2020 Transformation Competition

January 2020
Outline

• NFRF overview
• Transformation stream
• Project team eligibility and roles
• Subject matter eligibility
• Competition stages and timeline
• Review process
• Convergence demonstration (applicants)

Information for RGOs
• RGO role
• Convergence demonstration (RGOs)
New Frontiers in Research Fund

- Objective: to support research that is international, interdisciplinary, fast-breaking and high risk

- Launched in December 2018

- Initial investment of $275 million over five years beginning in 2018-19

- The budget will increase to $124 million per year beginning in 2023-24
Administration

• The Canada Research Coordinating Committee (CRCC) designed the NFRF following a national consultation, and is the steering committee for the NFRF.

• NFRF is a tri-agency program, administered by the Tri-agency Institutional Programs Secretariat (TIPS), which is housed within the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC).
Streams

**Exploration**
- Generates opportunities for Canada to build strength in high-risk, high-reward and interdisciplinary research

**Transformation**
- Provides large-scale support for Canada to build strength and leadership in interdisciplinary and transformative research

**International**
- Enhances opportunities for Canadian researchers to participate in research with international partners
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; or
  – 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
Transformation Stream Objective

• Transformation grants will support projects that:
  1. tackle a well-defined problem or challenge;
  2. propose a novel world-leading approach;
  3. are interdisciplinary; and
  4. 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)
- **Funds should be used to support research activities, not to acquire or maintain infrastructure**
- **Duration**: up to six years
- **Number of grants depends on the amounts requested in successful applications**
- **Mid-term review of funded projects is mandatory**
Project Team Eligibility

• Proposals must be submitted by teams of at least five participants

• Teams must include a nominated principal investigator who is an independent researcher

• Teams may include co-principal investigators, co-applicants and collaborators, who may or may not be academic researchers
Project Team Eligibility

• National, international and cross-sector collaborations are encouraged, as needed

• Early career researchers must be included as confirmed members in all teams
Roles

Nominated Principal Investigator

- 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 the administrative and financial responsibility for the grant
Roles

Co-Principal Investigators
- 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 a range of individuals
- Cannot be affiliated with a government or for-profit company

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

• The project 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)
  – Projects that fall under the mandate of only one federal research funding agency are not eligible
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 the external reviewers

4. Highest-ranked full applications
   • reviewed by a jury to select the applications to recommend for funding
   • the CRCC, the steering committee for the NFRF, makes decisions regarding which applications to fund based on the review panel’s and jury’s recommendations
## Competition Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 18, 2020</td>
<td>NOI deadline</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 15, 2020</td>
<td>LOI deadline</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 15, 2020</td>
<td>LOI results released</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 18, 2020</td>
<td>Full application deadline</td>
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<td>January 2021</td>
<td>Multidisciplinary review panel meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 23, 2021</td>
<td>Jury meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 16, 2021</td>
<td>Award results released</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 2021</td>
<td>Start date of awards</td>
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Notice of Intent to Apply

• Mandatory stage

• NOI deadline: February 18, 2020
  **Check with your RGO for internal deadlines**

• Not adjudicated

• NOIs, LOIs, and full applications that do not meet the eligibility requirements or application guidelines will be withdrawn from the competition
Notice of Intent to Apply

• Main requirements include:
  – completed profiles of at least five team members;
  – application title, keywords and fields of research;
  – outline of challenge;
  – overview of approach and potential changes; and
  – list of collaborators.
Letter of Intent to Apply

- The NPI must have submitted an NOI to be eligible to create and submit an LOI

- LOI deadline: April 15, 2020

**Check with your RGO for internal deadlines**
Review Process: Considerations

• Indigenous Research
  – SSHRC’s Indigenous Research Statement of Principles and Guidelines for the Merit Review of Indigenous Research should be referred to by teams preparing applications related to Indigenous research
  – These guidelines are provided to merit reviewers to help build understanding of Indigenous research
Review Process: Considerations

• Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+)
  – Gender-based analysis plus (GBA+) is used to assess the potential impact that identity factors, such as sex, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, age and mental or physical disability, may have on the experience of the individual.
  – These considerations must be integrated into the research design, when appropriate.
  – The purpose of GBA+ is to promote rigorous research that is sensitive to sex and gender as well as other identity factors.
Review Process: Selection Criteria

- Five selection criteria for all NFRF streams:
  1. interdisciplinarity
  2. EDI and early career researchers
  3. high risk
  4. high reward
  5. feasibility

- Criteria are assessed at the LOI and full application stages and the weighting of the criteria changes between stages
Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

• To ensure the greatest innovation and success, EDI is a core element of the NFRF program

• Teams must demonstrate a commitment to diversity 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 in the project team is required, with concrete measures to ensure this
**Review Roles**

**Internal Review**
- NOIs, LOIs and full applications that do not meet the program’s eligibility requirements and application guidelines will be withdrawn.

**Multidisciplinary/Multisectoral Review Panel**
- A multidisciplinary review panel composed of national and international members with broad expertise will evaluate the LOIs and full applications against all criteria.

**External Review**
- External reviewers with relevant subject matter expertise will evaluate applications according to the interdisciplinarity, high risk, high reward and feasibility selection criteria.

**Jury**
- A diverse, international and multisectoral jury will evaluate applications that meet the standard of excellence and are recommended by the multidisciplinary/multisectoral review panel to select those to be recommended for funding.

**Steering Committee**
- The CRCC makes decisions regarding which applications to fund based on the review panel’s and jury’s recommendations.
Review Process: LOI

• Assessed by the multidisciplinary/multisectoral review panel:
  – interdisciplinarity (pass/fail)
  – EDI (pass/fail)
  – high risk (20%)
  – high reward (60%)
  – feasibility (20%)
Review Process: Application

- Applications by invitation only
- Evaluated by external reviewers

Assessed by the multidisciplinary/multisectoral review panel and discussed at the face-to-face review meeting:
  - interdisciplinarity (confirm pass from LOI stage)
  - EDI (confirm pass from LOI stage)
  - high risk (25%)
  - high reward (25%)
  - feasibility (50%)
Review Process: Application

• The multidisciplinary/multisectoral review panel will recommend, from the applications that meet the required standard of excellence, those to be invited to present their proposal in person to a jury.

• The jury will select from the top-rated applications according to the high reward and feasibility criteria, and recommend which ones should be funded.
How to Use the Convergence Portal: Applicants
For RGOs

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

• If you do not have this option, please contact websupport@chairs-chaires.gc.ca
For RGOs

• Currently, RGOs can:
  – view NOIs from NPIs at their institution (in progress and submitted);
  – forward NOIs to the agency;
  – return NOIs to the NPI.
For RGOs

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

• is affiliated with the institution or organization;

• has the necessary time and resources to carry out the activity; and

• 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.
How to Use the Convergence Portal: RGOs
## Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NFRF contact</th>
<th><a href="mailto:NFRF-FNFR@chairs-chaires.gc.ca">NFRF-FNFR@chairs-chaires.gc.ca</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal Deadlines</td>
<td>Your institution’s Research Grants Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFRF website</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformation stream</td>
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<td>On-line Services Helpdesk</td>
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