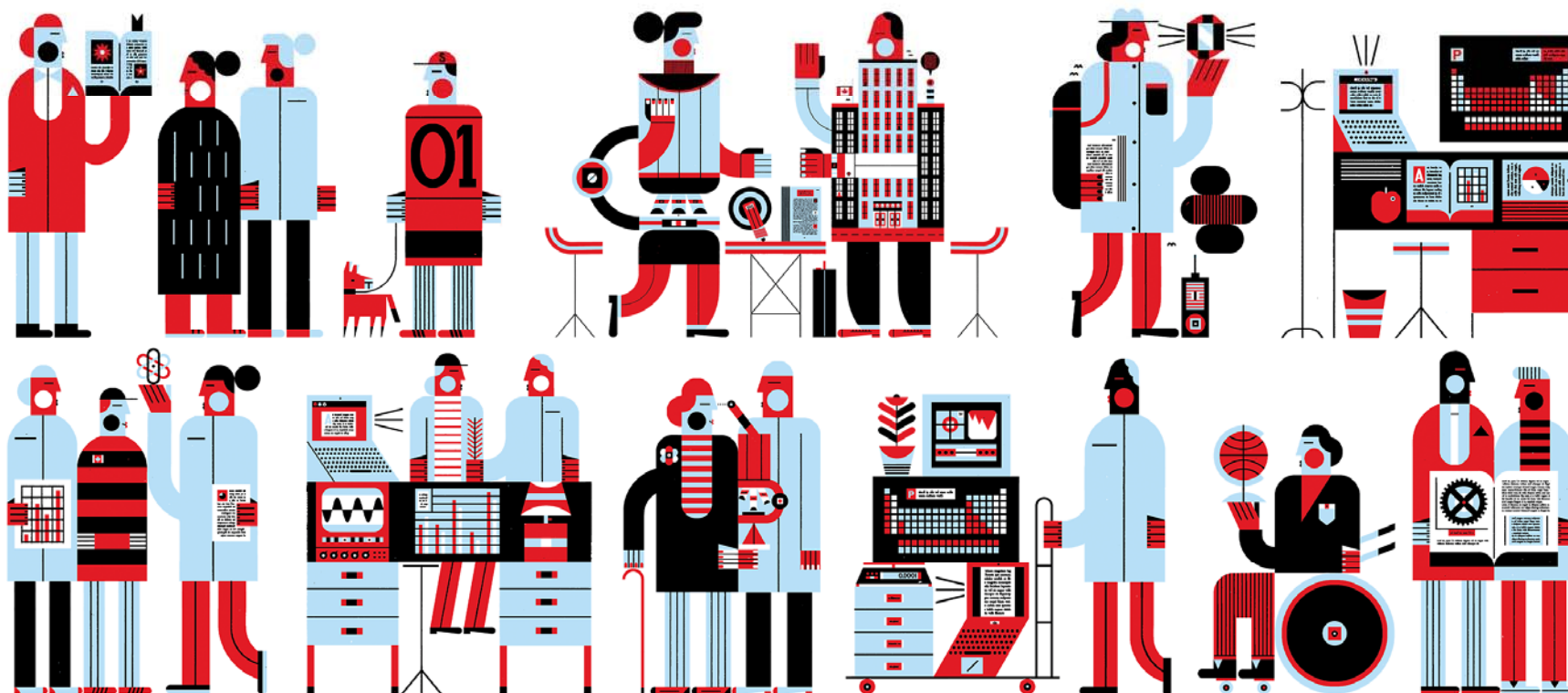




Des réponses innovantes
à de grandes questions

Breakthrough answers
to timeless questions



Conseil de recherches en sciences
naturelles et en génie du Canada

Natural Sciences and Engineering
Research Council of Canada

Canada



Alliance Grants Workshop: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) & Option 2

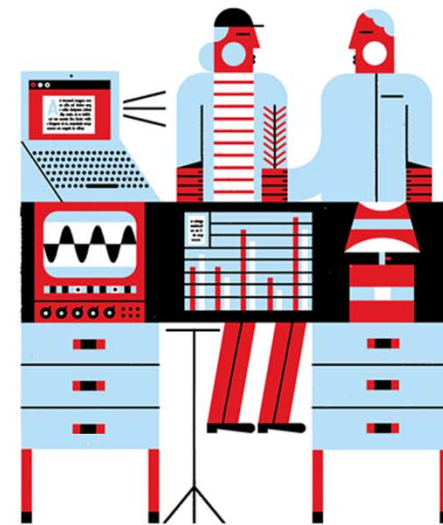
François Santerre, Senior Program Manager

Sarah O'Neill, Manager
NSERC Research Partnerships

June 2021

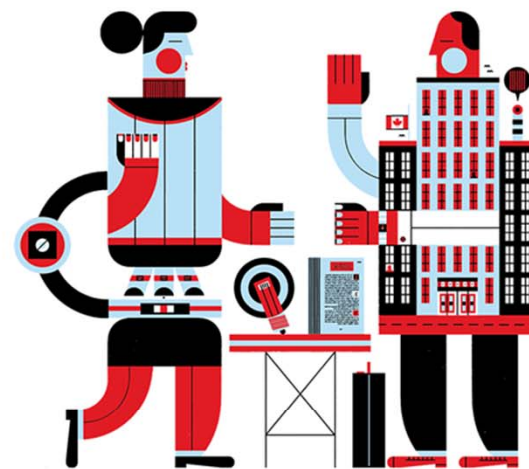
Table of contents

- Alliance reminders
- Alliance and EDI
- Alliance Option 2
- Best practices, recommendations, tips and tricks
- Conclusion



Reminders

Alliance Grants



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1
funding opportunity



2

very
different

options

The two options have the same:

- objectives
- evaluation criteria
- peer review process for **overall merit** assessment
- academic community and the three types of partner organizations served
- requirements for the recognition of partner organizations

Who?	How long?	How much?
University researchers collaborating with private-sector, public sector or not-for-profit organizations	1 to 5 years	<u>OPTION 1</u> \$20k to \$1M per year <u>OPTION 2</u> more than \$30k to \$300,000 per year

Alliance and EDI

Context

- Commitment to promoting the integration of equity, diversity and inclusion in research design and practice
- Consideration of EDI in the training plan is part of the evaluation criteria
- Explaining how EDI is considered in the training plan is mandatory

Alliance and EDI

Training Plan – EDI

Applicants must describe specific **initiatives, measures, actions** and **concrete practices** that **will be put in place** in the proposed project to ensure that EDI is **intentionally and proactively supported** in the training plan.



- **Do not provide vague or generic statements** (e.g., “the university is committed to EDI”)
- **Do not refer** to the **team’s current diversity**
- **Do not refer** to the **university’s EDI policy** alone



What specific practices will be put in place – “how” it will be done is important!

Alliance and EDI

Resources

- [EDI in your training plan \(help guide\)](#)
- [NSERC's Guide for Applicants: Considering EDI in your application](#)
- [Best Practices in EDI guide for applicants to the New Frontiers in Research Fund](#), including the section on Research team and environment
- University's EDI plan, if applicable

Coming soon: New guide for incorporating EDI into research design (mid summer), new training for external reviewers

Alliance Option 2



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Alliance – Option 2

**societal impact
making connections
broad outcomes**

**Your proposal
must meet all three
specific characteristics
to qualify for Option 2**

**Need for
a higher level
of investment
of public funds**

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Alliance Option 2

Characteristic 1: Societal impact

- Focuses on important and unmet needs affecting society or societal groups, regionally, nationally or globally with important impact in Canada
- Removes or lowers the barriers to achieve what would otherwise not be possible in terms of:
 - building capacity to transform a sector and its practices
 - providing evidence for new policies or regulations
 - solving an issue affecting a whole business area
 - creating a new area of the economy



The project's outcomes must reach beyond the partner organizations and near-term economic success to **impact & benefit society.**

Alliance Option 2 – Characteristic 1: Societal impact

Alliance Option 2

Characteristic 2: Making connections

- Identify the key stakeholders in the ecosystem or value-chain surrounding the problem.
- Engage all relevant stakeholders beyond the participating partner organizations in the research design and implementation who:
 - bring relevant societal perspectives/skill sets
 - help merge ideas, overcome barriers and find creative solutions
 - ensure the project is need-driven
 - contribute in integrating solutions with decision-makers within and across sectors



Despite limited cash contributions, partners must be **strongly committed & active**, and provide valuable opportunity to connect & share results with other organizations.

Alliance Option 2 – Characteristic 2: Marking connections

Alliance Option 2

Characteristic 3: Broad outcomes

- Outcomes/outputs generate benefits beyond the participating partner organizations
- Clear plan to communicate progress and results to the targeted groups:
 - results in formats accessible by all stakeholders in society
 - strategy to raise awareness of the resulting products, services or policies among potential users

Alliance Option 2

Characteristic 3: Broad outcomes

Expectations:

- **short term:** strengthening capacity, building relationships and networks
- **medium term:** uptake, use of results
- **long term:** measurable societal impact



All stakeholders must understand and accept the principle that the management of the intellectual property generated through the project **cannot become a barrier** to the use of the results.

Alliance Option 2 – Characteristic 3: Broad outcomes

Alliance Option 2

How to apply

1. Apply at any time, with limit per 12-month period:
 - 1 x application by Applicant and co-Applicant
2. Fill out the [proposal template](#) + Public Impact Value Proposition (PIVP)
3. Submit a complete application through [NSERC's online system](#)



Alliance Option 2

Cost-sharing ratio



Partners are only
from the public or
the not-for-profit
sectors



Up to
100%
from NSERC



At least one partner is
from the **private**
sector



Up to
90%
from NSERC

+

At least
10%
from partner
organizations

Alliance Option 2

Partner organizations

Same sectors
and rules as Option 1

At least 1 must be recognized
for cost sharing, even if no cash
contributions are required



Should include organizations
representing the interested
societal groups and end users



Alliance Option 2

Evaluation process

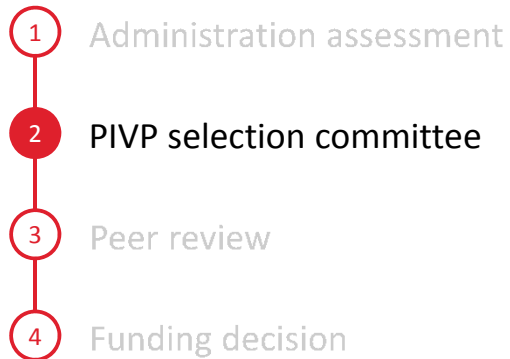
- 1 Administration assessment
- 2 PIVP selection committee
- 3 Peer review
- 4 Funding decision

Once submitted, the application undergoes an administrative assessment by **NSERC staff** to determine if it is complete and meets all our requirements.

If this step is satisfactorily completed, the application is submitted to the PIVP selection committee.

Alliance Option 2

Evaluation process

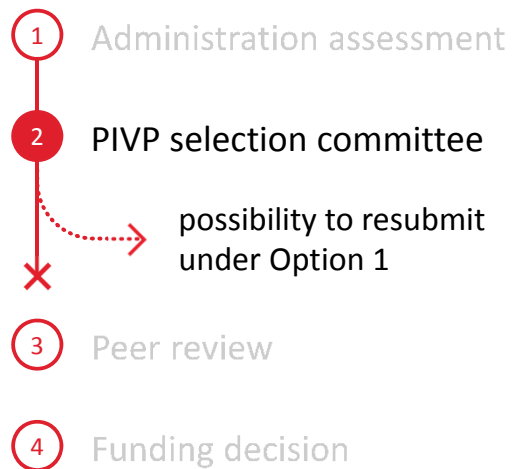


The committee consists of 10 to 15 members who are selected for their broad knowledge and their multidisciplinary and multisectoral expertise and experience.

They **focus on the three-page PIVP section** to determine whether the project meets Option 2's three characteristics, and if a higher financial contribution from NSERC is justified.

The committee may consult the rest of the proposal for broader context, if necessary.

Alliance Option 2

Evaluation process

If the outcome of the PIVP is negative, the application will not be funded.

You may rework the proposal, including its budget, and resubmit it under Option 1 if sufficient funds can be secured from the recognized partner organizations.

Alliance Option 2

Evaluation process

- 1 Administration assessment
- 2 PIVP selection committee
- 3 Peer review
- 4 Funding decision

If the outcome of the PIVP is positive, the application is sent to external reviewers who are experts in the proposal's area.

The external reviewers evaluate the application using the same evaluation criteria as in Option 1.

The PIVP section of your proposal will not be shared with the external reviewers.



Alliance Option 2

Evaluation process

Based on the comments received from the external reviewers, NSERC completes the assessment of the application by assigning ratings to the evaluation subcriteria using the merit indicators, as in Option 1.

NSERC determines applications for funding on a competitive basis, using the applications' merit ratings.

Alliance Option 2

Do not consider Option 2...



as a replacement for Engage grants
or Strategic Partnership grants

for a one researcher-one partner centred project

to push ideas as opposed to responding to an existing and
well defined societal need (i.e., **benefits to society are the
driver, not an afterthought**)

to reduce the financial costs of partner organizations
in initiating new partnerships

**to offset the cost of research where investments
are available** or in areas where research is intense
and already heavily funded

to reduce the cost of research where the goal
is to develop or improve new products or services
for commercialization

Alliance Option 2

**Consider Option 2
for projects ...**



with important unmet societal need

where societal impact is expected

with barriers that prevent it from happening

**that have a need to reach out to participants
beyond the usual comfort zone**

**where a viable solution can be envisioned to significantly
contribute to long-term societal benefits**

**where higher NSERC support is key
to enabling these advances**

Best practices, recommendations, tips and tricks

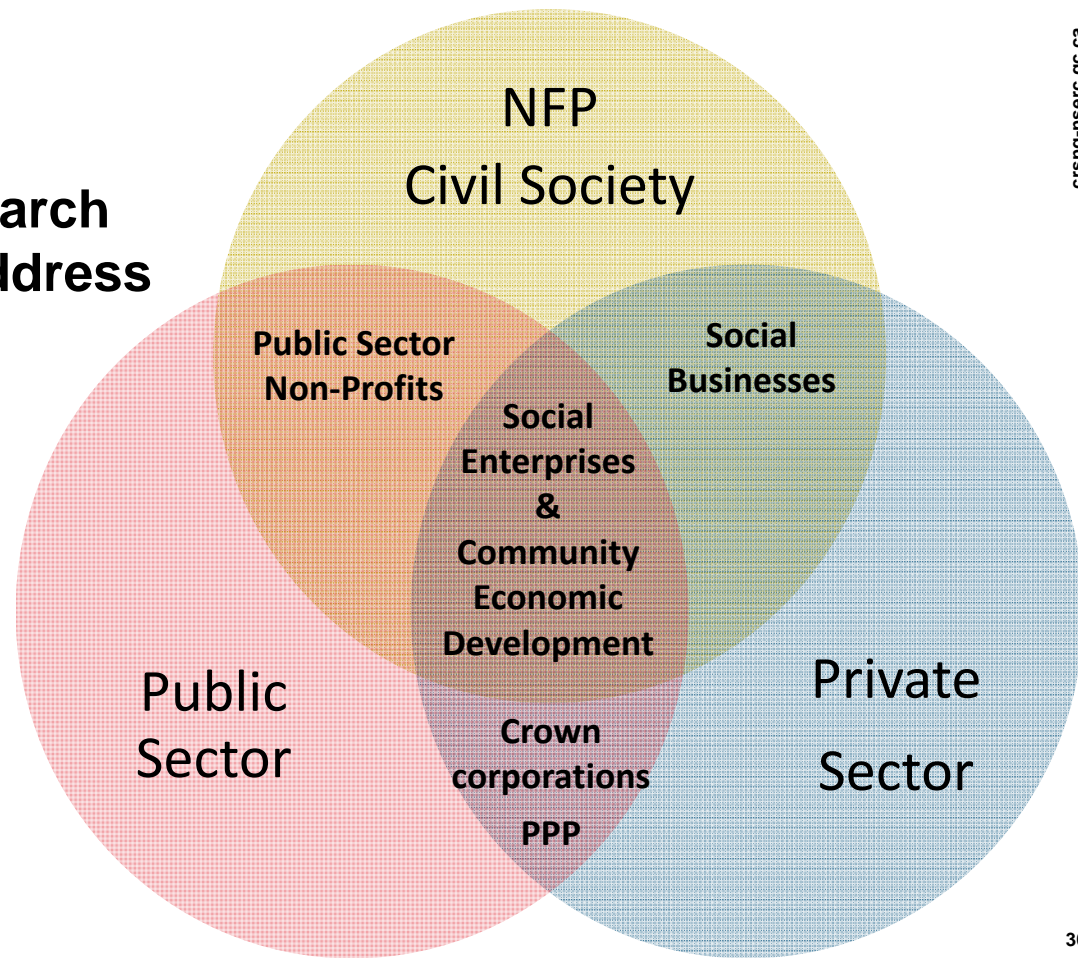


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Best practices

How to prepare a research project that aims to address a societal challenge?

An Option 2 proposal's ecosystem :



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Best practices

How to prepare a research project that aims to address a societal challenge?

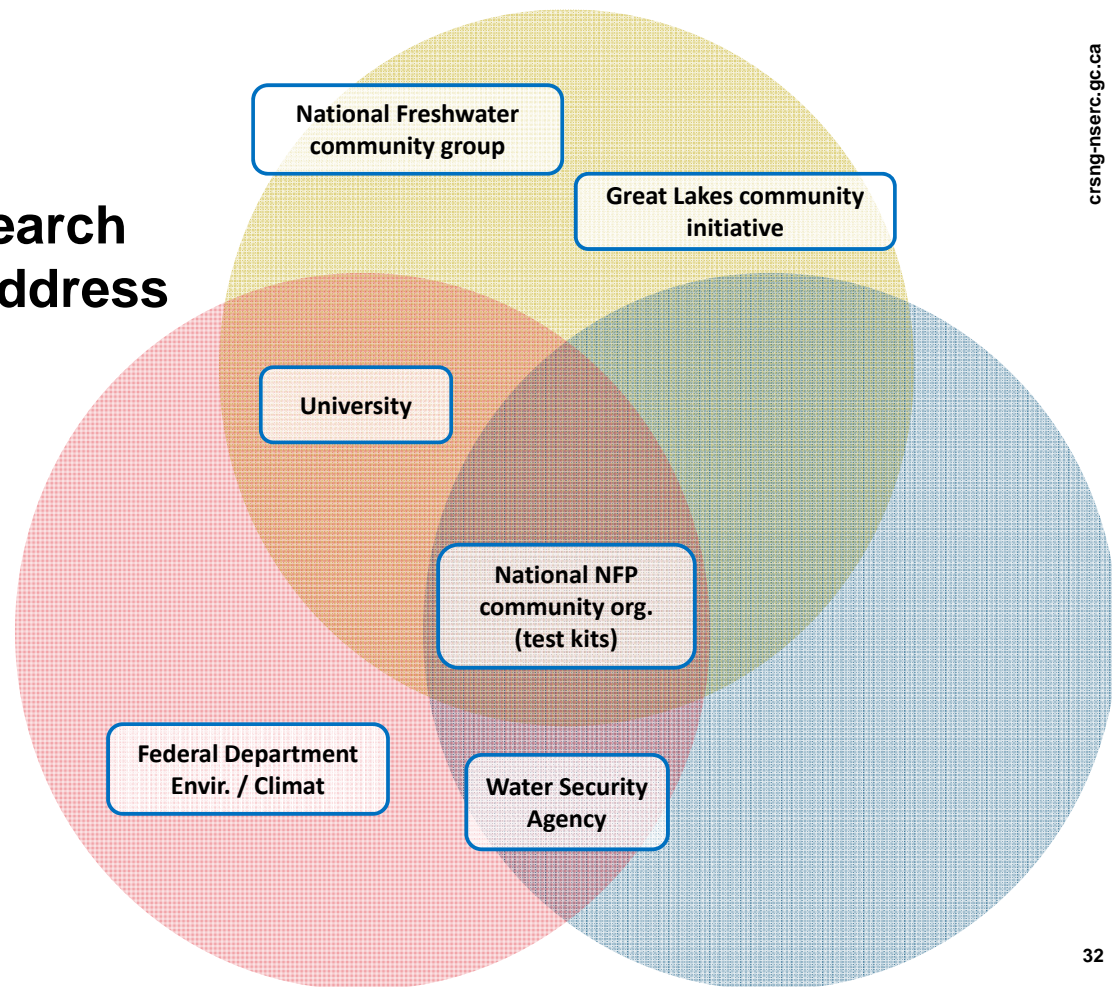
A few suggestions

- **Avoid jumping too quickly to a solution / approach:** a better way may exist.
- **Explore several possible solutions:** Make a list of organizations working on the problem... Try defining the proposal's ecosystem, the societal challenge's landscape.
- **Identify the stakeholders, the “who does what” in the proposal's ecosystem:** The more different perspectives there are, the better.

Successful proposal

How to prepare a research project that aims to address a societal challenge?

Fresh / drinking water project
(water quality in Canada,
citizen mobilization,
water quality monitoring)



Funded project: Option 2 example

Evaluation of micro- and nanoplastics in Canadian drinking water

- **Project:** to examine the concentration and characteristics of micro- and nanoplastics in untreated and treated water. The research team will then work to fill the knowledge gap associated with the potential health impacts related to consumption of these contaminants in drinking water.
- **Value:** \$388,200 over 4 years from NSERC
All partners providing essential in-kind support
- **Applicant:** PI with 25 years of experience in the evaluation of drinking water treatment processes and distribution systems
- **Partners:** 2 public utilities, 2 municipal governments



Value added by Alliance

Enabling partner organizations to research a topic that otherwise may not have been studied due to funding and technical gaps

Bringing together different organizations to work towards a common goal to benefit society

Tapping into expertise and facilities at a local university

Template vs Merit Indicators

CONTEXTE ET RÉSULTATS ESCOMPTÉS

- Présentez les objectifs du partenariat et expliquez les résultats et les retombées escomptés.
- Décrivez l'importance que revêt le sujet pour le Canada et la façon dont le Canada bénéficiera des résultats escomptés.
- Expliquez les nouveaux concepts ou les nouvelles directions qui seront explorés dans le cadre de la recherche sur le sujet. Indiquez comment la recherche permettra de combler les lacunes dans les connaissances nécessaires pour élaborer des technologies ou des processus nouveaux, c'est-à-dire par rapport aux autres travaux de partenaires et à toute autre recherche connexe.
- Décrivez ce que feront les organismes participants pour atteindre les résultats au Canada.

INSÉREZ ICI VOS RÉPONSES AUX POINTS

3. Qualité de la proposition

	Proposition exceptionnelle	Proposition de qualité supérieure	Proposition satisfaisante	Proposition insatisfaisante
3.1 Clarté des objectifs et pertinence de la recherche envisagée par rapport aux objectifs à atteindre et aux résultats escomptés; justification des dépenses prévues	Les objectifs et les livrables sont clairement présentés et de façon détaillée , et il est fort probable que les activités prévues permettent d'atteindre les objectifs et d'obtenir les résultats escomptés. Les dépenses sont justifiées et correspondent bien aux activités prévues.	Les objectifs et les livrables sont clairement présentés , et il est probable que les activités prévues permettent d'atteindre les objectifs et d'obtenir les résultats escomptés. Les dépenses sont justifiées et correspondent aux activités prévues.	Les objectifs et les livrables sont présentés , et il est possible que les activités prévues permettent d'atteindre les objectifs et d'obtenir les résultats escomptés. Les dépenses sont justifiées et correspondent assez bien aux activités prévues.	Les objectifs et les livrables ne sont pas clairement présentés ou les activités prévues ne permettent vraisemblablement pas d'atteindre les objectifs ni d'obtenir les résultats escomptés. Les dépenses ne sont pas assez bien justifiées.
3.2 Pertinence des indicateurs et des méthodes prévus pour suivre les progrès tout au long du projet et pour évaluer les résultats à la fin du projet	Les indicateurs et les méthodes sont clairement présentés et permettent de suivre les progrès et d'évaluer les résultats de façon très efficace .	Les indicateurs et les méthodes sont bien présentés et permettent de suivre les progrès et d'évaluer les résultats de façon efficace .	La proposition présente quelques indicateurs ou méthodes qui conviennent pour suivre les progrès et évaluer les résultats.	Les indicateurs et les méthodes prévus pour suivre les progrès et évaluer les résultats ne sont pas clairement présentés ou ne sont pas pertinents.
3.3 Pertinence de l'expertise des chercheurs universitaires et de l'expertise qui existe au sein des organismes partenaires, à la fois pour mener à bien les activités prévues et pour encadrer les étudiants et les stagiaires postdoctoraux.	L'expertise collective des participants est très pertinente pour mener à bien les activités. Le chercheur principal possède des compétences exceptionnelles pour gérer le projet, puisqu'il a bien géré des projets semblables dans le passé ou il a clairement démontré qu'il est en mesure de le faire.	L'expertise collective des participants est pertinente pour mener à bien les activités. Le chercheur principal est capable de gérer le projet, puisqu'il a géré des projets semblables dans le passé ou il a démontré qu'il est en mesure de le faire.	L'expertise collective des participants est suffisante pour mener à bien les activités. Le chercheur principal a assez bien démontré qu'il est capable de gérer le projet.	La proposition ne montre pas clairement que les participants ont l'expertise collective requise pour mener à bien la recherche ou qu'ils ont la capacité de gérer le projet.

**Option
1**

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Template vs Merit Indicators

TEMPLATE ITEMS - PUBLIC IMPACT VALUE PROPOSITION

1. Describe the issue the project aims to address.
2. Explain the societal impact the project results will have.
3. Describe the new technical knowledge that will be generated.
4. Describe the current barriers impeding a solution.
5. Describe the proposed novel strategy for addressing the issue.
6. Explain why and how the research team and partner organizations are positioned to address the challenge.
7. Describe how the project is designed to take into account the needs of the public.
8. Outline the project's plan to involve groups in your partner organization to achieve results and impact.
9. Explain how the project outcomes will reach beyond the partner organizations.
10. Describe the ways in which interested individuals or groups will be able to access the services or policies that stem from this research.
11. Justify why a higher level of investment of public funds is required.

**Option
2**



MERIT INDICATORS – Option 2 characteristics

1. Societal Impact

Your project should result in both new technical knowledge and societal impact. The research may tackle national priorities or global issues also affecting Canada, or generate societal benefits such as improving quality of life, health and safety, public goods and resources, prosperity and/or sustainability. Public benefits can be realized in any sector — private, public or not-for-profit. But such benefits must be more than improvements to a product or a service for increased profit; the project must aim for impacts beyond near-term economic success. Your project may build capacity to transform a sector and its practices; it may provide the evidence base for new policies or regulations; it could solve an issue affecting a whole business area or create a new area of the economy. The main principle is that the outcomes will reach beyond the partner organizations to impact society.

2. Making Connections

Like all Alliance projects, there must be a meaningful partnership. Your collaborative project must be defined by working with end-users and implementers to ensure it is use-driven and needs-driven. The approach should bring together academic, partner organization and societal perspectives and skillsets throughout the collaboration to merge ideas, overcome existing barriers and find creative solutions. Results and impacts are stronger when the project makes connections among actors in your partner organization's network, creates new relationships or leverages existing efforts and integrates solutions with decision-makers within and across sectors. These non-academic organizations understand the challenge and have the potential to contribute to solving it, although they cannot resolve the problem on their own. The partner organizations need not always provide a share of the monetary support but instead might advance the project through other important functions. Despite a limited financial contribution, your partner organizations must demonstrate a high level of commitment and participation. They must also show how the project is a valuable opportunity to connect with others and must be committed to sharing results beyond their own organizations.

3. Broad Outcomes

Your project must aim for outcomes that do not simply benefit the partner organizations. The results will be shared in various ways, including technical formats, such as publications, and broad channels and formats, such as open guidelines. Your proposal must explain how all interested individuals will both learn about and use the products, services or policies that stem from this research. Any intellectual property management appropriate for these projects should be decided by you and your partner organizations through a plan that ensures that any interested individuals can access the promised outcomes.



PIVP selection committee review instructions

Societal impact		
Review answers to these PIVP questions	To determine if application meets the following Option 2 requirements for <i>societal impact</i>	Does not meet
<p>Describe the issue the project aims to address and explain the societal impact the project results will have. Describe the new technical knowledge that will be generated.</p> <p>Describe the current barriers impeding a solution and the proposed novel strategy for addressing the issue. Explain why and how the research team and partner organizations are positioned to address the challenge.</p> <p>Justify why a higher level of investment of public funds is required for this project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • focuses on relevant and important regional, national or global issues or opportunities that could affect or benefit Canada AND • removes or lowers the barriers to achieve what would otherwise not be possible in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improvements to a category of product or service that has potential to transform a sector; or ○ providing the evidence needed to support new policies or regulations or to improve them; or ○ solving an issue affecting an entire sector; or ○ creating a new area of the economy AND • outlines the new knowledge to be generated by the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primarily focuses on partner's specific priorities OR • primarily focuses on partner's own long-term goals, such as increasing profitability, market share, efficiency, visibility, reputation, etc. OR • marginal or incremental improvements to a knowledge, a product, service or process OR • Failure to demonstrate that project cannot be funded through alternative sources of funds

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PIVP selection committee review instructions

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Making connections		
Review answers to these PIVP questions	To determine if application meets the following Option 2 requirements for <i>making connections</i>	Does not meet
<p>Describe how the project is designed to take into account the needs of end-users and implementers. Outline the project's plan to involve groups in your partner organizations' network to achieve optimal results and impact.</p> <p>Describe the current barriers impeding a solution and the proposed novel strategy for addressing the issue. <u>Explain why and how the research team and partner organizations are positioned to address the challenge.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> brings together the most relevant academic, partner organization and other organizations in the collaboration <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> outlines a specific plan among actors in the partner's network and integrate solutions with decision-makers through a demonstrated commitment from partner(s) to sharing project results beyond the partner organization to reach end-users and implementers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> partner and researcher fail to demonstrate connections with key end users and implementers OR project shows insufficient opportunities to connect beyond one partner organization OR inadequate evidence of consultation with relevant groups and limited input and commitment from them OR low degree of participation from partner organizations and unclear intent to share results beyond the project's partner organizations

PIVP selection committee review instructions

Broad outcomes		
Review answers to these PIVP questions	To determine if application meets the following Option 2 requirements for <i>broad outcomes</i>	Does not meet
Explain how the project outcomes will reach beyond the partner organizations to impact society. Describe the ways in which interested individuals or groups will be able to learn about and use the products, services or policies that stem from this research.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> project shares outcomes in various ways including broadly accessible technical publications or open guidelines <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> explanation of how all interested individuals will both learn about and use the products, services or policies that stem from this research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> project outcomes flow to partner organizations only OR ✓ knowledge mobilization beyond partners is solely through journal articles OR ✓ no plan to transfer the knowledge to the relevant groups OR Provides an IP management plan that would limit access to the outcomes ✓

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	Exceeds	Meets	Does not satisfy
Societal impact	Novel strategy and convincing activity plan to address a societal issue. Clear synergy between partner organizations	Project lowers barriers to achieve a solution that otherwise would not have been possible. Well positioned partner organizations	Marginal or incremental improvements to a product, to knowledge, to a service or process. Focus on partner's specific priorities or goals
Making connections	There is a convincing plan for active engagement of ecosystem partners and relevant societal perspectives/skill sets from across sectors	Project brings together the most relevant academic experts, key stakeholders and/or end users and implementers	Project shows insufficient opportunities to connect beyond one partner organization. Limited input and commitment from relevant groups
Broad outcomes	Project outcomes will reach beyond partner organizations to impact society. Clear appropriation of results by societal groups and society	Project shares outcomes in various ways including open or broadly accessible publications. Interested individuals will both learn about/use the results	No plan to transfer knowledge to the relevant groups beyond journal articles. IP plan may limit access to the outcomes
higher level of public funds	Multiple barriers to funding, clear need for higher public funding due to the presence of a high risk project and/or long term outcomes	Some barriers to funding, fragmented or non-existent ecosystem around the societal issue	Failure to demonstrate that the project cannot be funded through alternative sources of funds

IMPORTANT NOTE: This is an example given to illustrate what could constitute examples of good PIVP content relative to Option 2 characteristics and the justification for a higher level of public funding. This table should not be considered as official NSERC reference material and is provided solely as an example.

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Option 2 overview pamphlet

Does your project fit?

- You and the partner(s) will broadly share project results
- The PIVP section distinguishes the project from an option 1 project
- All interested stakeholders in the project's ecosystem are involved to achieve optimal results and impact
- Barriers to the project justify a higher level of investment of public funds

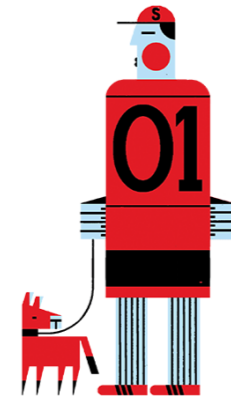


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Option 2 overview pamphlet

Projects supported under option 2 grants will:

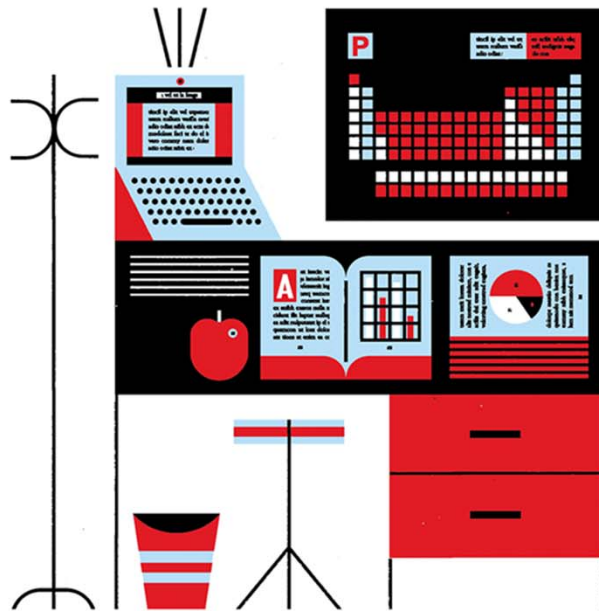
- address a societal challenge resulting in new NSE knowledge and societal impact
- bring together academic, partner organization, and societal perspectives and skill sets
- demonstrate how all interested individuals will learn about and use the products, services or policies that stem from the research



Conclusion



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Questions?

NSERC Alliance Grants

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1-877-767-1767 - Regional Offices

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