New Frontiers in Research Fund
Transformation Scheme - 2020
In this workshop

• Brief overview of parameters, competition stages and proposal format

• Discussion of strategies and approaches for selection criteria (i.e., EDI, interdisciplinarity, high-risk)
Inaugural competition

• Grants from $2M-$4M/year, for up to six years
  • Totals include 25% indirect costs to the institution
  • Grants will receive a mid-term review
• Competition budget: $144M
• This means as few as six grants may be funded nationally
Eligibility - Team

• All teams must include at least 5 members and include at least one early career researcher (ECR)

• Additional members can be added at each stage of the competition process and throughout the term of the grant, but all core members should be confirmed in the Letter of Intent

• Each individual can only be NPI or co-PI on one awarded Transformation grant

• Participation on NFRF Exploration or International grants does not affect eligibility
Eligibility – Team roles

• NPI must be a Canadian independent academic researcher
• Co-PIs and co-applicants may have other positions: practitioner, policy-maker, Indigenous elder or knowledge keeper, etc.
  • If academic, must be independent (not postdoctoral fellow, RA, student)
  • Must not be affiliated with the private sector or a government department
  • May be international

• Collaborators may be from any sector, Canadian or International
  • Students/postdocs only eligible if they are not supervised by any other team members
  • Collaborators cannot receive access to grant funds
Team size/composition

“The NPI should be the most appropriate Canadian researcher to lead an interdisciplinary project of this scale which requires integration and coordination beyond usual disciplinary perspectives. Team members may be from any sector to ensure that all required sectors and disciplines are represented in the team... The focus should be on assembling a coherent team of experts to execute the project rather than on establishing a network.”
Eligibility – Project type

- The intention of this fund is to support projects with the potential to create significant (transformative) change in addressing a well-defined problem.
- Proposals that are primarily to establish a new network or platform, or to fund a range of projects across an existing network, are not appropriate to this call.
- Proposals to create national training programs are not eligible.
- Smaller-scale proposals and/or those in development/pilot stages would be more appropriate for the Exploration stream.
Eligibility – Subject Matter

• Projects must incorporate areas of research that fall under the mandates of at least two granting agencies (SSHRC, NSERC, CIHR)

• Interdisciplinarity will also be assessed by whether the projects includes at least two or more discipline-level Canadian Research and Development Classification (CRDC) codes

• Team membership should reflect the expertise needed for the project to actually be interdisciplinary as described
Project stages - NOI

- Research team profiles
  - Fields of research/keywords
  - EDI self-identification
- 3,500 character summaries (2) of the challenge and the approach
  - For promotional purposes if funded
- Fields of research
  - Two different disciplines must be included as primary fields of research to meet interdisciplinarity criterion
- List of collaborators (do not need a profile)
- Suggested and excluded reviewers
  - Optional at this stage
- NOI content can be updated at the LOI stage
- NOI is *not adjudicated*

*Internal deadline: February 11, 2020*       *Final deadline: February 18, 2020*
Project stages - LOI

- Additions to research team and/or collaborator list
- EDI form
  - Specific form not yet available, but will likely be same/similar to form used for Exploration
- Support and integration of ECRs – separate section
- Minimum 20 suggested reviewers, at least 10 international

Internal deadline: April 7, 2020               Final deadline: April 15, 2020
Project stages - LOI

10-page proposal – suggested headings:

• Novelty
  • How is this approach different? Why will it succeed?
• Interdisciplinarity
  • Who will bring in interdisciplinary perspectives? How will they be integrated?
• Feasibility
  • What is the methodological plan?
    • Will GBA+ considerations be integrated?
  • What is the strength and expertise of the research team?
  • How will you access the necessary infrastructure?
• Anticipated transformation/impact
  • What is the anticipated impact and its significance?
  • What are the short- and long-term benefits?
  • What is the likelihood the impact will occur?
LOI review process

• No external reviewers at LOI stage. LOIs will be assessed by members of the multidisciplinary/multisectoral review panel according to the following selection criteria:
  • interdisciplinarity (pass/fail)
  • EDI (pass/fail)
  • high risk (20%)
  • high reward (60%)
  • feasibility (20%)

• Members’ ratings for the high risk, high reward and feasibility criteria will determine an overall score for each LOI.

• The review panel will meet to discuss the LOIs. Some may be triaged out before the meeting due to low scores. If there is a discrepancy between members’ assessments, the LOI will be brought forward for discussion.

• Review panel will identify the top-rated LOIs to proceed to the full application stage.
Full application

• Format and guidelines not yet available
• 30 applications to be invited to full proposal
• Expert external reviewers will be engaged
• Reviewer reports will be provided to the panel, who will also review applications and then rank
• Final funding decisions will be made by a jury following an in-person presentation
Criterion – Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

PASS/FAIL at LOI stage

• Separate section – likely a 4-page attachment

• Identify existing context, including your efforts to date and identifying existing barriers to inclusion in the field(s)

• Refer directly to NFRF Best Practices document. At least one best practice should be implemented from each area:
  • Team composition and recruitment processes
  • Training and development opportunities
  • Inclusion

• Indicate how you will implement and measure success in each area
Criterion – Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

PASS/FAIL at LOI stage

- Consider diversity broadly – beyond only sex/gender and race/ethnicity
- Have plans in place to integrate ECRs and support leadership development
- Do not provide information that identifies the EDI status of your team
- Do not focus on the context of the research, e.g., diversity in your patient/study population
Criterion - Interdisciplinarity

PASS/FAIL at LOI stage

• Proposal must include an interdisciplinary approach that integrates different disciplinary approaches to bring a novel perspective to address the research challenge.

• explain how the disciplinary perspectives, methodologies and techniques will be integrated

• demonstrate that the team has the required expertise to execute the interdisciplinary approach.

• explain why an interdisciplinary approach is required and/or the added value of this approach to the research problem.
Criterion - Interdisciplinarity

PASS/FAIL at LOI stage

• avoid interdisciplinary approaches that are well-established or where methods from one discipline are already in common use in another

• interdisciplinarity should be integral to the design of the project – not an “add-on” to meet the criteria
Criterion – High-Risk

20% of LOI score

• Approach should be highly innovative, building on the latest knowledge and techniques

• Projects should be “first-of-its-kind” with expertise drawn from world-leading experts

• Provide a compelling case for why this project is expected to succeed where others have failed
Criterion – High-Reward

60% of LOI score

• The project should lead to significant breakthrough opening a new area of discovery, and have impact on multiple fields
• A defined and specific change emerging from the research should be outlined
• Argue for the high likelihood that benefits will be realized, and provide a plan to measure them.
• Show that there are significant short-term benefits that are specific and will be measured.
• Project should have significant benefit to Canada, and beyond Canada if possible.
Criterion – Feasibility

20% of LOI score

- At LOI stage, scored only on feasibility of the proposed approach to the problem or challenge at a relatively high level.
- Focus on clearly articulating the problem or challenge and the approach
- The literature should be clearly addressed; demonstrate that the project is founded on sound principles even if it challenges current paradigms
- Show the team has the necessary resources to execute the project
- Present a well-defined workplan with short- and long-term objectives
- Clearly describe impact of SGBA+ on the methodology – not a token inclusion
- If appropriate, show active engagement with affected Indigenous communities