2020 Exploration Competition

How to Prepare a Full Application

August 2020

New Frontiers in Research Fund
Fonds Nouvelles frontières en recherche

Government of Canada — Gouvernement du Canada

Canada

CIHR IRSC   SSHRC CRSH   NSERC CRSNG

Outline

- New for the 2020 competition
- Program description
- Eligibility and Roles
- Competition stages and timeline
- Full application requirements
- Review process

Information for RGOs

- Role

New for the 2020 Competition

- Two-stage competition:
  - notice of intent to apply (NOI) (not adjudicated)
  - full application

- [Tri-agency Guide on Financial Administration](#):
  - general guidelines for eligibility of expenses
  - use of funds related to the direct costs of research
  - exceptions noted in the [Competition Overview](#).

New Frontiers in Research Fund Exploration Stream

- Goal: to inspire research that is **high risk, high reward**, and **interdisciplinary**
  - pushes boundaries into exciting new areas
  - outside the box
  - defy current paradigms
  - bring disciplines together in unexpected ways and from bold, innovative perspectives
  - potential to deliver game-changing impacts

New Frontiers in Research Fund Exploration Stream

- Supports projects that :

  - **bring disciplines together** beyond traditional disciplinary or common interdisciplinary approaches;

  - propose to **explore something new**, which **might fail**; and

  - have the **potential for significant impact**.

- Range of impacts: social, cultural, economic, health-related, technological, etc.

- Proposals led from any discipline: social sciences and humanities, health, natural sciences and engineering

Evaluation Criteria

- High Risk
- High Reward
- Feasibility
- Interdisciplinarity / Fit to Program
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

High Risk

- High risk can be defined by elements such as, but not limited to:
  - proposing unique directions;
  - challenging current research paradigms;
  - enhancing understanding of complex and challenging issues;
  - bringing new disciplines together with different perspectives, to use novel approaches for solving existing problems; and/or
  - developing or adapting frameworks, methods and techniques.

High Reward

- High reward can be defined by elements such as, but not limited to:
  - having an economic, scientific, artistic, cultural, technological or health impact;
  - impacting and/or affecting large communities, or unique communities or subpopulations with the potential to provide lessons for other contexts;
  - transforming and/or disrupting conventional thinking;
  - resolving a longstanding issue or debate; and/or
  - significantly advancing current knowledge, methods and/or technologies.

Feasibility

- While a focus on high risk may seem at odds with feasibility, risk must be related to the idea being proposed, and not to a lack of a concrete plan or inability to execute the activities.

- Feasibility considers elements such as the:
  - research problem being addressed;
  - knowledge, expertise and capacity of the research team;
  - current research in the field;
  - workplan and timeline;
  - proposed approach, including GBA+/SGBA where appropriate;
  - project's engagement and reciprocity with First Nations, Inuit and/or Metis peoples (for Indigenous research), where appropriate; and
  - suitability of the research environment.

Interdisciplinarity / Fit to program

- Interdisciplinarity requirement: at least 2 different disciplines (group-level classification of the CRDC)

  The onus is on the applicant to explain the **novelty of the interdisciplinary approach** to justify the fit to program

- Interdisciplinarity can be defined by elements such as, but not limited to:

  - Novelty of the Perspective
    - ✓ integrating two or more disciplines that are not commonly combined

  - Novelty of the approach
    - ✓ application or adaptation of frameworks/ tools/ methods/ techniques from one discipline to solve a problem in another discipline.

  - Project design
    - ✓ designed from an interdisciplinary perspective

  - Fit to Program
    - ✓ a project that pushes the boundaries of what can be funded through the agencies

Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI)

- EDI is a core element of the NFRF program; applicants must clearly demonstrate their commitment to EDI

- For each of these three key areas, applicants must explain :

  1. team composition and recruitment processes;
  2. training and development opportunities; and
  3. inclusion.

  ❑ what actions they will take,

  ❑ the outcomes expected, and

  ❑ the assessment planned

- Actions proposed are expected to **remove barriers** and **provide opportunities** for the meaningful integration of individuals from all groups, including the four designated groups (women, Indigenous peoples, members of visible minorities and persons with disabilities).

  See the NFRF [Best Practices in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Research](#)

Value and duration

- Value:
  - up to $125,000 per year (including indirect costs of up to 25% of direct costs); maximum value for direct costs is $100,00 per year
  - funds should be used primarily to support research activities, not to acquire or maintain infrastructure

- Duration: up to 2 years

- Minimum of 100 grants
  - a proportion of awards will be reserved for ECR-led proposals

Project Team Eligibility

- At least 2 participants:

  - Nominated principal investigator (NPI) who is an [independent researcher](#) at an eligible institution;

  And

  - Co-principal investigator (co-PI), who must also be considered an [independent researcher](#)

  Or

  - Co-applicant (co-App), who may be independent researchers. Or may be, but are not limited to, practitioners, policy-makers, educators, decision-makers, health-care administrators, Indigenous elders, Indigenous knowledge keepers, community leaders, or individuals working for a charity.

Project Team Eligibility

- NPIs, co-PIs and co-Apps:
  - must not be affiliated with local or foreign government or for-profit company
  - can participate in **only one Exploration stream application or grant at one time**

- Exploration grantees must submit their final report before the full application deadline of a subsequent competition to be eligible to apply. *i.e.* Exploration 2018 grantees cannot apply as they are within their last year of funding and have not submitted their report.

Project Team Eligibility

Exceptions

- Federal government employee and adjunct professor whose students are participating in the research project may be a co-applicant, with the use of funds limited to salaries or stipends and travel costs for the students

- Federal government employee and adjunct professor whose contributions to the project do not fall within the mandate of their federal organization and will not be performed within the employer's facilities or with the employer's resources may be a co-PI or co-applicant

- Individuals whose primary affiliation is with an Indigenous government are eligible to be co-principal investigators (if they are considered to be an independent researcher), co-applicants or collaborators, with eligible expenses limited to those related to the execution of the project that are not within the mandate of the Indigenous government.

Project Team Eligibility

- For a proposal to be considered led by early career researchers (ECRs), **both the NPI and co-PI** (if applicable) must be ECRs

- Refer to the [Eligibility](#) section of the Competition Overview for more details

NPI role

Nominated Principal Investigator (NPI)

- Responsible for the direction of the project and the coordination of proposed research activities

- Completes the NOI and full application on [Convergence Portal](#) and submits to their research administrator

- Assumes administrative and financial responsibility for the grant

Roles

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Fonds **Nouvelles frontières** en recherche

Co-Principal Investigator (co-PI)

- Shares responsibility with the NPI for the direction of the proposed activities

- May access grant funds

Co-Applicants (co-App)

- Contribute to the execution of the project

- Various backgrounds and affiliations

- May access grant funds

Collaborators

- Can be any individual who contributes to the project

- Cannot be supervised by the team

- Do not have access to grant funds

Competition Stages
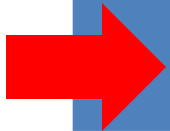
Notice of Intent to Apply (NOI)

| Mandatory | Not adjudicated | August 18, 2020 |

Full application

| Evaluated by the multidisciplinary review panel, taking into account the feedback of external reviewers. | **October 20, 2020** |

Award results released

| **March 31, 2021** |

Application Stage

NPIs who submitted a NOI by August 18, 2020 will be able to complete the Full Application using the Convergence Portal

Application deadline for submission to NFRF

October 20, 2020

Check with your RGO for internal deadlines

Full Application – Content

- Information that was provided at NOI stage; and

- Any new participants (Co-PI/Co-app)

  - However, they <u>cannot</u> transfer from one NFRF project to another

- Any changes to: Collaborators, Suggested Reviewers or Reviewer Exclusions

- Details of: Budget, GBA+ analysis, Certifications, Licenses and permits, and EDI (in Convergence Portal)

- Supporting documents (4) uploaded as separate attachments

Participants and Suggested External Reviewers

- Additional members can be added e.g. co-PI (if one not already invited), co-Applicants and/or Collaborators

- New team members (co-PI and co-Apps) will have to complete their profiles in Convergence Portal

- External reviewers could also be suggested (minimum of 5) or excluded

Sections in Convergence Portal

- Budget Table

- Gender-based analysis plus (GBA+)

- Certifications, licences and permits
  - [Agreement on the Administration of Agency Grants and Awards by Research Institutions](#)
  - [Requirements for Certain Types of Research](#)
  - [Impact Assessment Form (Appendix A)](#)

- Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI)
  - Must not include any self-identifying information
  - Consult NFRF's [Best Practices in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Research](#)

Supporting Documents

Section	Maximum number of pages
Research Proposal	4
Biographical information about the research team	2
Budget justification	1
Literature references	5

Research Proposal

- Maximum 4 pages
- Describe the project and address why it is:
  - High Risk
  - High Reward
  - Interdisciplinarity
- State the objectives
- Describe the project:
  - methodology and design
  - work plan and timeline
- Discuss the approaches to Indigenous Research and GBA+/SGBA (if appropriate)

Do not include any identifying information about team members

Biographical information

- Maximum 2 pages
- Provide an overview of the research team's knowledge, background and expertise
- Identify the anticipated contributions of each team member
- Explain how their contributions will be coordinated and integrated
- If self-identifying information is relevant, it may be included in this section **only with the members' consent**

Budget Justification

- Maximum 1 page
- Provide a breakdown & explanation of the direct costs
    - provide sufficient information to assess appropriateness of requested resources
- Other resources can also be described, if necessary, e.g. funding, materials, equipment
- Breakdown of indirect costs is not required

Do not include any identifying information about team members

Literature References

- Maximum 5 pages
- List of references cited in the application

Instructions for Attachments

- All documents must be converted to Portable Document Format (PDF) before they can be attached to the application

- Be mindful of [formatting requirements](#) (page length, font size, margins, no personally identifying information, etc.)

- Applications that do not adhere to the requirements can be withdrawn

Finalize Application

- Review your application and submit it
- Accept the Terms and Conditions
  - Status will change to Received by Administrator
- If changes are needed – ask your institution's RGO to return it to you
- RGO approves and submits to agency
  - Status will change to Received by Agency
  - No further changes can be made

Review Process

- Purpose:
  - to identify the most meritorious applications to be recommended for funding by the multidisciplinary review panel

- Each application is:
  - assessed by External reviewers

  and

  - evaluated by 5 members of the Multidisciplinary Review panel

- Consult the [Reviewer Manual](#) for more detail

External Review – Double blind

- External reviewers will evaluate the proposal according to the criteria:
  - high risk,
  - high reward,
  - Interdisciplinarity, and
  - feasibility
- This process is double-blinded (i.e. the external reviewers are not provided information that identifies the research team, and vice versa)

External Review – Double-blind

- External reviewers will be provided with the following sections:
  - NOI Stage: Summary of the Proposal
  - Full Application stage:
    - gender-based analysis plus (GBA+) section
    - research proposal
    - budget justification
    - literature references

- To ensure anonymity, **do not include any identifying information about the team members** (e.g., names, previous work, research groups, departments, institutions or organizations) in these sections
  - When referring to prior research, use non-identifying statements (e.g., "article was published," "research was conducted on," etc.).

Multidisciplinary Review Panel

- Each application will be adjudicated by 5 members
    - 3 with similar area of research expertise
    - 2 provide non-expert perspective
- Members have access to all content from the NOI and Full application stages, in addition to the External reviewers' reports

Multidisciplinary Review Panel

- Evaluate and score according to the [merit indicator matrices](#) for the selection criteria:
  - high risk: 40% of overall score
  - high reward: 40% of overall score
  - feasibility: 20% of overall score
  - equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) (pass/fail)
  - interdisciplinarity / fit to program (pass/fail)

Collection of personal information

- Collected for the purpose of program performance management

- Self-ID data collected as part of the user profile is **NOT** shared with reviewers (or agency staff)

- Please consult [Data Collection policy](#) for more information

ROLE OF THE RGO

RGO Role

- RGOs can:
  - view Applications from NPIs at their institution (expired, in progress and submitted)
  - return submitted Applications to the NPI
  - forward submitted Applications to the agency

RGO Role

- Before forwarding an application to the agency, you will be asked to confirm:
  - that the participants meet the eligibility requirements
  - that the proposed research project meets the eligibility requirements

RGO Role

- By forwarding the application, you will also be certifying, on behalf of the institution, that the NPI:

  - is affiliated with the institution or organization

  - has the necessary time and resources to carry out the activity

  - will email NFRF-FNFR@chairs-chaires.gc.ca of any changes during the tenure of the grant, including changes in the composition of the partnership, such as the addition of new co-principal investigators, co-applicants or collaborators

RGO Role

- ## Use the "Research Administrator" button to access your institution's applications

- ## **If you do not have this option, please contact websupport@convergence.gc.ca**

Convergence

A recorded presentation on how to complete and submit the Full application on the Convergence portal will be made available to the RGOs.

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING!

Resources

NFRF contact	NFRF-FNFR@chairs-chaires.gc.ca
Internal Deadlines	Ask your institution's Research Grants Office / RGO
NFRF website	
Competition overview	
On-line Services Helpdesk	E-mail: websupport@convergence.gc.ca Telephone: 613-995-4273