and project readiness

A financial plan is in place to partially fund and scale the opportunity and implementation of the project. Agreements with partners and funders should be finalized or nearing completion.

Impact readiness

Strong understanding of impact measurements required to show the climate achievements and potential of the technology and/or innovation and project outcomes. Impact reports and other documents should be available upon request.

Areas of priority

Solutions submitted to the 2025 Wildfire Tech Call for Innovation will be prioritized by NorthX based on the following criteria, as set out in the program's scoping and eligibility guidelines:

- **Alignment with hard-tech innovation:** solutions must demonstrate a strong focus on hard-tech innovation with direct emissions reduction or removal. Software solutions will only be considered if they are tightly integrated with hard-tech components.

While NorthX will consider solutions across the wildfire value chain, particular interest will be given to projects that can integrate with existing operations, and address the following key areas:

- **Prevention:** fire weather prediction systems, proactive land management approaches, and forest fuel reduction strategies, including economic biomass removal and utilization.
- **Mitigation:** early detection systems with strong use cases for private-sector industries and utilities, suppression technologies, spread-limiting innovations, and specialized equipment.
- **Adaptation:** solutions that enhance forest and community resilience to future fires, reduce emissions, and introduce innovative, scalable business models.

NorthX seeks solutions that address these critical needs, demonstrate scalability, and integrate both technological innovation and community-driven approaches to wildfire resilience and will give priority to:

- **Prescribed burning and Indigenous involvement:** tools and planning assistance to safely scale up hazard reduction burning, with a focus on Indigenous leadership and involvement and support for First Nations-led practices.
- **Indigenous leadership and partnerships:** solutions led by, or developed in partnership with, Indigenous communities. Projects that integrate traditional ecological knowledge and advance economic reconciliation will be favored.

Other factors that will be favorably considered include:

- **Regional impact and scalability:** solutions with clear potential to scale across multiple sites, demonstrating impact in BC and Canada-wide.
- **Business model strength:** clear, near-term business models, and robust commercialization pathways beyond government procurement, including

engagement with private sector buyers, insurance partners, utilities, or other non-governmental customers.

- **Multiplier effect:** solutions with strong potential for dual-use or multi-use applications such as agriculture, utilities, insurance, or other relevant industries in addition to wildfire.
- **Testing and validation:** applications with clear pathways identify potential partners for field testing and operational integration, or projects leading to pilot programs, validation, and demonstration with end users.
- **Co-benefits and ecosystem restoration**: technologies that deliver additional benefits—such as ecosystem restoration, biodiversity conservation, and community resilience.
- **Regulatory and implementation feasibility**: realistic plans for regulatory approvals, necessary permits, certifications and timely project start.
- **Economic and social benefits:** solutions that strengthen socio-economic outcomes for communities, including capacity-building and local employment.

Application process

Stages of application

A staged application process will be used to funnel project proposals from initial inquiry to final evaluation, as outlined below.

Stage 1 – Expression of Interest (“EOI”)

The first stage of proposal includes an expression of interest that requires a short video and provision of basic details about the proposed project, the proponent advancing the project and the alignment with NorthX objectives and criteria.

Expressions of interest will be submitted via a web-based application form that will be available October 22, 2025. At this stage NorthX expects submissions to involve non-confidential disclosures submitted without a requirement for any non-disclosure agreement.

We encourage participants to refer to the project evaluation criteria as guidance in preparing for submission. To help you and your team prepare for the online submission, a list of information to submit in the EOI is provided for your reference at the end of this document.

More about your video submission

Companies are invited to submit a 5-minute video that provides an overview of the project, and clearly articulates the following:

1. **Project overview:** briefly introduce your project and the innovation you're developing. What makes it unique and how does it strengthen wildfire resilience, response, or recovery?
2. **Funding request and use:** what amount are you requesting from NorthX, and how would these funds accelerate your project? Please note any funding already secured, or applications in progress.
3. **Commercialization pathway**: what is the current commercial status of your technology? Who are your target customers or first adopters? What is your business plan and timeline to reach market readiness and scale?
4. **Implementation**: where and how do you plan to test or implement your technology, and what is the status or path for any required certifications, permits, or approvals?
5. **Partnerships and collaboration:** describe your key partnerships, including Indigenous participation, community involvement, and collaboration with industry, utilities, insurers, or other stakeholders, and how these relationships strengthen your project and/or technology.
6. **Impact and alignment:** what measurable impacts do you expect, including GHG emissions reductions, community benefits, and contributions to wildfire risk reduction, and how will you validate these outcomes? How does your project align with NorthX's mandate and priority areas?

Videos will be uploaded via the web-based application form.

Stage 1 evaluation will consist of a preliminary review of proposal details to ensure eligibility against program requirements. Eligible projects will undergo a competitive review of the proposed projects against the NorthX evaluation criteria as well as in comparison to all other project proposals submitted. In some cases, we may contact the applicants to request additional information related to the project proposal. A limited number of project proposals will be invited to execute a confidentiality agreement and proceed to Stage 2.

Stage 2 – Detailed proposal submission and review

This stage includes preparation and submission of a detailed proposal, detailed due diligence, third-party assessments conducted by experts in their relative fields and multiple engagements with the NorthX project review team.

NorthX will provide Stage 2 applicants with a document template for the detailed proposal submission. Applicants will be required to enter into a confidentiality agreement with NorthX before confidential or detailed information on the project is submitted.

Upon review of the written submission, NorthX may elect to conduct a review meeting with project leads and request further documentation to support the project proposal.

Project proposals will be reviewed against NorthX evaluation criteria and will be ranked competitively with other Stage 2 project proposals. NorthX and their third-party reviewers will assess proposals independently and in relation to each other to identify projects most aligned with the strategic objectives of this call for innovation. Multiple projects may be funded, the amounts determined by the requirements of each project.

Successful project proposals will be subject to a final stage of due diligence review after which they may proceed to Stage 3.

Stage 3 – Funding decision:

Successful project proponents will work with NorthX to develop and agree on a project funding agreement ("PFA") which will identify obligations of all parties and will become a binding agreement governing the relationship between NorthX and the project proponent(s). The PFA will also include key milestones for fund release and reporting requirements.

Information for the expression of interest

General information

Company name, incorporation, address, website
Project title, short summary, and location
Main contact and details

Company overview

Applicant description
Technology / innovation principle
Technology baseline reference
Company size
Management / project team structure

Project specific data

Project description, status, and location

Project partners
Technology readiness level (current and expected at the end of the project)
IP ownership status
Regulatory status of project
Commercial readiness level of project
Diversity and inclusion of project

Effect on GHG emissions

How does the project replace / remove GHG emissions?
What is the project level GHG emissions impact and over what period?
What is the scaled level GHG emission impact and over what period?
How does this innovation compare to the technology baseline on emissions?
Indicate how GHG emissions claims are validated, if any validation?

Project costs and funding request

Project total costs
Funds requested from NorthX
Funding requested start date
Funding estimated end date
Remaining funds status