

Grain Farmers of Ontario

INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING A RESEARCH PROPOSAL

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1. Introduction

Grain Farmers of Ontario aims to address the research needs of barley, corn, oat, soybean and wheat through four overall priority areas:

Agronomy and Production
Breeding and Genetics

Weed, Disease and Insect Pests
Crop Utilization and Crop Quality

Within each priority area, Grain Farmers of Ontario invests funds in projects of high priority to Ontario farmers, strives to maximize public sector research investment, and encourages private sector research investment. Our goal is to target our research, innovation and knowledge transfer initiatives toward opportunities that will enhance our farmer-members' returns.

All proposals submitted to the Research Coordinator must follow the guidelines outlined in this document.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the Research Coordinator, Natalie DiMeo (ndimeo@gfo.ca; 519-767-4138).

2. Who is eligible to apply?

Any individual or organization (academic institution, private industry, government or non-government organization) from Ontario or elsewhere with ability and/or a track record of success in carrying out high quality scientific research projects in areas relevant to the Ontario grain industry is eligible to apply.

3. When are applications considered?

An annual call is held each year. The call usually opens in September and closes in November. When a call has been opened, the specific dates can be reviewed on <http://gfo.ca/Research/Research-Programs>

4. Timeframe for projects

Projects of duration between one and five years may be submitted.

5. Consultation of proposals

Grain Farmers of Ontario Research staff welcomes inquires on proposal ideas year-round. We also provide feedback on proposals prior to and during the Call for Research Proposals where time allows. Ideally, researchers will have contacted us prior to the call for maximum opportunity for input.

Consultation is required for proposals targeting the priority area of Crop Utilization & Crop Quality. The consultation questionnaires can be found in **Appendix 1**.

6. Confidentiality of proposals

All those who review proposals submitted to Grain Farmers of Ontario are required to sign a statement of confidentiality in their review of the proposed research.

7. Letters of Support

We strongly encourage researchers to submit letters of support from the key stakeholders of the research indicating how the research will benefit them.

8. Proposal form

The proposal and budget templates have been created for use on Microsoft Office. Special features will be lost when using other word processing or spreadsheet software. Please contact Natalie if other document types are required.

The required proposal and budget templates can be found on <http://gfo.ca/Research/Research-Programs>. Submit these files in their original format (no PDFs or photocopies, please).

Examples of how to fill out the Proposal template can be found in **Appendix 2**. Examples of how to fill out the Budget template can be found in **Appendix 3**.

9. Commercialization/Marketing plan

A commercialization or marketing plan is not required for each project. We expect a rough commercialization plan for those proposals with the potential to discover or lead to innovating a product, process, technology, etc.

A commercialization or marketing plan will be defined in the agreement based on the plan submitted in the proposal and consultation with the Research Coordinator.

10. Suggested resources for estimated economic impact

The following are suggested resources to use to give some monetary value to a change in a system, including production system, disease monitoring, new trait or mycotoxin test. If you have any questions, please contact Natalie.

- OMAFRA Budgeting Tools – Excel calculators produced by John Molenhuis, Business Analysis and Cost of Production Program Lead <https://tinyurl.com/OMAFRA-BudgetTools>
- OMAFRA Publication 60 - Field Crop Budgets – Sample average costs of production compiled by John Molenhuis <https://tinyurl.com/OMAFRA-pub60>
- Input cost comparison research report list – Research reports on farm input cost comparisons starting 2007 by Ken McEwan, University of Guelph, Ridgetown Campus <https://tinyurl.com/McEwan-InputCosts>

11. Research work plan

For each objective listed in the proposal, please provide enough detail for a peer-reviewer to assess the scientific design, including data collection methods, number of replications, number of sites or site-years, statistical analysis plan, etc. Proposal deliverables should follow the SMART principles (Specific Measurable Achievable Realistic Time-based). These will be carefully reviewed to ensure the scientific merit of the project and the robustness of the results to generate useful research deliverables.

While recognizing that not all research goes as planned, we are interested in tangible research

deliverables/milestones that will indicate successful completion of each project objective.

Research deliverables will be defined in the agreement based on the submitted proposal.

12. Knowledge transfer plan

While recognizing that not all research goes as planned, we are interested in your plans to transfer key results back to the target audiences to encourage adoption, uptake and/or commercialization where appropriate.

When identifying KT deliverables and levels of audience engagement, consider the following questions:

- How much scientific background knowledge is there on the topic? If less is known, consider a lower level of audience engagement.
- What is the goal of the knowledge transfer plan – to bring research to the next step, to change a management practice on-farm, etc.? Deciding on the desired goal helps in planning the scope of the knowledge transfer and in selecting the appropriate way to reach an audience.
- Have you considered what factors may reduce the uptake of results by the target audience and who may help communicate findings to the target audience?
- Does knowledge transfer need to happen in phases in order to release the results at appropriate times of the year?

Knowledge transfer deliverables will be defined in the agreement based on the knowledge transfer plan submitted in the proposal and consultation with the Research Coordinator.

13. Funding policy

- A maximum of 25% overhead can be charged on incurred research project expenses when they are necessary and justified by the research institution.
- Cell phone bills and student laptops are ineligible costs for research project budgets.

14. Budget

Researchers need to carefully consider their annual budget allocations and total project cost; once a project is approved, the total project cost is fixed. If the project includes matching funding partners, very stringent spending guidelines may need to be followed (e.g. forecasted budget was fixed across years in Growing Forward 2 program). Include only funding that is directly applicable to the proposal activities/objectives and do not include funding for other related projects.

Please fill out an annual budget and total project cost on the Proposal - Call for Research Proposals Word file and the budget by expense type and fiscal year on the Budget - Call for Research Proposals Excel file. For examples of budget descriptions, please review **Appendix 3**.

Research Years – The budget template has been set to follow a Research Year (April 1 to March 31) to encompass typical matching funding partners' fiscal year.

Labour – salaries are eligible for individuals responsible for conducting activities directly related to the research project. Please include in the description details of the personnel involved, including job title, hours worked on project-specific activities (hourly/daily rate or percent FTE) and total amount paid.

Supplies – costs for consumables used for work directly related to the project. Also includes items that do not fit the definition given for “Equipment” category (see below). Please include in the description a list of the types of supplies. Please note that cell phone bills are ineligible costs.

Equipment – equipment is non-consumable, tangible property with a lifespan of more than one year which is purchased for work directly related to the project. Equipment rentals belong in the “Other” expense type (see below). Please note that student laptops and cell phones are ineligible costs.

- Less than \$1,000 each - Please include in the description a list of planned equipment purchases in general categories (e.g. micropipettes, lab glassware, etc.).
- Over \$1,000 each - Please include in the description a list of each planned equipment purchase over \$1,000 with the estimated cost.

Communications – includes costs associated with the knowledge transfer plan, including publications, graphic design, editing, printing costs, conference registration, etc. Please include in the description a list of the types of communication costs and associated cost.

Travel - research – includes travel costs associated with field work, including mileage, vehicle rental, gas and airfare. For mileage, please estimate total km and the rate/km. All travel must be directly related to research proposed.

Travel – knowledge transfer - includes travel costs associated with conferences, meetings and knowledge transfer, including mileage, vehicle rental, gas and airfare. For mileage, please estimate total km and the rate/km. All travel must be directly related to research proposed.

Other – includes expenses directly related to the project that don't fit into previous categories, such as equipment rentals, land rentals, service contracts, etc. Please estimate the rate as per unit (time, sample or area, etc.) for each rental and service contract.

Overhead – a maximum of 25% overhead may be charged on research project expenses.

15. Additional funding

Grain Farmers of Ontario strongly encourages partnerships amongst research institutions and with other funding agencies, where relevant. Grain Farmers of Ontario funding may be conditional on other sources of funding being awarded, which will be stated in our award letter. If you would like to discuss linkages with other funding programs, please contact us.

Please indicate all sources and amounts of additional cash funding for the proposed research, and specify whether each source is pending or is confirmed. Pending is considered any funding

that has been applied for or will be applied for.

In-kind contributions could include land usage, supplies, equipment usage, scholarships or bursaries that are directly related to the objectives of the proposal. However, labour of principal investigators is not considered when reviewing in-kind contributions.

16. Project review process and timeline

Proposals are submitted to the Research Coordinator, and then are reviewed by Research Department staff and the Research Committee. Research staff provide support on scientific merit, ability to achieve research deliverables, and provide a review of similar projects to avoid duplication. The Research Committee is composed of eight farmer-members. The role of the Research Committee is to identify proposals that have the greatest potential to deliver the highest value to Ontario grain farmers.

Examples of how to fill out the sections of the proposal template can be found in **Appendix 2**. Examples of how to fill out the budget template can be found in **Appendix 3**.

To help ensure that the research proposal is not a duplication of previously funded projects, please visit Grain Farmers of Ontario's Project Database at <http://gfo.ca/Research/Projects> and OMAFRA's Research Management System at <https://tinyurl.com/OMAFRA-RMS>.

Proposals are reviewed using the following questions as guides:

- **Project objectives:** Are the objectives reasonable and achievable in the time frame proposed? Do the objectives generate information not already known (i.e. duplication of other work or not)? Do the objectives provide good value for Ontario farmers?
- **Methods:** Are the methods robust enough to achieve the objectives and generate useful information? Is the research capacity (e.g. personnel and equipment) sufficient?
- **Clear and useful deliverables:** Are the deliverables Specific Measurable Achievable Realistic Time-based (SMART)? Are they useful and will they add value to their field of study? Are they achievable based on objectives and methods?
- **Effective and appropriate KT plan:** Do the deliverables allow the researcher to develop useful KT products/communications? Have they identified the relevant audiences and developed an appropriate plan to reach them?
- **Appropriate budget:** Is the budget appropriate to achieve the deliverables? Is it underestimated or over-estimated? Has the researcher budgeted for their KT plan? Has the researcher pursued the appropriate matching funding sources? If not, what sources should be pursued?
- **Overall opinion.**

Timeline

- **September 13, 2017 to November 24, 2017:** the Call for Research Proposals is open.
- **December to January:** review of proposals by staff, Research Committee members and potentially external reviewers. Questions and comments may be sent to researchers.

- **Late-January:** the Research Committee meets over two days to rank proposals and recommend proposals for funding to the Board of Directors.
- **Early-February:** Board of Directors meets and reviews the proposal recommendation. Research staff is notified of funding approvals.
- **February to mid-March:** the Research Coordinator contacts researchers to notify them of the Board's decision.

17. Documentation submitted after the deadline for project proposals

Once a project proposal has been submitted, the Research Coordinator may request any missing or additional details. No unsolicited documentation is permitted after the deadline date for the receipt of project proposals.

18. Appeals of projects declined for funding

Decisions on proposals are considered final. Feedback on proposals declined for funding can be requested and will be provided when time permits.

19. Submit a proposal

All submitted Project Proposals will receive an email confirming receipt within 2-3 business days. Please electronically submit the completed Proposal Application Package to the Research Coordinator. Proposals not using the templates provided each year will not be considered during the proposal review process.

Deadline: Friday, November 24, 2017 at 4pm EST