Update

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Our new College Fund: building on the recommendations of an evaluation of the College-Industry Innovation Fund

This fall, we will launch the first draft call for proposals for our new College Fund. This new program reflects actions taken in response to recommendations made following an evaluation of our former College-Industry Innovation Fund (CIIF).

The College-Industry Innovation Fund (CIIF) was first launched in 2011 to enhance the capacity of colleges to support business innovation in Canada by providing them with state-of-the-art, industry-relevant research infrastructure. In January 2020, the CFI contracted Goss Gilroy Inc. to determine whether the CIIF was meeting its goals and the needs of its stakeholders, and to identify future areas of improvement in its design and implementation. The evaluation relied on data gathered from:

- The CFI's administrative records
- Interviews and focus groups with stakeholders
- A survey of team leaders for both funded and non-funded projects.

We shared the evaluation findings and our response to the recommendations with the CFI Board of Directors in March 2021.

Key findings from the study were:

- The CIIF addresses the needs of institutions with an established research capacity and partnerships with the private sector. More than 90 percent of survey respondents agreed that the CIIF aligns with, and responds to, the needs of their institution.

- The availability of research infrastructure is fundamental to meeting the needs of colleges' industry partners.

- The majority of respondents were satisfied with the application and review process including: the timeline and timing of competitions; the notice of intent process; the support and information provided by the CFI; the clarity, transparency and fairness of the review process; and the feedback received from CFI on their application.

The evaluation report contained four recommendations that focus on:

- Designing the fund to take into consideration the capacity of colleges to apply for and access funding

- Ensuring that fund objectives and parameters accommodate a broad and diverse range of applied research across various disciplines, and with various types of partners (to that end, we renamed the CIIF to the "College Fund")

- Clarifying access to support from the fund for small- and medium-sized projects

- Analyzing the composition of review committees for the fund to ensure balance and representativeness.

These recommendations were integrated in the new College Fund with a view of continuing to serve the evolving needs of the community.

Advanced research computing: Contributed systems policy guidance

Operational funding for the national advanced research computing (ARC) platform is transitioning from the CFI's Major Science Initiative (MSI) Fund to the Digital Research Alliance of Canada (the Alliance, formerly NDRIO). In response, ISED, the Compute Canada Federation (CCF), the CFI and the Alliance have refreshed the guidelines for integrated hardware (contributed systems). The Renewed Policy Guidance on Integrated Hardware (Contributed Systems) is available on the [Alliance website](#).

The Alliance is working to establish an internal process and documentation for consultations with the institutions on CFI infrastructure awards for advanced research computing. When it is ready, the Alliance will share the final process with the research community, including CFI liaisons and contacts.

Upcoming draft calls for proposals

We will publish draft calls for proposals for the 2023 Innovation Fund and the 2022 College Fund soon. See below for important dates and stay tuned for more details to come shortly!

Important upcoming dates

You can always find key dates for all the CFI's funding opportunities on our website. Here are a few important dates coming up:

Week of October 25, 2021	CFI issues the 2023 Innovation Fund draft call for proposals
November 4, 2021	Deadline to submit proposals to the 2023 Major Science Initiatives Fund competition (facilities funded in the 2017 competition)
	CFI issues invitation to submit proposals to the 2023 Major Science Initiatives Fund competition (all other facilities)
November 12, 2021	Deadline for feedback on the draft call for proposals for the 2023 Innovation Fund
November 23, 2021	CFI Board of Directors meeting
November 24, 2021	CFI issues the 2023 Innovation Fund call for proposals
December 7, 2021	Deadline to submit proposals to the Biosciences Research Infrastructure Fund competition
December 13, 2021	Information session for the 2023 Innovation Fund – English
December 14, 2021	Information session for the 2023 Innovation Fund – French
December 15, 2021	Information session for the 2023 Innovation Fund – English

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