<u>Tier I Town Hall Transcripts</u>

October 21, 2019

Stacy Favrin: So I'm, ah, I'm really excited for the change and to be part of the UofG Office of Research. So the first hour of the meeting will be a town hall so this will be a generic overview of the Tier 1 research program. We'll take a short break and then, uh, I'll turn the floor over to Cassandra Lofranco, she's the research program coordination manager at OMAFRA for the discovery and dialogue portion of the meeting which, uh, will be a deeper dive into the, I think the, stewardship priorities and give an opportunity for researchers to interact with OMAFRA staff and ask questions specifically about the priorities.

So I'm going to provide an overview of, uh, all the programing that we have lined up just very briefly some draft timelines for you. What's new for 2019. There are a number of things that are new this year so it is truly great you are here - to the folks online, as well. And then, please, if you have a question as I go, feel free to interrupt me and ask your question - I will repeat it for the benefit of those on Webex, but don't feel like you have to hold your questions 'til the end.

So the call for full proposals launched, uh, October 1st, our next generation research management system wasn't quite ready so that launched a week and a bit later. Uh, in intent field, and I'm going to explain this later, are due November 6th and full proposals for the program are due November 26th. The Tier II research program, uh, actually just launched on Friday in next gen. RMS so if you're wanting to submit a Tier II proposal, you can do that now, uh, in next gen. RMS. Zach, who's sitting over there is the program lead for Tier II if you have any questions and his contact information is, uh, in this slide deck. This presentation is already, also, already posted on the Alliance website so don't feel you have to take detailed notes, it's already there for you to be able to access. The Knowledge Translation and Transfer program and Gryphon's LAAIR, we're anticipating, uh, launching by the end of the month, uh, it may or may not happen exactly on October 30th but we are anticipating a launch in the next few weeks for that program and the Highly Qualified Personnel scholarship program, mid to late November.

So there are a number of significant changes that are new for this year, uh, OMAFRA has undertaken a new approach to research priority setting so the priorities document will look different than you've been used to seeing for the last 10 years or so. We are using a single stage call for proposals, so full proposals only, this year. Development and submission of proposals will be in our next generation Research Management System and I'll talk to all of these in a little bit in more detail. There is a new research team invitation process, there are new resources to support your knowledge mobilization efforts related to your proposal and there is no signed OR5 form needed anymore. Um, it gets filled out in next gen. RMS and then approvals are taken, uh, take place online, that's not something you will have to quarterback anymore.

Audience member: I have a question.

Stacy: Sure.

Audience member: I just don't quite understand. You say that there's just a single full proposal stage.

Stacy: That's correct.

Audience member: Then you talk about an intent due November 6.

Stacy: Yes, I'll explain that. There's not a full, um, review stage for the intent process. Um, once I speak to the intent stage, if you still have a question, let me know. Hopefully I'll be able to provide some clarity there.

Audience member: But, you would have to go through a… We would have to go through an OR5 form. Maybe a week before… no?

Audience member/Stacy: chatting at the same time – hard to hear

Stacy: No, for the intent stage, no, no. Um, it's a good question though, no one's asked that. There is no intent, uh, no OR5 form needed for the November 6th date.

So I'm not going to talk a whole lot about priorities because Cassandra will do that but there's been a lot of effort undertaken over the last year at OMAFRA to develop a new Ministry wide research agenda that is guiding all of the Ministry's research and innovation activities, including, programing under the Ontario Agri-food Innovation Alliance. The priorities are now aligned within the Ministry's three core business areas which are stewardship, protection and assurance, and economic development. I realize it's hard to see there but the priority areas are food safety, animal health and welfare, plant health and protection, soil health, water quality and quantity, sustainable production systems, productive land capacity, competitive production systems, innovative products and product improvement, trade market targeted, sector growth opportunities. So these are replacing the seven themes that you have been used to seeing over the last while. Each of these priority areas, have, uh, the core businesses, in general, have goals. The priority areas have focus areas and then the appendix to the priorities document has research questions and these are the specific questions that you need to align your proposals with, so please, uh, make sure you're taking a good read of the appendix to the document. Some of the questions are not really intuitive as far as where they are placed. So, the example I've been using is there is a trout breeding project in product development. You would naturally maybe think that would be, um, somewhere else in animal production so, um, just please make sure you're a giving a good read of the document, identifying the question you are going to answer and then that will determine what your focus and priority area is going to be when you select that, um, in the RMS. I will also note that, um, the research management system is used by OMAFRA to administer all of their program areas. There are focus areas within these priority areas that are listed that don't have research questions, there's is going to be addressed by other Ministry programming so again make sure that you're starting with the research question.

So I noticed it's uh, noted it's a single stage call and the main driver for this is to support earlier notification. We've heard for many years that we are notifying too late for faculty that have field seasons, it makes it difficult to get their projects underway in time, uh, and this earlier notification, targeting the end of February will also allow, um, recruitment of grad students earlier, in a more appropriate time in the academic cycle. I mentioned the intent field. This is not a formal submission process. Because, um, we're doing a single stage process and we want to be as efficient as we can with our cycle, we are asking that there are two fields in next gen. RMS that are, are filled in. There's no submission date, we will just query the system for that information, sorry, there's a, there's a date but there is no submission button so we ask that you have the general tab filled in. This is where you have you title, your name, um, you pick your priority and your focus area, there's a short project description, there's not a lot of heavy duty content in that tab so we're asking that you have that tab filled in and you're suggested peer reviewer tab by November 6th. And that does a couple things – it allows us to get ahead of, uh, peer review, uh, planning so that, uh, when the submissions do come in on the 26th, we can hit the ground running with, uh, reaching out to peer reviewers and providing them proposals and then, uh, also it helps with review committee planning. It's been very stable over the last number of years, our committees have aligned very closely with our themes. Because of the new priorities, because of the way the questions are aligned, uh, and this is our first time through this, it's going to take a little bit more planning to align proposals, align our research program directors, um, with the committees. We also want to manage reviewer time, recognizing that these are full proposals, so we don't want to have, uh, very large committees. Letters of intent can sometimes permit larger committees, but we want to have, uh… I guess respect the time of our reviewers that do this off the corner of their desk. So, it's just going to take a bit more planning this year and having these fields filled out in advance of the actual submission deadline, uh, will be very helpful for us; but you don't need your OR5 at that time and there's no formal submission, you just make sure those are complete. Does that… does that help with your question?

no verbal answer but likely a head nod by audience member

Uh, no change to project duration or the total award, 80k per year for total project value of up to $240,000 up to 36 months in length.

Under the leadership of Kelly Jackson and her team, uh, at OMAFRA, both OMAFRA and UofG have been working very hard at the development of our next generation management system. The new system has improved security, some improved administrative functionality, uh, hopefully, a better user experience. All of our new fall programming will launch in next gen. RMS. If you have any projects, uh, currently active, you will continue, for the time being, to do your, uh, reporting and extension request in the current system. And then at some point, we will do a major data migration of, uh, all the information in the current RMS but, uh, that is to, the timing of that is to be determined, we will let you know.

As we were doing our user acceptance testing of this system, we did notice that Internet Explorer, some functionality doesn't work quite right so if you can avoid using Internet Explorer as the browser for next gen., that would be great. I believe it's Chrome, that seems to work the best but other browsers are okay. Perhaps, you can just avoid Internet Explorer.

Audience member: Oh, there's a question at the back.

Stacy Favrin: Oh yeah, mhmm.

Audience member: So, Safari works okay? Because usually, I think it's the other way around.

Stacy and audience member talk at the same time

Stacy Favrin: Pardon me?

Audience member: Safari works okay?

Stacy: I think Safari was okay… Kelly's not in the room, um, but the advice to us was just that Internet Explorer is the one you really want to avoid.

So we have migrated all faculty contact information into next gen. So, you, uh, if you had a login in the old system, you have a presence in the new system, uh, for security reasons, we cannot migrate passwords. So, you do not have to create a new registration in next gen. RMS, if you had one in the old system, you will just go to the link there, hit 'forget password', you will put your UofGuelph email address in, submit it and then you'll get an email and it's a process you're familiar with. You will get a temporary password and a login and you'll ask to change the password and then you should be good to go. If you have any problems though, our research coordination, uh, coordinators, Zach and Vanessa here, can, uh, can help.

hand raised

Stacy: Yeah?

Audience member: Well, I tried to do it on Friday and it didn't work…

Stacy: … it didn't work.. okay, so I'll have you maybe chat with Vanessa and if she's online, she might even be able to help you but…

Audience member: *inaudible*

Stacy Farvin: So, uh, you did the forget password and, uh… Okay…

You know, we're hopeful for a completely seamless migration to the new system, it might be a bit of a pipe dream, so if there are, um, any issues as you're going through, we would just, appreciate your patience for sure. Once you are able to login, there is a button that says 'determine eligibility question', er, it says 'determine eligibility', and there is a question for you to answer, uh, just confirming you're eligible to hold an award with the program and then once you do that, you can, uh, access the, the system. It does look similar to the old one in the sense that there's tabs across the top that you just migrate through the tabs and fill out information. So UofG faculty members are eligible to be lead applicants and co-applicants as are adjunct faculty, if they can hold research funding with the University of Guelph. And prior to being awarded any new project, please make sure if you have any outstanding reports in the system that those are, um, those are submitted and current.

We have a number of supports to you, to help you navigate the new system. The Tier I program guide, is available on the Alliance website. If you go to research, apply for operating funding, at the bottom, there's, there's actually a fair number of attachments now, there's the program guide, there is, uh, offline templates, so some faculty, we've heard, kind of like to develop their proposal and their budget offline and not do that immediately, sometimes they use a Word version to circulate to collaborators, etc., so that is available to you if you want to avail yourself of that. There is also an Excel template for the budget, for the, uh, expenditures. When you first log on to next gen. RMS, there's an icon that says 'help'. If you click on that, there is, uh, a lot of screenshots and kind of a play by play of, of how to navigate through the application process. There, um, are little tool tips, so as you're moving through the application and the tabs, there's instructions but there's also little question marks in a circle. If you hover your cursor over that, there will be like a little pop up that will provide a little bit of additional guidance about what that field is for. And then there are KTT manual and sample plans, which in a few moments, I'll let Shannon explain. If you have technical difficulties in the RMS, and it seems like it's an IT problem, we encourage you to reach out to Kelly Jackson at OMAFRA at rms@ontario.ca, if you have any questions about how to fill in the application as you're going along, uh, Zach and Vanessa, are here to help. I've been with the office since, uh, mid-August, Zach just, uh, after me, Vanessa, just before me but we've, uh, tried very hard to get up to speed very quickly on the, on the programming, and we'll do our very best to support you through the process.

I noted there's a new team member invitation process so when you get to the team tab, there's instructions there but there's a button on the left hand sidebar that says 'invitations', a pop-up window will open up, that's where you put in your proposed team members. You can save them and go back and edit that at any time, but, uh, prior to submitting your full proposal, we would ask that you invite your team members. So, there's a button that says 'invite', they just get an email saying, uh, 'you've been invited', it'll have your name and the title and the submission number to be a collaborator on the project. They will confirm or decline the invitation, you've probably wanted to reach out offline to these folks before then anyways. You also have an option, uh, obviously, of selecting a co-applicant. A co-applicant is, is optional. A co-applicant is some who has ongoing, um, and significant involvement in the execution of the project. They have editing rights to the proposal. So, if you sign a co-applicant, be aware that they can go in and edit your proposal. They have to acknowledge a declaration, it is only the lead applicant that can submit. Only the PI can actually, formally submit the proposal.

Uh, there's also a role called delegate. So, we've heard this is a role created in the previous system where some faculty wanted to have someone who could administratively help them with their proposal. Uh, what was happening in the past was the PI's were sharing their passwords and that's not ideal, so a role was created, completely optional where you can assign someone to help quarterback your proposals and your reports administratively. If your delegate is also a team member, meaning they're going to help you with, uh, implementing the science, please also identify them as a collaborator. I know that, that, uh, duplicates effort but for our performance indicators, we actually, um, track collaborators. So, if a delegate, you want someone to be able to edit the proposal but they're also a collaborator, please identify them as such.

Team members will, uh, be able to view the proposal, but not edit. Um, and I will say that is, that is our intention. Right now, team members cannot see anything, uh, we are working on how to selectively permission fields. We, there are certain fields like the budget, that we don't want to make accessible to team members. It has salary information, etc., in it of technicians, and others, so we are working on that. Our intent is to allow the general fields to be accessible to team members, so that they understand what they're signing on for. But, if you're quick out of the gate and are inviting team members, they currently will not be able to see anything.

Uh, I have a note at the bottom. If you have a technician, whether, whether they're funded by the Alliance or not, please ensure that you include them on your team member table. As part of our performance indicators, we have to track, uh, technician involvement, particularly, supported under the Alliance, there's a certain number of FTEs that are supported and we have to appreciate where those are being allocated.

High qualified pers… oh, yep…

Audience member: Can, um, co-applicants, and um collaborators be part of more than one application?

Stacy Favrin: Uh, so, the question was, can collaborators and co-applicants be part of one, more than one application? Yes. PIs can submit more than one proposal if they would like as well. And they are just evaluated independently on their own merit. But you can be a lead applicant on one, a co-applicant on another, a collaborator on another and that's fine. That's a good question.

Ah, highly qualified personnel are captured separately, so they, uh, please don't identify them in your team member table, there is a separate table for HQP. Please ensure you are including all HQP that are going to be trained as part of your project, whether or not they are actually funded by the Alliance. So, they could have a HQP scholarship award from the Alliance, they could be funded directly out of the project funds or have stipends coming from another source; but if they're involved in being trained as part of the project, please make sure that they are all, um, reflected in the, in the table and training HQPs is an important part of what we do so of course we encourage you to engage HQP where ever possible.

Yep?

Audience member: And if you do not yet know who the HQP are going to be?

S: Thank you. That's another good question. So, the question was 'what if we don't know who the HQP are going to be?'. If you anticipate hiring a Master's student, identify it and there's actually instructions in there where you can, you can literally, for now, you can say the name is, like, TBD. We understand that in most cases, they will not be identified and that's fine. Post docs are also considered HQP for the purpose of these tables. Um, and then, team member involvement in HQP recruitment will be tracked in the report. So, in your first annual report, you will need to identify whether the HQP that you anticipated recruiting, you were actually able to secure in the project.

One thing we had heard was that, uh, there could be better guidelines around leverage and partnerships, so we've built out part of the program guide a little bit. We see it as being sort of a living document so happy to hear any feedback. There are no prescribed leverage requirements for the Alliance and this is important because it recognizes the breadth and diversity of research that we fund. From public and policy research that naturally would not, um, attract a lot of third-party support to more kind of industry pull, pre-commercialization research where you would anticipate you would have third-party or industry support. Uh, also, even within industry, there is different abilities to pay so a project on, um, day neutral strawberries or asparagus would probably not be able to attract the same kind of leverage, particularly cash, as a dairy or soy project would. So in order to try and be as equitable as possible, we do not have prescribed leverage requirements. Obviously we encourage you to get third-party support, cash and in-kind, where ever possible but there are no prescribed limits. The review committees will do the best they can in looking at the project and figuring out what is reasonable as far as what can be expected as far as third-party, uh, support.

Third-party funding from OMAFRA, non-Alliance sources, are actually eligible. The agreement specifies that and other provincial Ministries. From the perspective of a proposal, we want you to identify all sources of funding associated with the project – a) because if you don't, there could…from a review perspective, there could be a gap, um, but also faculty really should be rewarded for any shaking of the trees that they, that they do that attracts support regardless of the source. If, at a later date, we have to back out any of that information from a formal performance indicator reporting perspective, we can do that.

(~22:20) Audience member: So, um sorry, so in the past, if a faculty has already been funded by federal government or monies with UofG. When we try to use part of the money for someone's labor or graduate partial support of a graduate student, it was not considered as leverage. Is it now… will it be considered as leverage?

Stacy: Okay, so, uh, you're saying, if, if, the University gets money from…

Audience member: If the, if the PI has some money…

Stacy Favrin: If the PI has money from NSERC and they're using that to pay the grad student or…

Audience member: Yeah on the project… federally funded project…

Stacy Favrin: Yeah, so, provided it's covering eligible expenses and it's necessary to the project, uh, my answer to that question is, yes. It would be something that is supported by someone else and had it not been supported by someone else, it would have to be paid for out of the project. Um, so, yeah. My answer to that question is, yes.

Audience member: Okay.

Stacy Favrin: When you are in your budget tab and you identify other sources of funding. There is a place where you identify if it's the lead applicant organization, which in this case would be UofG - UofG provides institutional scholarships and that would be a lead applicant organization contribution to the project. If it's a third-party like NSERC or you know, GFO or someone.

Audience member: Or AAFC

Stacy Favrin: Yeah. Or, uh, it would be, uh, a co-funder and then you would identify that it is from Ag Canada and it is being used to support a student

Audience member: Would you then require something from Ag Canada to confirm that they're…

Stacy Favrin: So, um, yes. We recognize with a single stage process... So the question was, would we require confirmation and, uh, yes, absolutely, where ever possible. So, we recognize with the November 26th deadline, that's not a lot of time to confirm funding… other funders have different timelines.

Audience member: What could that confirmation look like? If we already have a contract with them, can it be uploading that contract or can it be a reference to that contract number? Or trusting number…

Stacy Favrin: Yeah. So…

Audience member: Or do you need a letter from them?

Stacy Favrin: Uh, I don't think it would necessarily have to be a letter every time. We recognize that faculty get, uh, partner support that gets allocated to numerous projects. Not just the one they're applying to. When I get to the supporting documentation page, there is a place where, um, you can put your confirmation of funding. In some cases, it could be, um, like some other, uh, approval of, of an award. But we just want to, um, obviously from a due diligence perspective, we just want to make sure the support is real one way or the other. A letter, you know, a letter's ideal but I appreciate it's not going to always be possible for every piece of a larger award. I can follow up on that question but some sort of confirmation by the time the project is awarded, I believe is a requirement.

Audience member: The problem comes when we share someone's labor. Like example, when someone's labor is $12-14,000 for one person and then invariably we can always float that person across several projects. So, if the person is 30% working on the new Alliance project, then we cannot assign a budget because we have already got the money for that. But if we go back and ask AAFC to say… ‘okay, that’s fine, you can use 30% of the money for this project, they’re not going to give me that extra.

Stacy Favrin: Right. Right, so, I think in that case you would demonstrate that you have the student in place and that it’s paid for.

Audience member: Okay.

Stacy Favrin: Um, also, at the bottom... Oh, sorry, another question.

Audience member: So, you say no prescribed leverage, um, but when it comes to proposal evaluation, how is leverage weighed into that evaluation? So, if there’s… I read it, there’s no prescribed leverage that means it’s not really weighted. So, a proposal that has, let’s say 10% leverage versus 30%, wouldn’t necessarily be weighted differently. Is that the case?

Stacy Favrin: Yeah. Um, I’m going to do my best to answer that question. I appreciate the subjectivity that that, uh, creates…um, I don’t know if someone involved in the review committees, uh, wants to, uh, jump in but my understanding is, is projects are looked at, on a case by case basis. So something that is very policy focused is not anticipated to have… is not likely to have third-party, um, support. The way the criteria, so, it is, a review criteria, leverage and partnerships, is a review criteria and I believe the way the language in the criteria is, um,…Does the… I’m not going to be very articulate when I say this but it’s sort of worded like… does the project have the appropriate or the expected support. So, if you have a very applied dairy project and there’s no evidence that the dairy industry’s interested, um, you know, that would be a bigger problem than if you had a policy project that’s very focused on meeting the needs of government and has no funding. So, I appreciate it’s subjective. Does anyone in the room have like, from OMAFRA have anything to add about how that’s…? If not, I’ll just…

Staff member in audience: Stacy, I think you’ve done it the best…

Stacy Favrin: Yeah.

Staff member in audience: I think you’ve… Maybe we can follow up with more information afterwards.

Stacy Favrin: Yeah, I mean.. it is, for the situation we’re in... I think prescribed leverage requirements would be a bigger problem because there’s a lot of research that we wouldn’t fund if we had a prescribed limits, um, so we just, I think the review committees do the best they can. But it is, it is something that, that is looked at.

Um, the line at the bottom, uh, also is about technicians, so, if you have technicians that are, are being applied to the project that are not funded by the Alliance, please include that as an in-kind contribution to the project. It is a legitimate, um, expense, if that technician was not being paid for elsewhere, it would be a cost to the project. So, we have found that we are under-reporting, we feel that we are under-reporting that as a source of leverage in the projects.

Um, on your general tab, you will identify whether you plan to use a research station or not. Obviously, completely optional; most projects don’t. Um, but anything production related, they could use a station. If you say on the general tab, that you are using a station. You say ‘yes’, when you get to your budget tab, there will be a, a new window that opens where you identify what services you are using. So, what station, whether it’s land or animals, if it’s animal, the number of animal days. The system will automatically calculate your station fees. It's subsidized at a rate of 92%, the 8% needs to be covered by cash from other partners. So, if you are using a station, you automatically need to have some cash support from a partner and it will tell you what the non-subsidized fee is. You will just have to see what that is across all of your fiscal years and all of your services, and then in the cash from partners table, that's when you will identify where that support is, is coming from.

There is a place in the system that asks for the overhead rate, for the Alliance, there is no overhead that is paid separately to the University under the agreement. So, there's no project level overhead, so that remains zero. Other OMAFRA programs are different, that's why that has to be there. There are two cases though, where you do need to consider indirect costs. If you are working with another institution, you're going to have a collaborative research agreement with another institution, and they levy overhead that needs to be included in your budget. If you just consider what the project costs are and you don't take into account that your, the partner is going to levy indirect costs; you can appreciate that creates a problem because now, they're not getting their indirect costs and you haven't accounted for it in your budget. So, please, make sure you're doing that. If you're receiving funds from a third-party that's coming into the University, the University of Guelph levy's indirect costs and that should be noted as well.

Okay, I'm going to hand it over to Shannon to talk about KTT.

Shannon Brown: So, I'm Shannon Brown, I'm the Knowledge Mobilization Manager for the Alliance. Um, and so with a couple of the changes that we've made in RMS, we've also changed the KTT plan template. So, in order to help you through those changes, we've also put together a number of resources. All these resources can be found at that link, uh, I was going to say the slides are on our website, but if you're on our website, you can get to that page anyway.

So, the first is a manual of best practices and these are, uh, evidence-based best practices for KTT in agri-food and rural research, specifically. And as a bit of an appendix to those best practices, we've also put together a KTT plan checklist. So, these are practical, you now like, tools, tips, things to consider as you're putting together your KTT plans and they're all based on those best practices. Um, and we've also put together some sample KTT plans. So, these are completed plans that give you an example of what types of innovative KTT can look like across a variety of different research projects. So, there's anything from, you know, discovery and policy-based research through applied and more commercial and pilot testing type projects. So, those plans follow the, uh, KTT plan that you see in RMS, exactly. They're very Alliance specific. And for the KTT plan checklist and the example plans, I will say, they were put together by UofG and OMAFRA KTT staff, um, so I highly encourage you check them out because they are the people who are reviewing the KTT plans and it gives you, essentially a like, very good insight and a bit of a cheat sheet to sort of the level of detail that we're looking for, uh, questions we'll be asking around the table so it's good to take those into consideration as you're putting your plans together. As well, if you are looking for more, you know actual, like, face to face, rather than just online tools, um, I have got some postcards for a series of workshops we're running to help develop different KTT skills. Researchers are more than welcome to come to them, you can also feel free to send your students to them. As well, you can email KTTadmin[@uoguelph.ca] at any point and myself or one of my colleagues can sit down, we can have a bit more of a discussion one on one about what your KTT plan can look like and we're always happy to answer any KTT related questions.

Stacy Favrin: Great, thanks! And I should have noted that if anyone on Webex has a question, please use the chat function in, in the Webex and then Zach will ask the question for, for the group. So, sorry I didn't say that at the start.

Details, uh, not a lot of details but a little bit of detail on IPs is expected in a proposal, just whether you, um, anticipate developing any, and there's a text box question. If you're concerned about disclosure or there's any sensitivities around your project, please reach out to the Research Innovation Office and they can support you in, in how to develop your proposal in a way that it can be reviewed but won't compromise, um, IP development.

There's a supporting documentation tab, there's three different fields. The reason for that, again, relates to permissions. So, some, uh, roles and users will be able to see some fields, and some won't. So, please provide the CV of the lead applicant and co-applicant. We generally don't need team member CVs.

Proposal details and supporting documentation. So, if you have a, uh, literature review references, we are actually recommending that you put your references there. It just takes a lot of real estate up in the actual tab so this way you can append your literature review references. Uh, occasionally, people will have some, some methodology - a table or a graph or something that they feel is really important, uh, that occasionally gets appended.

Audience member: What form of the CV? Would it be the…

Stacy Favrin: We're not fussy on the format of the CV. Someone asked us this and it could be, um…

Audience member: Still be the NSERC form?

Stacy Favrin: Yeah, the NSERC form is fine. I mean, the outcome really here is just to demonstrate that the PI is appropriate to lead the project so as long as the CV allows us to make that determination, I don't think we're fussy on the format. Certainly, don't reinvent the wheel like if you've got one, you'd all have one already, what ever you tend to use, just append that.

Supporting documentation, letters of support, confirmation of funding. I think the program guide, uh, certainly in the past, I'm not sure if it does but it had something about other award letters that would demonstrate that you have funding for the student, or, other support that you're using to leverage toward the project.

Um, some questions in the OMAFRA priorities document, require what's called a value assessment plan. So, if you are doing a project that involves product development or are answering a question that says that a value assessment plan is needed, please fill that out and append it to the, append it to your proposal and in next gen. If you anticipate, uh, so, if you are working with another faculty member and you need a sub-award agreement, the Office of Research and Finance needs to know what money is moving to that collaborator so please fill out the sub-award budget template and append that. If you are moving money to another institution, uh, that may require a collaborative research agreement and if that's the case, we would also, uh, need to know what money is moving to a collaborator. I will say though, so collaborative research agreements are fine if no changes are needed. That the legal, uh, services branch of wherever you are sending to, is, is fine with everything, it's not so bad. As soon as they want changes to the collaborative research agreement, it can be very cumbersome and time consuming and sometimes projects are like well into their lifespan before the CRA's actually landed.

There are other ways if, if, uh, another organization is providing a service, they're doing some lab testing for you. They can use, they can invoice the institution for that. But a collaborative research agreement is not needed every time money moves somewhere else so if you have any questions about that, please reach out to our office and we will help support you through that. Uh, if a CRA is needed and it's necessary, we will do that but it's not always needed so we can help you make that determination. I also noted that no paper OR5 or signatures are needed. You will still fill in, there's an OR5 tab, you will still fill in the information. Uh, there is no internal deadline for, for that. So, November 26th, is actually your real deadline and the approvals will happen, uh, after that. The College, Departmental and Office of Research approvals will take place after that.

It is possible that the proposal may need to get punted back to you for revision, there are workflows in next gen. RMS for that. If that happens, please respond as soon as possible because that's obviously holding up our ability to get your proposal to peer reviewers. So should the Office of Research or your department send your proposal back, please respond as soon as possible but November 26th, is your, uh, is your real deadline.

Proposals are reviewed by external scientific peer reviewers and review panels. Review panels make funding, uh, recommendations that go into the governance structure of the Alliance agreement so OMAFRA-UofG, there's a formal governance structure. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of OMAFRA. So, the panels make recommendations, but ultimately, final funding decisions are made via governance and ultimately by OMAFRA.

This will be fairly familiar to you, as far as what's important as far as review. Fit with priorities is paramount so please pay close attention to the research questions. Strength of the team, quality and clarity of the experimental design, clear and tangible deliverables, a strong KTT plan, value for money and then evidence of involvement of relevant partners through leverage and partnerships; we already talked about, uh, about expectations there but do your best to demonstrate support for your project.

And then tips for success are obviously just the flip side of that. So, making sure you're making a clear case of how your proposal aligns with our priorities. Make sure it's complete and well written. I know when I write things and I've looked at it for a long time, I don't really see it anymore. I often benefit from giving my work to someone else to do a proofread. We would recommend that. Clearly demonstrate how the project addresses a priority, realistic benefits, well defined deliverables, you know, basically what was on the previous slide. Uh, I strongly suggest you avail yourselves to the resources that Shannon noted as it relates to the KTT plan because that is a review criteria. And fully explain and justify your, your budget items, that does help the review, um, committee quite a bit.

So, uh, if you are successful, any conditions of funding will need to be met prior to award. When we had the two-stage process, the time between the letter of intent review and the full proposal review did allow opportunity for feedback to go back to faculty to strengthen the proposal in some cases or provide advice. We don't have the benefit of that this time, so again, that's another reason why you want a strong proposal. I had meant to mention as it relates to methodology, please make sure that it's as complete and robust as possible… a) because peer reviewers will want to see that. Uh, if you have sampling plans, make sure, if you're doing sampling, make sure your sampling plans are there. How you intend to do your statistical analysis, the more robust that is, uh, the better. We are anticipating that in some cases, the conditions of funding might be more…um, there might be more of them, or we might have higher requirements at that condition of award phase only because we didn't have the benefit of that in between the LOI and full proposal. That's too be determined but it's possible. Then you will complete your award agreement.

Data management plans are a new requirement in the Alliance, the renewed Alliance agreement. And it's a post-award requirement, so it's not a condition of funding, you don't need to do it before the award letter goes out, but I think there's a 90-day period where you need to submit a data management plan. In some cases the data management plan will be, "I don't need a data management plan", but you still need to fill it out, others will have a more robust plan that's needed. We are also requiring that you reach out to the library; they've been really terrific, they are providing supports to all faculty. On the portage network, there is an Alliance-specific data management plan template to fill out and the library will support you and provide advice in the development of your DMP and then that will be uploaded to your, uh, project. And then at the end of the project, you will just need to just demonstrate that you fulfilled the requirements of your DMP.

Annual reports due 30 days passed the anniversary of the project's start date; and final reports due 60 days after the project end date.

Please ensure your reports are as comprehensive as possible, even if they're annual reports. There are staff at OMAFRA and UofG and it's an important part of their jobs, they're, they're,… that have performance commitments themselves, related to accountability and due diligence and so we need to provide them the information that they need to do their job well. So, even if it's an annual report, it's understood you're not going to have a lot of results; maybe you haven't done a lot of KTT yet, uh, but please be as comprehensive as you can. You can still talk about what you did do even if you don't have firm conclusions, yet. The more complete and comprehensive your reports are at every stage, the easier it is for them to do their jobs. Revision workflows are a pain and they're inefficient so the more that we can do upfront to avoid that revision workflow, is just best for, uh, for everybody.

Research performance indicators, so, some of the reason why we ask you to provide as much information as we do is because we have reporting obligations under the Agreement, so a select list is there. Leverage, faculties, FTEs, technician FTEs, collaborators, HQPs, co-funders and KTT activities. So obviously the only place we get that information is in the reports; we want to be as comprehensive as possible in our reporting so that we are meeting our, uh, or exceeding our performance commitments in those areas.

Uh, I'm in the home stretch. Uh, program contacts, technical issues with next gen., please reach out to Kelly. Support completing your application, Vanessa and Zach. Again, we are all going through next gen. for the first time; if we can't answer your question immediately when you first call, we will find the answer and get back to you as soon as we can. KTT support with Shannon. Some Office of Research contacts there. Uh, what has also been interesting or something we need to do now is determine how to align our research program directors, which were very aligned to the previous themes with the new priority, uh, areas and understand given that questions are not aligned, uh, maybe in the same way that they used to be, that's another reason why the intent information is really important but this is how we have notionally allocated our research program directors. They were not involved in priority setting at OMAFRA this year so they may not be able to answer priority related questions but on the next couple slides are… oops, are OMAFRA staff and their kind of year one window into the Ministry if you have questions or you want clarity on whether a proposal idea fits with the program. We recognize since it's a single stage process, even though the LOI was still pretty heavy duty, it wasn't a full proposal. You don't want to invest a lot time unless you have some, uh, sense that your project idea is a fit so if you do want to reach out to staff, they will do that; they may link you in with the Ministry policy or program area specialist to help answer your question. So again, these are online. I won't, I won't introduce people, I'll leave that for you, Cass, to let these guys know who from OMAFRA is in the room.

Were there any questions from the chat, Zach?

Zach: Nope.

Stacy Favrin: Okay. I know I've talked at you a lot… I hope it's been, it's been helpful. We're here to support you. Oh, there's a question.

Audience member: Yeah, is there any weighting on EDI?

Stacy Favrin: On what, sorry?

Audience member: EDI - equity, diversity and inclusion.

Stacy Favrin: Uh, that's a good question. To my knowledge not formally, we have not embedded that. I will bring that forward. I did get a question from Melissa about that. When we were identifying team members, that there'd be a little box that they would tick about whether, you know, the EDI information. But because there was no way of not making that public to everyone, we couldn't really do that there because I know they want to track different groups of people who are engaged in our programing so that is not the way we would be able to do that. Uh, I'm not sure if that would factor into our review, currently that is not part of the process.

Cass: I can add in. There were, there are some preliminary conversations between OMAFRA and the UofG on looking at how we can incorporate this into our formal policies and programs, but it's not yet determined at this time.

Stacy Favrin: Okay. Thanks, Cass, I wasn't aware of that, that was helpful.

Okay, that's it for me. I hope you can stick around, there's lots of OMAFRA people who are eager to engage with you about the priorities and your project ideas. We'll take a break, maybe just to…

Audience member: Did you say these slides are available online?

Stacy Favrin: Yes. Yep, they are on the Alliance website under apply for operating funding at the bottom.

So, we'll take a break just to 11. If you need the washrooms, you just go left out the door, there's a door to the left and you kinda continue straight down and the washrooms are on the left. In about 6 or 8 minutes we'll get started with the next stage.

Staff: And for those people on the Webex, there is a slide deck for the second part that does formally start at 11 and we will be monitoring for the questions coming through on the Webex as well so stay tuned.