ONTARIO AGRI-FOOD INNOVATION ALLIANCE
TIER II RESEARCH PROGRAM GUIDE

OCTOBER 18, 2019
ONTARIO AGRI-FOOD INNOVATION ALLIANCE RESEARCH PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The priority-driven Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance Research Program supports leading research aligned to support strong rural communities, keep our food safe, and develop a prosperous, environmentally sustainable agri-food sector in Ontario.

TIMELINES FOR 2019-20 PROGRAMMING

Tier II Research Program:
- Program Launch: 18 October 2019
- Call open to receive proposal submissions at any time

Timelines for other 2019-20 Alliance Programming:
- Tier I Research Program – Call open; Full Proposal due 26 November 2019
- KTT Funding Program – Estimated launch October 30; Proposals due December 11
- Gryphons LAAIR Program - Estimated launch October 30; Proposals due December 11
- HQP Scholarship Program - Estimated launch November 20; Application due date TBD

This guidance document is focused on program details and the application process for the Tier II Research Program. Details about the other Alliance programs will be available when their respective program launches.

WHAT IS NEW FOR 2019

There are significant changes in the focus and administration of the Alliance Tier II Research Program in 2019. These include:

- New OMAFRA research priorities
- Development and submission of applications in the ‘Next Generation’ Research Management System (NG-RMS)
- Research team member invitation process
- New KTT Manual and sample KTT plans
- No paper OR-5 form. Fields filled in on-line by researcher. Approvals electronically in NG-RMS post-submission.

Please read this document carefully to understand these changes as you prepare an application for Tier II funding.
RESEARCH PRIORITIES
The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) undertook a new approach to research priority setting in 2019. Research priorities for the Alliance Research Program are aligned within the Ministry’s core businesses and objectives: Protection and Assurance, Stewardship, and Economic Development as illustrated below.

Each of these research priorities has a set of goals and research focus areas, in addition to five cross-cutting focus areas. Research priorities and focus areas are outlined in greater detail in the OMAFRA Research Priorities document. Program applicants must demonstrate that their proposal is within scope of OMAFRA’s research priorities and focus areas.

RESEARCH STATIONS
Through the unique partnership between the University of Guelph and OMAFRA, 15 crop and livestock research stations located throughout Ontario drive research support for the agri-food industry. The stations are owned by the Agricultural Research Institute of Ontario (ARIO). The University of Guelph manages the stations with oversight from OMAFRA’s Research and Innovation Branch.

TIER II RESEARCH FUNDING
The Tier II Program provides access to OMAFRA-funded resources, such as OMAFRA-supported technicians and research stations for projects that meet current OMAFRA research priorities. Research station access for awarded proposals is subsidized at a rate of 92%. Please note, these awards do not provide any Operating Funding for research. For projects which require Operating Funding, please refer to the Tier I Program Guide. External partners are required to fund the non-subsidized portion (8%) of the total cost of the research station usage for the approved project, plus project operating costs. Project funding is also conditional on service availability at the proposed research stations, as per recommendations from the Research Station Managers.

For a complete list of research stations and associated access fees, please visit our website.
PROPOSAL REVIEW PROCESS
All proposals will be reviewed internally by University of Guelph and OMAFRA in collaboration with Research Station Managers. Projects will primarily be reviewed for fit with priorities. Projects must demonstrate how the project addresses an OMAFRA research priority and focus areas. There must be sufficient external funds secured to successfully complete the project, and the overall quality and completeness of the proposal will be assessed.

HOW TO APPLY

OPEN CALL
The Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance Tier II Research Program is an open call which accepts submissions throughout the fiscal year. The review process for applications begins as soon as they are submitted, and best efforts are in place to ensure reviews occur in a timely fashion. Applications consist of a single stage call (Full Proposals only). The application will take place entirely in the “Next Generation” Research Management System (NG-RMS).

ONLINE APPLICATION SYSTEM – NEXT GENERATION RESEARCH MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (NEW!)
Work has been underway for some time to develop and implement the “Next Generation” Research Management System (NG-RMS), which will replace the current RMS system. A phased approach is being used for the implementation of NG-RMS:
- The 2019 Tier II program call is being administered in the NG-RMS; and
- Active projects will continue to be administered in the current RMS until data migration takes place.

More details about this migration process will follow.

While the NG-RMS has a new look and new functionality, the overall approach to applying to Alliance programs will be familiar. It is highly recommended that additional time be allocated for completion of the application in the NG-RMS. Of particular note is the team member invitation process which requires action from both the researcher and team members in advance of the submission deadline.

REGISTERING IN THE NG-RMS
If you have not accessed NG-RMS for applications to another Alliance program, a new login in NG-RMS is required. UofG faculty contact records have been migrated from the current RMS system, but for security reasons passwords have not. Enter your uoguelph.ca email address on the NG-RMS login page (https://omafra2.smartsimple.ca/) and select “Forgot Password”. Enter a new password at the prompts. If you have not used the current RMS system previously, you can simply register a new account. Please be aware that faculty existing within the current RMS system must follow the “Forgot Password” option in order to be properly affiliated with their previous projects once these projects have migrated to NG-RMS. Please contact rescoordin@uoguelph.ca if you experience any difficulties logging in. Registering and logging into the NG-RMS will bring you to your Researcher Workbench where you can apply to open calls.

To open an application, select the Alliance Tier II Research Program and click on “Determine Eligibility”. Confirm your eligibility to apply to access an application.
NG-RMS works in a variety of web browsers, but we do not recommend that you use Internet Explorer as some functionality does not work well.

**ELIGIBILITY**

**Lead Applicants and Co-Applicants**
The Lead Applicant is the primary award holder and is accountable for project management and compliance with any reporting requirements.

A Co-Applicant (optional) is a researcher or partner that plays an important and ongoing role in the development and implementation of the project. Co-applicants are identified and invited from the team member tab in NG-RMS. There can be only one Co-applicant.

University of Guelph faculty members are eligible to be the lead applicant and/or a co-applicant on any Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance Research Program project. Adjunct faculty members may also apply if they are eligible to hold research funding at the University of Guelph.

**Please Note:** Prior to being awarded any new project(s) under the Alliance, lead applicants and co-applicants must be fully compliant with all reporting requirements for existing projects under the OMAFRA-UofG / Alliance Research Program.

**THE NG-RMS TIER II APPLICATION**

**SUPPORT FOR APPLICANTS**
The following supports are available to assist researchers in the application process:

- This program guide;
- Instructions and tool tips (denoted by 📘) in the NG-RMS Application Template;
- Tip sheets available on the NG-RMS Researcher Workbench Home page (‘Help’ icon) (Please Note: These tips sheet are developed for the Tier I Program – so not all of the content is relevant to the Tier II application process);
- If you experience technical difficulties in the NG-RMS please contact rms@ontario.ca
- For support completing the NG-RMS application template please contact our Research Program Coordinators at rescoord@uoguelph.ca or at x56863 (Vanessa Knox) and x56877 (Zach Telfer).

**TIER II APPLICATION TEMPLATE**
The Tier II application consists of several sections that are navigated via tabs across the top of the on-line application in the NG-RMS. All tabs must be completed. The majority of the application instructions are provided in the NG-RMS, but some additional guidance is provided below.

A validation process will take place upon submission to ensure all mandatory fields are complete.

**RESEARCH PRIORITY SELECTION**
Select the Research Priority and Research Focus Area that your project will address. Please describe how your project aligns with the selected program priority and focus area in the ‘Alignment with OMAFRA Priorities’ field in
the ‘Proposal Details’ tab. Researchers are also encouraged to describe how their project addresses one or more of the Ministry’s three core business areas (Protection and Assurance, Stewardship, Economic Development).

**RESEARCH TEAM AND INVITATION PROCESS (NEW!)**

Team members and Highly Qualified Personnel are identified in their respective tables in the Team tab in the NG-RMS. **Inviting Research Team members** is a new process in NG-RMS. This process is described in the application template and in the tip sheets (accessible under the ‘Help’ icon on the NG-RMS home page). Co-applicants, Delegates (described below) and all Collaborators should confirm their participation in the project and be registered in NG-RMS by the Full Proposal submission date.

A **Delegate** (optional – limit of one) is an individual whose only role is to assist the Lead Applicant in the creation and editing of the application and progress reports (for awarded projects). A Delegate must be part of your organization. A Delegate, while not formally a team member, is identified and invited from the team member tab in NG-RMS. Delegates that play an active role in the research project must also be identified and invited as a Collaborator or identified in the HQP table in the NG-RMS (this is important for performance measure reporting).

There is no limitation placed on the balance of the team composition, but all team members should play an active role as collaborators in the implementation of the project (advisory, researcher or knowledge broker). The team may include individuals from:

- U of G (researchers and other support staff e.g. technicians);
- Other University or research institutions in Canada or globally;
- Private businesses;
- Industry / commodity organizations;
- Non-governmental organizations; and
- Provincial, federal or municipal government departments (e.g., OMAFRA staff).

The project team composition should ensure that the appropriate research expertise is brought to bear on the research objective(s) to be addressed. The FTE (full-time equivalent) you report in the team member table should reflect the total average annual time that each individual will contribute to the project. Documenting FTE contributions are important to support performance indicator reporting.

The involvement of all team members (including their estimated actual FTE contributions to the project) will be reported on in annual and final reports.

**HIGHLY QUALIFIED PERSONNEL**

Highly qualified personnel (HQP) are undergraduate and graduate students or post-doctoral fellows receiving training through the proposed research. These HQP are captured separately from team members in the NG-RMS. Please provide details on all HQP that will be involved in the project, regardless of their stipend funding source. Highly Qualified Personnel do not need to be invited. Proposals can move forward without specific persons identified as HQP if the positions are not yet filled. If specific people are not identified, use TBD as the first and last name within the HQP table and complete all other fields except for e-mail address.
KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION AND TRANSFER (KTT)

The KTT tab in the application consists of two tables: KTT User Audiences and the KTT Plan. Instructions for completing these two tables are in NG-RMs.

There are several resources available to assist you in creating your KTT plan. Visit the KTT Services and Resources page to access these resources.

- **Growing Knowledge Translation and Transfer in Ontario: A Manual of Best Practices**: This manual outlines a collection of best practices in agri-food and rural KTT that can help guide you through the development of your KTT plan.
- **KTT Plan Checklist**: A practical tool based on the Alliance KTT plan template. These guidelines, prepared by Alliance funding program reviewers, ensure your proposal covers key aspects of KTT planning.
- **KTT Example Plans**: Examples of complete KTT plans to help provide ideas of innovative KTT activities as well as questions to consider as you answer each section.

Contact kttadmin@uoguelph.ca if you have any questions about these resources or the KTT section of your proposal.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Supporting documentation should be in PDF format and may include:

- Team Member Supporting Documentation
  - CV’s of the Lead Applicant and Co-Applicant
- Proposal Details Supporting Documentation
  - Relevant articles demonstrating industry needs
  - One-page diagram which illustrates the Methods described in the proposal
- Other Supporting Documentation
  - Letters of support
  - Confirmation of leveraged funding
  - Award letters to be leveraged with this proposal

OR-5

An OR-5 Form is no longer required to be uploaded to the application. OR-5 fields are completed on-line by the applicant on the OR-5 tab within the NG-RMS. Departmental and College approval will be obtained electronically following proposal submission. No further action is needed by the applicants.
THE NG-RMS BUDGET GUIDELINES

RESEARCH STATION USE AND ACCESS FEES
UofG faculty have access to 15 research stations at highly subsidized rates. Be sure to identify that you are using a Research Station in the ‘General’ Tab in NG-RMS. This will create a section on the Budget tab where you identify the specific research station services you require. Full instructions are available in the NG-RMS application.

Visit the Program website for a complete list of Research Stations and Research Station Access Fees.

Third party (non-OMAFRA) funding is required to cover the non-subsidized portion (8%) of the fee, as well as all other operating costs associate with the project.

OVERHEAD/INDIRECT COSTS
Partner Cash Contributions: Indirect costs must be included at the applicable rate (e.g. 25% or 40%) on partner cash contributions from government and industry sponsors. Identify these costs in the ‘Operating-Other’ category in the ‘Cash from Partners’ expenditure table and describe them in the budget notes.

BUILDING A PROJECT BUDGET
An Excel version of the budget template is available on the Alliance program website as an OPTIONAL tool to draft and plan your budget. This is for planning purposes only. Please DO NOT upload this Excel budget to your application. You are required to complete and submit the budget in the NG-RMS.

1. Sources of Project Funds identifies the cash and in-kind support from partners. Click ‘ADD Funding Source’ under the ‘Other Sources of Project Funding’ section within the Budget tab and provide the details requested for each Funding Partner supporting the project.

2. Research Station Usage calculates the total Research Station fees accumulated during the course of your project that need to be accounted for in the budget. Click ‘Add Research Station Usage’ under the ‘Research Station’ section within the Budget tab to enter in a single usage. Each crop/animal type requires it’s own Usage entry for each fiscal year. Once all Usage entries are complete, the table under the ‘Research Station’ section will provide a total Fee to be Expensed in Budget.

3. Uses of Project Funds - There are three tables to be completed in the Budget tab (will appear in a pop-up window):
   - Request from Program;
   - Cash Support from Partners; and
   - In-kind Support from Partners (if applicable).

Please leave the Request from Program table empty (except for fiscal years). In the Cash Support from Partners, use of partner funds should be allocated across budget categories and fiscal years. Each row in the budget corresponds to a UofG fiscal year (May 1 – April 30) that the project will take place. E.g., A 3-year project beginning October 1st would require 4 budget periods (fiscal years) – the first and last periods covering 6 months only.
**POST AWARD PROCESSES**

Tier II Proposal Decision Notification and Award Phase
- Researchers will be notified of the outcome of the review and approval process via the NG-RMS.
- Conditionally approved applications must address any conditions of award described in the notification email (through the NG-RMS).
- A [Data Management Plan](#) will be a post award requirement for all approved projects.
- Award Agreements are issued for projects approved with no conditions and projects with conditions of award which have been addressed.

Project Monitoring Phase
- Annual Progress reports are due 30 days after the anniversary of the project start date.
- Annual reports will be reviewed and approved if acceptable or revisions may be requested.
- Final reports are due 60 days following the conclusion of the project. They are critical to the success of the Alliance. Some of the important summary fields will be published.