



New Frontiers in Research Fund  
Fonds **Nouvelles frontières** en recherche

# 2020 Transformation Competition

## Letter of Intent to Apply

February 2020



Government  
of Canada

Gouvernement  
du Canada

Canada



SSHRC  CRSH



# Outline

- Transformation stream
- Subject matter eligibility
- Project team eligibility and roles
- Competition stages and timeline
- LOI requirements
- LOI review process
- Convergence Portal demonstration (applicants)

## Information for RGOs

- RGO role
- Convergence Portal demonstration (RGOs)

# Transformation Stream Objective

- To support large-scale, Canadian-led interdisciplinary research projects that address a major challenge, and have the potential to realize real and lasting change
- The challenge the research addresses may be:
  - fundamental, leading to a scientific breakthrough
  - applied, with a social, economic, environmental or health impact
- Projects are expected to be world-leading, and to draw on global research expertise when relevant

# Approach

- Transformation grants will support projects that:
  - tackle a well-defined problem or challenge
  - propose a novel world-leading approach
  - are interdisciplinary
  - have the potential to be transformative
- *Transformative research* is defined as having the potential to create a significant and real change or impact—a noticeable leap or tangible breakthrough rather than an incremental advance

# Value and Duration

- Value:
  - Between \$2,000,000 and \$4,000,000 per year (including indirect costs of up to 25% of direct costs)
  - Maximum budget for direct costs is \$3,200,000 per year; the minimum budget is \$1,600,000
  - Funds should be used primarily to support research activities, not to acquire or maintain infrastructure
- Duration: up to six years
- Number of grants depends on the amount of funding requested in successful applications, but we anticipate awarding a minimum of six grants
- Mid-term review of funded projects is mandatory

# Subject Matter Eligibility

- Must propose a **world-leading interdisciplinary** approach
- Must have the potential to have a **significant impact** in addressing a well-defined challenge
- Must include elements from at least two disciplines **and cross the mandates of at least two** of the federal research funding agencies (CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC)

# Project Team Eligibility

- Proposals must be submitted by teams of **at least five participants** (including NPI, co-PIs and co-applicants)
- Teams must include a nominated principal investigator (NPI) who is an independent researcher at an eligible institution
- Early Career Researchers (ECRs) must be included as confirmed members in all teams
- Teams may include co-principal investigators, co-applicants and collaborators

# Project Team Eligibility

- National, international and cross-sector collaborations are encouraged to ensure:
  - that the most appropriate individuals and/or organizations are involved
  - that team composition reflects best practices in equity, diversity and inclusion



# Roles

## Nominated Principal Investigator (NPI)

- Responsible for the direction of the project and the coordination of proposed activities
- Completes the NOI, LOI and full application through the [Convergence Portal](#) and submits them to the RGO at their institution
- Assumes administrative and financial responsibility for the grant

# Roles

## Co-Principal Investigators (co-PI)

- Work with the NPI to direct the project and contribute to its execution

## Co-Applicants

- Contribute to the execution of the project

## Both Co-Principal Investigators *and* Co- Applicants

- May access grant funds
- Can be individuals with various backgrounds and affiliations
- Cannot be affiliated with a government or for-profit company


## Collaborators

- Do not have access to grant funds
- Can be any individual who contributes to the project

# Competition Stages

## 1. Notice of Intent to Apply (NOI)

- Not adjudicated



## 2. Letter of Intent to Apply (LOI)

- Evaluated by the multidisciplinary/multisectoral review panel

## 3. Full application, by invitation based on the LOI

- Evaluated by the multidisciplinary/multisectoral review panel, taking into account the feedback of external reviewers

## 4. Highest-ranked full applications

- Invited to present their proposal in person to a jury
- The jury selects the applications to recommend for funding
- The CRCC, the steering committee for the NFRF, makes decisions regarding which applications to fund based on the recommendations of the review panel and the jury

# Competition Timeline



**February 18, 2020**

- NOI deadline

**April 15, 2020**

- LOI deadline

**June 15, 2020**

- LOI results released

**November 18, 2020**

- Full application deadline

**January 2021**

- Multidisciplinary review panel meeting

**February 2021**

- Jury meeting

**March 2021**

- Award results released

**March 2021**

- Start date of awards

# LOI Requirements

- **The NPI must have submitted an NOI to be eligible to create and submit an LOI**
- **LOI deadline for submission to NFRF:**  
**April 15, 2020**
- **Check with your RGO for internal deadlines**

# LOI Requirements

1. Profiles in the Convergence Portal for any additional members of the research team
  - Members identified at the NOI stage are expected to remain on the team
  
2. LOI content
  - Includes all information submitted in the NOI, updated as necessary, as well as sections outlined in the next slides

# Collaborators

- Changes to the list of collaborators (additions or deletions)

# Suggested Reviewers

- Suggested reviewers (minimum of 20):
  - have the expertise to review and comment on your application
  - have the ability to review your application in the language in which it is written
  - are not in a conflict of interest with any member of the team
- Suggest a diverse cross-section of reviewers:
  - Canadian and international
  - early-career and established
  - women and other under-represented groups
  - from academic and non-academic institutions
- **At least 10 suggested reviewers must be from outside Canada**
- Indicate any individuals who should not be asked to review the proposal



# Budget Table

- Enter the planned amount of funds to be spent in each category (direct and indirect costs) for each year of the project
- Please contact your research administrator for direction on how much to request for indirect costs

**The budget table will not be available until March 5, 2020. Your LOI will only be considered complete once the budget table is completed.**

# Gender-Based Analysis Plus

- Indicate if GBA+/SGBA considerations are appropriate and if they have been integrated into the proposed research
- Note that they must be integrated if considered appropriate or you will be unable to submit your application
- Provide an explanation if GBA+/SGBA considerations are not deemed appropriate for the proposed research

# Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

- The research team must demonstrate a commitment to EDI, demonstrating diversity by meaningfully engaging members of the four designated groups
- Personal information about any individual must not be included
- Provide:
  - A short description of the EDI context of your team (max. characters: 2500)
  - Best practices implemented (max. characters: 250 each element) and the relevance, approach and expected impact (max. characters: 2500 each element) for:
    - Team composition and recruitment process
    - Training and development opportunities
    - Inclusion



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Related to:  
Project design

## EDI / ECR Criterion

Related to:  
Team  
members'  
practices

## Personal Information

(Convergence Profile)

Not shared  
Not considered  
in assessment  
Should not be  
included in  
application  
anywhere

# Early Career Researchers

- Explain how ECRs will be included in the team and integrated in a meaningful way, including plans to support their leadership and development throughout the project (max. characters: 3500)

# Research Proposal

- Maximum 10 pages, including diagrams and illustrations
- Should address:
  - novelty of approach
  - interdisciplinarity
  - feasibility
  - anticipated transformation/change/impact
- Ensure you use language that can be understood by a multidisciplinary committee
- The allocation of space and the order are not prescribed; the use of headings is highly encouraged

# References

- No page limit
- Applicants are strongly encouraged to include only the main references required to support the proposal

# Instructions for Attachments

- Each supporting document must be uploaded as a separate attachment following the instructions for attachments
- It is the responsibility of the NPI to verify the page lengths and formatting of all uploaded attachments
- If a submitted application contains one or more attachments that do not comply with the required page length or formatting, the application may be withdrawn



# LOI Review Process

- Each LOI will be evaluated by 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%)

# Interdisciplinarity

- Transformation projects must integrate different disciplinary approaches to bring a novel perspective to address the research challenge
- Proposals must:
  - 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 the need for an interdisciplinary approach and/or the added value of the approach to the research problem

# Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and Early Career Researchers

- To ensure the greatest innovation and success, EDI is a core element of the NFRF program
- Teams must demonstrate a commitment to EDI by meaningfully engaging members of underrepresented groups, including the four designated groups
- Teams should also consider diversity as it applies to career stages, sectors and institutions
- The meaningful integration of all members of the project team is required, with concrete measures to ensure this

# High Risk

- High risk refers to the novelty of the proposed approach to the challenge
- Proposals must explain:
  - why the project is novel, as it relates to the latest methods, concepts, information and techniques
  - how the approach builds on and benefits from expertise and resources across Canada and/or internationally
  - what makes the approach “world-leading”
  - why the approach is expected to lead to real change

# High Reward

- High reward is defined as the potential to create a significant and real change or impact—to be transformative
- Proposals must:
  - explain the anticipated change or impact that is likely to result and its significance
  - outline the major short-, medium- and long-term changes that are expected, the likelihood of their achievement, and who or what will be affected by the changes

# Feasibility

- Feasibility covers the plan and the ability to execute the activities
- At the LOI stage, the evaluation will focus only on the feasibility of the proposed approach to the problem or challenge at a relatively high level
- At the full application stage, the external reviewers and the multidisciplinary review panel will evaluate the project's feasibility in more detail

## Using the Matrices

For each criterion, reviewers are asked to consider relevant elements, including, but not limited to, those in the evaluation matrices.

Interdisciplinarity, like EDI/ECR, is scored pass or fail.

The [evaluation matrices](#) for all five criteria are on the NFRF website.

### Criterion: Interdisciplinarity

Projects that meet the expectation for interdisciplinarity with respect to the Transformation stream can be defined by elements including but not limited to:

|                        | Pass   | Fail   |
|------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Perspective</b>     | Proposes a novel interdisciplinary approach.<br><br>Incorporates different disciplinary approaches, bringing a novel perspective to the defined challenge.   | The proposed approach is largely based on a conventional perspective.<br><br>Proposes an interdisciplinary approach where there is a long tradition and/or established co-operation/collaboration/interaction between the disciplines. |
| <b>Approach</b>        | Proposes the application or adaptation of tools/methods/techniques from one discipline to solve a problem in another discipline. (This may also apply for projects where there is a history of collaboration between the disciplines.) | The proposed tools/methods/techniques are already in use in or easily applied to the second disciplinary area, requiring little adaptation or development.   |
| <b>Integration</b>     | The various disciplinary approaches and perspectives are fully integrated; the project is not an amalgamation of disciplinary-specific approaches.   | The interdisciplinary nature of the project is achieved through an amalgamation of projects/activities that are disciplinary.  |
| <b>Team</b>            | The interdisciplinary approach is reflected in the team.   | The team does not reflect the expertise required to execute the interdisciplinary approach.  |
| <b>Proposal design</b> | Designed from an interdisciplinary perspective.  | The proposal appears to be an interdisciplinary component "added on" to a more conventional project or program of research.  |
| <b>Other</b>           |  | The application did not adequately establish the interdisciplinary nature of the project.<br><br>The project falls under the mandate of only one federal research funding agency   |



# LOI Review Process

## Using the Matrices

High risk, high reward, and feasibility are assigned one of seven ratings.

### Criterion: High Risk

Projects that meet the expectations for high risk with respect to the Transformation stream can be defined by elements including but not limited to:

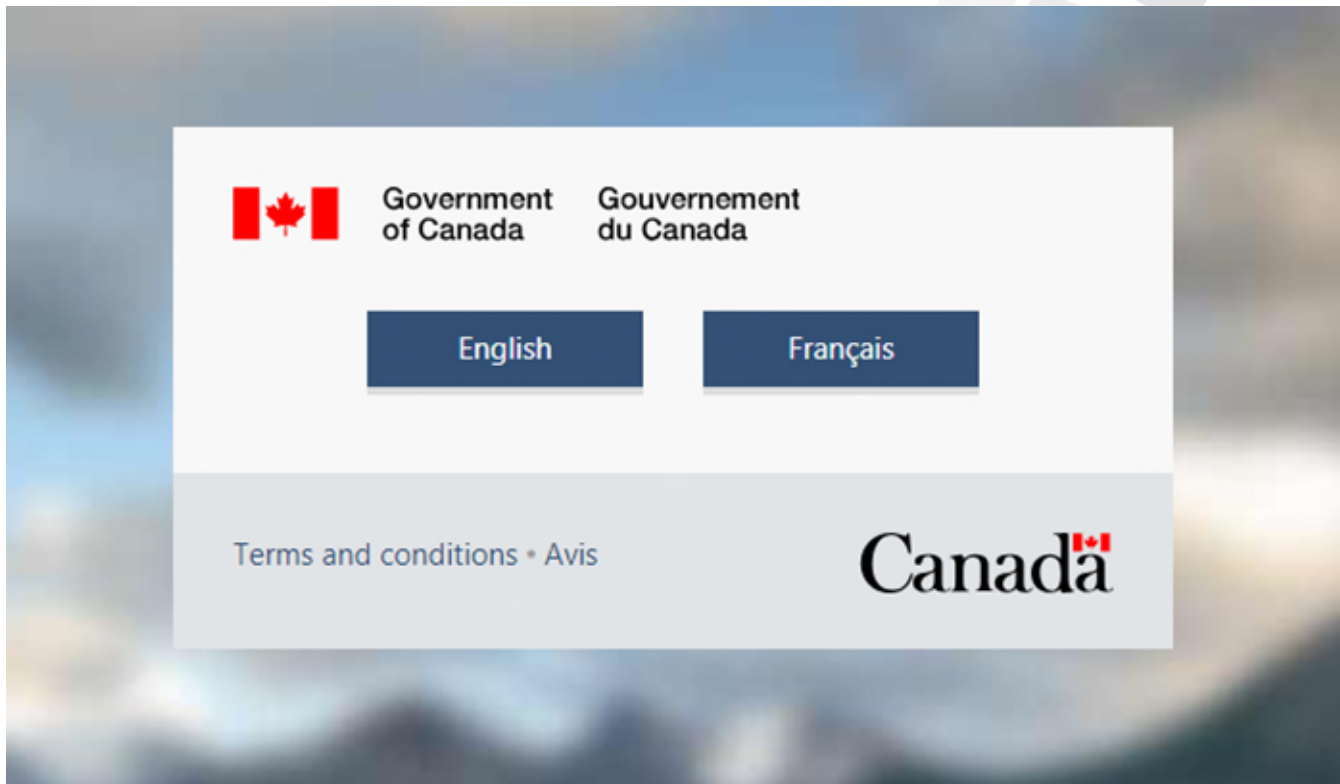
|  | High   | Medium-High  | Medium-Low   | Low   |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| <b>Novelty</b>   | Highly innovative, pioneering a new approach building on the latest methods, concepts, information and techniques. | Innovative approach, incorporating advanced techniques and methodologies from several disciplines. | Represents an innovative variation on a conventional approach.   | Represents a conventional approach to the problem.  |
| <b>Expertise</b>   | Integrates expertise from world-leading experts in all disciplinary areas.   | Led by world-leading expert(s) in the primary disciplinary area(s).                                | Integrates expertise from experts in all disciplinary areas.   | Led by expert(s) in the primary disciplinary area(s).   |
| <b>Approach</b>  | Represents a world-leading approach, a "first of its kind" project.  | Represents a significant "first of its kind" project.  | The approach has not yet been attempted but is likely to be taken by other groups (logical next step). | The approach has been previously attempted or is currently being undertaken by another group. |
| <b>Cogent<br/>(or: persuasive, plausible)</b>  | Highly compelling case for why the approach is likely to succeed where others have failed.                         | Compelling case for why the approach is likely to succeed.   | The application is somewhat persuasive in terms of the potential of the approach.                      | The application was not convincing in terms of the potential of the approach.                 |
| (Note: The viability of the project plan is assessed under the Feasibility criterion. The focus of this element is on the persuasiveness of the argument.) |  |  |  |   |



# LOI Review Process

- Members' ratings for high risk, high reward and feasibility will determine an overall score for each LOI
- The review panel will meet to discuss the top LOIs
- At the meeting, the review panel will decide by consensus which LOIs should proceed to the full application stage

# Convergence Portal Demonstration: Applicants





# Budget Table



[Home](#) > [Letter of Intent](#) > [Proposed Budget](#)

## Proposed Budget

|                                       |
|---------------------------------------|
| ✓ Application Details                 |
| ✓ Invitations                         |
| ✓ Participants                        |
| ✓ Collaborators                       |
| ✓ Fields of Research                  |
| ✓ Keywords                            |
| ✓ Project Description                 |
| Suggested Reviewers                   |
| ✓ Reviewer Exclusions                 |
| Proposed Budget                       |
| GBA+                                  |
| Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) |
| Early Career Researchers (ECRs)       |
| Supporting Documents                  |
| Finalize Application                  |

53% Complete

[PDF view](#)

**Application ID:** NFRFT-2020-00266 **Administering organization:** The University of British Columbia  
**Applicant:** Basciano, Jessica **Funding opportunity:** New Frontiers in Research Fund - Transformation  
**Titles:**

Before completing the budget table below, consult the [Use of Grant Funds](#) section of the competition overview for information about the eligibility of expenditures for the direct costs of research and the regulations governing the use of grant funds.

You must enter the direct costs for each year of the project for up to six years. The direct costs for each year must be at least \$1,600,000 and cannot exceed \$3,200,000. The maximum budget for indirect costs is 25% of the direct costs for a given year (e.g., if the direct costs in a year is \$2,500,000, then the maximum allowable indirect costs is \$625,000 for that year).

You must enter budget details for each year of the project up to a maximum of six years.

| Direct Costs Year 1 | Indirect Costs Year 1 | Year 1 Total |
|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| \$ 0                | \$ 0                  | \$0          |
| Direct Costs Year 2 | Indirect Costs Year 2 | Year 2 Total |
| \$ 0                | \$ 0                  | \$0          |
| Direct Costs Year 3 | Indirect Costs Year 3 | Year 3 Total |
| \$ 0                | \$ 0                  | \$0          |
| Direct Costs Year 4 | Indirect Costs Year 4 | Year 4 Total |
| \$ 0                | \$ 0                  | \$0          |
| Direct Costs Year 5 | Indirect Costs Year 5 | Year 5 Total |
| \$ 0                | \$ 0                  | \$0          |
| Direct Costs Year 6 | Indirect Costs Year 6 | Year 6 Total |
| \$ 0                | \$ 0                  | \$0          |
| Total Direct Costs  | Total Indirect Costs  | Total        |
| \$0                 | \$0                   | \$0          |



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# INFORMATION FOR RGOS

# RGO Role

- Use the “Research Administrator” button to access your institution’s applications

Français



Government  
of Canada

Gouvernement  
du Canada

Convergence Portal



| Have questions?

| **Research Administrator**

| Creed Millman ▾

## My Applications

**Please note:** Submission deadline dates and times are presented in local time.

- If you do not have this option, please contact [websupport@chairs-chaires.gc.ca](mailto:websupport@chairs-chaires.gc.ca)

# RGO Role

- RGOs can:
  - view LOIs from NPIs at their institution (expired, in progress and submitted)
  - forward submitted LOIs to the agency
  - return submitted LOIs to the NPI
  - create a PDF of a single LOI
  - create a PDF of multiple LOIs (a bulk download)

# RGO Role

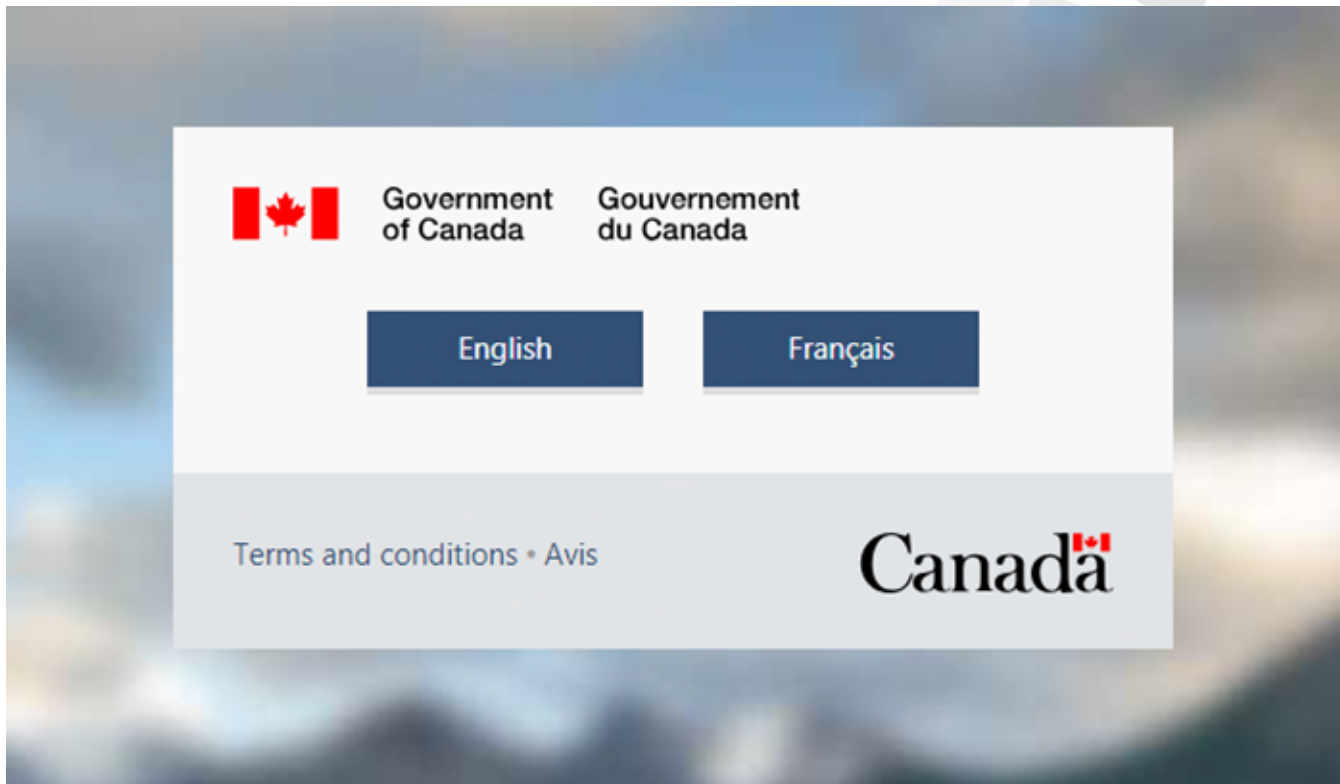
- Before forwarding an application to the agency, you will be asked to confirm:
  - that the participants meet the eligibility requirements
  - that the proposed research project meets the eligibility requirements

# 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-chaire.gc.ca](mailto:NFRF-FNFR@chairs-chaire.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



# Convergence Portal Demonstration: RGOs



# Resources

|                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| NFRF contact                          | <a href="mailto:NFRF-FNFR@chairs-chaires.gc.ca">NFRF-FNFR@chairs-chaires.gc.ca</a>                                      |
| Internal Deadlines                    | Your institution's Research Grants Office   |
| <a href="#">NFRF website</a>          |   |
| <a href="#">Transformation stream</a> |   |
| On-line Services Helpdesk             | E-mail: <a href="mailto:websupport@chairs-chaires.gc.ca">websupport@chairs-chaires.gc.ca</a><br>Telephone: 613-995-4273 |