

# Interim Guidance for Submitting Investigative Use Licence Applications for Renewable Energy Projects

---

## Applications

Application Management System (AMS) is the portal for submitting applications related to energy project development. Applicants will need to register through the [Petrinex system](#) before creating an account in AMS. While the [AMS User Manual](#) includes comprehensive guidance for the oil and gas sector, this document highlights sections specifically relevant to renewable energy projects under investigative use.

To submit an application for an Investigative Use Licence (IUL) and related permits, you may not need to complete every section of the AMS application; however, the following tabs are mandatory:

- **Spatial data**
- **Administrative**
- **Land**
- **Stewardship**
- **Archaeology**
- **Rights Holder Engagement**
- **First Nations**
- **Maps and Plans**

**Application type will be:** New ERAA

**Activity Type:** Associated Activity for Investigative Use (INV)

In the **Summary Section**, you must indicate if there is already a tenure issued for the project and indicate the tenure licence number. In that instance, include the tenure document as an attachment in the “**Other**” category.

**Spatial Data:** the first step is to upload spatial data which must meet the requirements for format and naming convention as outlined in the detailed manual: [AMS-Spatial-Data-Submission-Standards.pdf](#). AMS will validate and automatically calculate land overlap based on the uploaded spatial data.

Additionally, the following maps must be provided with the application:

- PDF map at the 1:20,000 scale
- PDF map at the 1:250,000 scale

In the **Stewardship Tab**, you must address how the project meets the Government’s Environmental Objectives identified in the [Environmental Protection and Management Regulations \(EPMR\)](#) and further explained in the [Environmental Protection and Management Guideline \(EPMG\)](#). This is usually communicated in a report format and should include all potential values that may be impacted and how the proponent plans on assessing, avoiding and or mitigating. For investigative use, an assessment based on publicly available data is acceptable, i.e., a desktop review. If wildlife, fish or habitat assessments have been completed, include them as attachments in this section. Providing the decision maker with accurate and recent assessment is of benefit to the applicant, as this may reduce the need for restrictive conditions to protect values.

In some instances, proponents may need to apply for federal permits: to [Fisheries and Oceans Canada](#) if an activity could potentially harm fish or fish habitat, or the [Canadian Wildlife Service](#) if migratory or Species at Risk will be impacted.

For the **Archaeological Tab**: Archaeological deliverables are not currently required as part of the IUL application package for renewable projects. Under the “Archaeology Details” in AMS, “Administrative Change Only” should be set to “yes”.

The Heritage Conservation Act applies throughout the province and protects both known and unknown archaeological sites. Heritage Conservation Act permits may be necessary to support investigative work. Applicants should be aware archaeological deliverables under the Heritage Conservation Act will be needed when applying for an Energy Resource Activities Act (ERAA) facility permit.

Applicants should contact [Archaeology@bc-er.ca](mailto:Archaeology@bc-er.ca) if they require application-specific information or guidance on Heritage Conservation Act section 12.2 and section 12.4 permit applications.

**Rights Holder Engagement Tab:** Proponents must notify Rights Holders (including but not limited to: forest tenure holders, range tenure holders, guide outfitters, trapline holders), local governments and federal bodies that could be impacted by the investigative activities. Specifically, if land impacts are proposed over tenured land, you must provide documentation to show Rights Holders have been notified. Detailed information can be found in Chapter 6 of the [Energy Resource Activity Application Manual](#). In AMS, upload the following attachments:

- [Line list document](#)
- Engagement materials
- Engagement log
- All official correspondence

Please note impacted Rights Holders can make a [written submission](#) directly to the BCER, in which case you will be informed if a submission is received by the BCER.

Proponents should pre-engage with First Nations whose traditional territories overlap with the project, as per the Consultative Areas Database. In the **First Nations Tab**, pre-engagement logs must be included. Proponents should refer to [Guidance for Pre-Engaging Indigenous Nations \(v1.1\)](#) for a complete list of the information requirements.

- Pre-engage with First Nations whose territories overlap the project.
- Fill out and upload the [First Nation Project Description Form](#).
- Upload pre-engagement logs and all relevant documentation.

## Investigative plan

There is no tab for the investigative plan: applicants must upload a PDF of their investigative plan to AMS in the **“Other” category**. Your investigative plan should be a standalone document with all relevant information on the activities that will take place. Appendices can be incorporated in the investigative plan. Clearly state the date and version of the plan.

The investigative plan must, at a minimum, include the following:

- Planned number and locations of monitoring equipment, borehole sites or any other activity that will cause disturbance on the land.
- An estimate of the footprint (in hectares) for any new access and disturbance, semi-permanent structures and boreholes.
- How the area will be accessed.
- If vegetation clearing will be needed and if you are requesting a cutting permit as part of the application.
- Assessments to be conducted during the investigative phase and estimated timeline.
- In the case of habitat, fish or wildlife assessments, clearly state what method(s) you are planning on using. Be aware you may need to apply for a [Wildlife Act permit through AMS](#) if you are to conduct inventory that includes animal handling.
- How and when restoration activities will happen. This section should cover equipment removal, remediation and revegetation.

## Optional sections

If you require an **Occupant Licence to Cut (OLTC)\*\***, fill out the [OLTC application form](#) available on the provincial website and attach it to the application in the **“Other” category**. Ensure the form is completed by a Registered Professional Forester and a map of the area to be cut is included.

*\*\*Please note the mechanism for obtaining a permit to cut timber on Crown Land may change subject to decisions by the Province of British Columbia and the finalization of associated regulations. Announcements will be posted on the BCER website. If you are preparing to submit an application after such changes may be made, and you require a Master Licence to Cut (MLTC), fill out the [MLTC application form](#) in the **Forestry Tab**.*

If you require an authorization for stream crossing(s), **Changes In and About a Stream (CIAS)** must be included in the shape files and the CIAS Tab must be filled out. Authorizations for stream crossings can also be issued as a standalone permit. A Fisheries Habitat Assessment, signed and stamped by a Qualified Environmental Professional with a Registered Professional Biologist designation, must be submitted when the proponent proposes crossing(s) of fish-bearing streams. The application will be reviewed to ensure it's compliant with the [Water Sustainability Act](#) and the [Water Sustainability Regulation](#).

-1 shapefile for the stream crossings (point data)

**Roads** can be submitted as part of a multi-activity application or as a single activity application. Roads will get a unique activity identifier. Where the proponent intends on using existing Forest Service Roads, they should seek a formal road use agreement and submit as an attachment in the 'Other' Category.

**Agricultural Tab:** The Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) is a provincial zone in which agriculture is recognized as the priority use. ALR is a designation of land under the Agricultural Land Commission Act. The purpose of the ALR is to preserve agricultural land; its boundaries are based on the agricultural capability of the soil, not on the current use or ownership of the land. When applicants plan to conduct investigative activities causing a soil disturbance (e.g., boreholes or installations of semi-permanent equipment such as meteorological towers) that overlaps ALR land, an agricultural land assessment signed and stamped by a B.C. registered agrologist must be provided.

An agricultural land assessment includes:

- Area assessment documenting current land resource and agricultural use.
- Pre-development site assessment to document baseline site information for soil management and reclamation planning.
- Recommendations for soil conservation and surface water management.
- Reclamation plan.

You can include an application to have a **Short-term Water Withdrawal (STWU)** out of a point of diversion (POD). A shapefile for the POD (point data) must be included. STWU applications can also be submitted later as a standalone request.

## Amendments

Once BCER has issued authorization(s) for the project, changes to boundaries and changes to management plans should be made via an amendment request and referencing the Application Determination (AD) number that will be provided to you by the BCER if an IUL permit is issued.

## Additional Guidance

As with all BCER documents, this manual does not take the place of applicable legislation. Readers are encouraged to become familiar with the acts and regulations and seek direction from BCER staff for clarification. Some activities may require additional requirements and approvals from other regulators or

create obligations under other statutes. It is the applicant and permit holder's responsibility to know and uphold all legal obligations and responsibilities.

Throughout the document there may be references to guides, forms, tables and definitions to assist in creating and submitting all required information. Additional resources include:

- [Glossary and acronym listing](#) on the Regulator website.
- [Documentation and guidelines](#) on the Regulator website.
- [Frequently asked questions](#) on the Regulator website.
- [Advisories, bulletins, reports and directives](#) on the Regulator website.
- [Regulations and Acts](#) listed on the Regulator website.