



# NSERC Alliance grants

**Presented by: Shirine Jeradi – Manager & Fatine Loumrhari – Research and Innovation Development Officer**  
Research and Technology Partnerships Division  
Natural Sciences and Engineering Council of Canada  
May 2024



## Supporting research at Canadian universities

The Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) is the **largest provider of grants & scholarships** in Canada in the fields of Natural Sciences and Engineering

\$1.3B annual budget

Supporting:

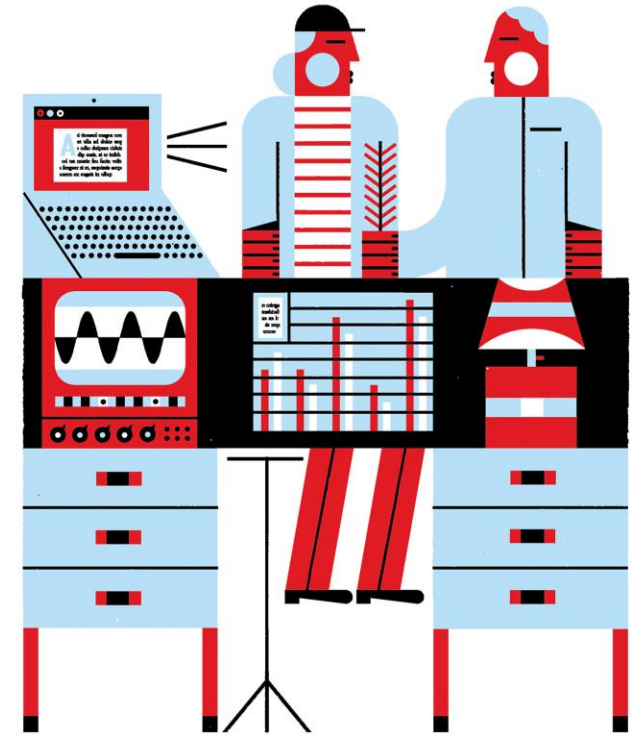
12,000+ researchers

33,000+ students and fellows

4,600 partners

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  - Alliance Advantage (formerly Alliance option 1)
    - Alliance Mitacs Accelerate joint funding opportunity
  - Alliance Society (formerly Alliance option 2)
  - Alliance International
- Policy on Sensitive Technology Research and Affiliations of Concern (STRAC)
- Useful links



Alliance grants

## Program objectives

### Support

- **Collaborations with partner organizations** from multiple sectors (private, public, not-for-profit) as well as with national and international **academic researchers.**
- **Research in the natural sciences and engineering (NSE)** led by strong, complementary, collaborative teams
- Projects that will generate new knowledge and accelerate the application of research results **for the benefit of Canadians**

## Alliance grants

# Program objectives

- **Alliance Advantage grants:** Support partner-driven projects. They fund projects focused on the partners' goals, with at least one partner sharing in the costs of research.
- **Alliance Society grants:** Support projects with societal impact as the main driver. They draw on the relevant perspectives and skill sets of active participants that help accelerate the translation and application of research results.
- **Alliance International grants:** Help researchers establish and grow collaborations with academic research groups that have a high potential for impact in NSE disciplines.



### Alliance Advantage

Accepting applications

Alliance Advantage grants (formerly Alliance cost-sharing option 1) support research projects conducted in collaboration with partner organizations to address their needs and accelerate the application of results.

### Alliance Society

Accepting applications

Alliance Society grants (formerly Alliance cost-sharing option 2) support research projects conducted in collaboration with partner organizations to address challenges at the intersection of natural sciences, engineering and society.

### Alliance International

Accepting applications

Supports partnerships between Canadian and international academic researchers to establish and grow research collaborations of global importance that will generate benefits to Canada.

### Special calls and joint funding opportunities

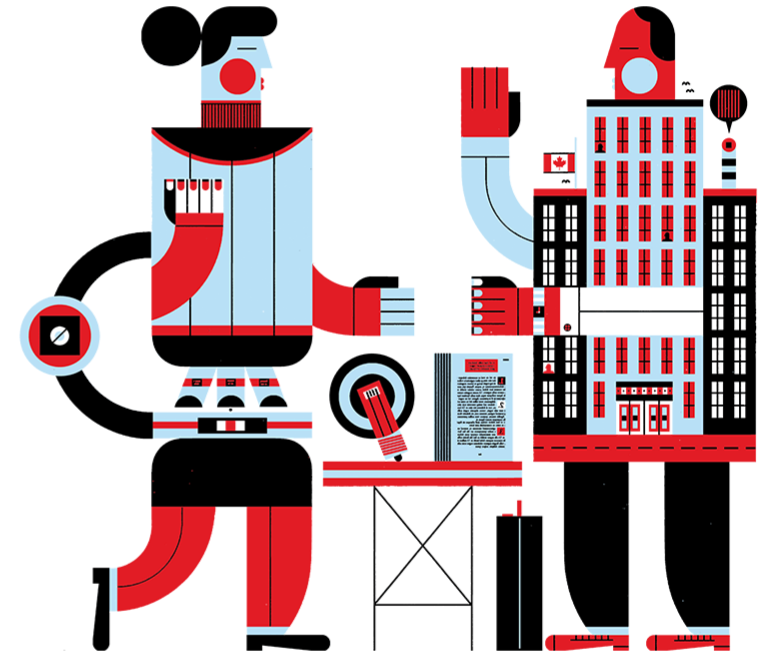


## Alliance grants

# Recent updates to Alliance Grants

- **Interactions between trainees and partner organizations:** The training plan must include interactions between trainees and partner organizations.
- **Merit indicator for EDI in the training plan:** Applicants are asked to provide context for the concrete practices they are proposing. Applicants who cite evidence supporting the proposed practices and propose methods for monitoring success will receive higher merit scores.
- **Cost sharing ratio:** The applicable cost sharing ratio has been simplified and streamlined to a single cost-sharing ratio of 2:1, regardless of the size or type of the partner organization involved in the research (as of June 23rd, 2023).
- **Conflict of Interest (COI) guidelines:** Institutions must manage COI and put mitigation plans in place according to their own policies. PI will be required to attest that all members of the team comply.
- **National Security Guidelines for Research Partnerships:** In the Partnership section of the online application system, you must select yes or no to indicate if your application includes a partner organization from the private sector. If you select “yes” in the Partnership section, you will be required to upload the Risk Assessment Form, in its new dedicated section.

# Alliance Advantage





## Alliance Advantage

### Overview

|                       |                                                                                            |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Who can apply?</b> | University researchers working with partner organizations, co-applicants and collaborators |
| <b>When to apply?</b> | Anytime                                                                                    |
| <b>Essential?</b>     | <b>Cash and in-kind contributions from partner organization(s)</b>                         |
| <b>Cost-sharing?</b>  | 2:1 leverage                                                                               |
| <b>How much?</b>      | \$20,000 to \$1 million per year                                                           |
| <b>How long?</b>      | 1 to 5 years (1 year extension with funds possible for 4 years projects or less)           |

## Alliance Advantage

# Partner-driven projects, focused on the partners' goals

### Alliance Advantage objectives:

- Generate new knowledge and technology
- Contribute to Canada's competitiveness
- Train highly qualified personnel in areas that are important to Canada
- Accelerate the translation and application of research results

### Key benefits:

- Cost-sharing investments from partners could be eligible for SR&ED tax credits and could also be leveraged by other funding organizations, further reducing financial risk.
- Applications can be submitted anytime.
- Applications that request  $\leq$  \$75,000/year are processed internally with a decision within 5 to 9 weeks

## Alliance Advantage

# Role of the partner organizations

The partner organizations involved in your Alliance project can be from the **private, public or not-for-profit sectors**

At least one partner organization must be recognized for cost sharing and make a cash contribution that NSERC will be leveraged at the cost-sharing ratio of 2:1



Each partner organization must be actively involved in the project and support it through in-kind contributions



At least one partner organization must have the ability to exploit the research results and to achieve the desired outcomes



## Alliance Advantage - Best practices

### Partner organizations :

- Active and engaged in the project
- Contribute to reaching the objectives
- Will exploit the results and generate outcomes

### Each partner organization completes a one-page profile addressing these two requirements:

- Description of organization, including the nature of its operations in Canada and how it intends to grow them by mobilizing the research results
- Demonstration that the organization has the capacity to achieve the project's expected results (HR, facilities and financial capabilities)

**Are cash contributions recognized for cost sharing?**

[Role of partner organizations](#)

[Partner org. self-assessment tool](#)

[Tri-agency guide on fin. admin.](#)

Reference to partner organization's website is not acceptable in lieu of a comprehensible profile

Refer to the [instructions](#)

# Approaching potential partner organizations



**Alliance Advantage grants**



**Partner with Canadian university researchers to solve your research and innovation challenges**



**Alliance Advantage grants**



**Key benefits:**

- Solve your science or engineering research challenges
- Build your knowledge
- Innovate and increase your competitiveness
- Contribute to training students and identify highly qualified future hires
- Access state-of-the-art university research facilities
- Leverage your investment through cost-sharing with NSERC

**98% of organizations that participated in completed Alliance projects would recommend NSERC's programs to support their research in partnership with academia.**

**In detail:**

- NSERC can contribute up to \$500,000 over 3 years to support research projects in all areas in the natural sciences and engineering domains.
- NSERC funds cover up to 98.7% of the direct costs of the research.
- Applications can be submitted anytime
- Your cost-sharing investments could be eligible for 20% R&D tax credits, further reducing your financial risk.

**Where to start?**

1. Learn more about [Alliance Advantage](http://AllianceAdvantage.gc.ca) [www.allianceadvantage.gc.ca](http://www.allianceadvantage.gc.ca) or NSERC's website, or reach out directly to us.
2. Verify if your own facilities are eligible for cost sharing.\*
3. Use the resources on the right to find the relevant experts in Canadian universities.\*
4. Work together to define your research goals and determine the budget needed to attain your objectives.
5. Ensure your organization will be active in the project, make cash contributions and exploit the research results.
6. Your academic research partner will develop the application for submission to NSERC.

**Resources**

- \* Are your own facilities eligible?
- [Facilities eligibility checklist, assessment tool for Alliance grants](#)
- [Find a cost-sharing partner](#)
- \* How to find an academic partner?
- [Search our NSERC search database](#)
- [Search the university websites](#)
- [Contact the university research offices](#)
- [Search Gazette](#)

**Contact NSERC or visit [www.allianceadvantage.gc.ca](http://www.allianceadvantage.gc.ca) to learn more about how Alliance Advantage grants can help you achieve your research and innovation goals.**

**NSERC science grants**  
1-800-975-3800  
[2025@NSERC.CRSNG.GC.CA](mailto:2025@NSERC.CRSNG.GC.CA)

 National Science and Engineering Research Council of Canada / Conseil de recherches en sciences naturelles et en génie du Canada



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## Alliance Advantage

# How to apply

1. Apply at any time by filling out the [proposal template](#).  
No limit on the number of applications you can submit
2. In the proposal template, describe specific, concrete practices that you will put in place to ensure that EDI is intentionally and proactively supported in your project's training plan
3. Assess and address potential conflicts of interest to discharge professional and institutional obligations, maintain public confidence and ensure accountability
4. Complete the [National Security Guidelines for Research Partnership's Risk Assessment Form](#), if your application involves private sector partner organizations
5. Submit a complete application through the [NSERC's online system](#)

### Proposal:

- Follow the [instructions](#)
- Keep the headings and bullets, the font and font size, as well as the margins
- Keep within page limit (includes the template's heading and bullets)
- Any document that is not requested will be removed

### Risk Assessment Form:

- Complete the risk assessment questionnaire and the risk mitigation plan (when applicable)
- Consider the risks associated with each private sector partner organization involved in your project

Alliance Advantage

# Evaluation process

- 1 Administrative assessment
- 2 Risk assessment (when applicable)
- 3 Merit assessment
  - I. Review mechanisms
  - II. Evaluation criteria
  - III. Determining the overall merit
- 4 Funding decision

| Size of project                      | Small                                             | Medium                                                                              | Large          |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Average annual request</b>        | \$20k to \$75k                                    | \$75k to \$300k                                                                     | \$300k to \$1M |
| <b>Review mechanism</b>              | NSERC File Managers<br>or<br>External reviewers * | External reviewers with expertise directly related to the proposal provide a review |                |
| <b>Maximum total number of pages</b> | 7                                                 | 11                                                                                  | 27             |
| <b>Expected assessment time</b>      | 5 to 9 weeks                                      | 9 to 18 weeks                                                                       |                |

\* If there is no existing NSERC peer review for the applicant or one of the co-applicants (except co-applicants who are early career researchers)

## Alliance Advantage

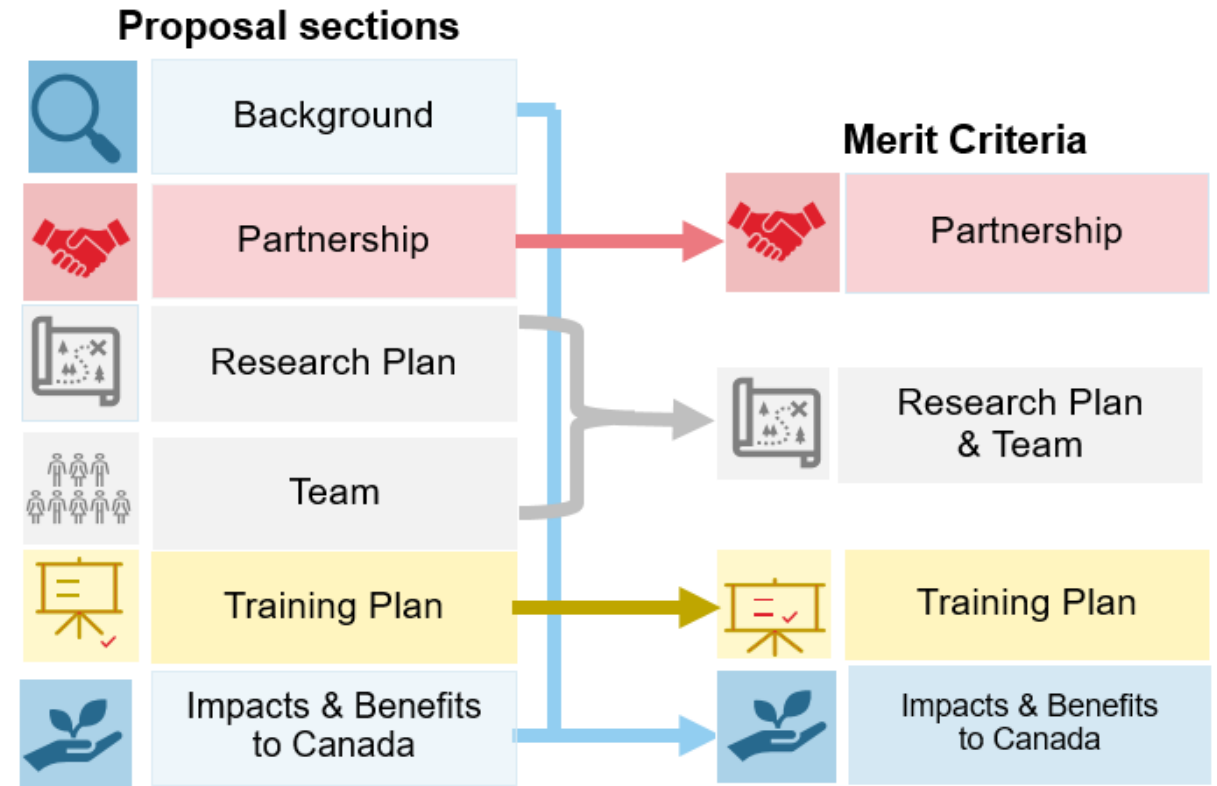
# Evaluation process – merit assessment

The proposal template has been revised and reorganized into six distinct sections :

- guide and help applicants develop more streamlined research proposal
- easier for reviewers and NSERC staff to find needed information

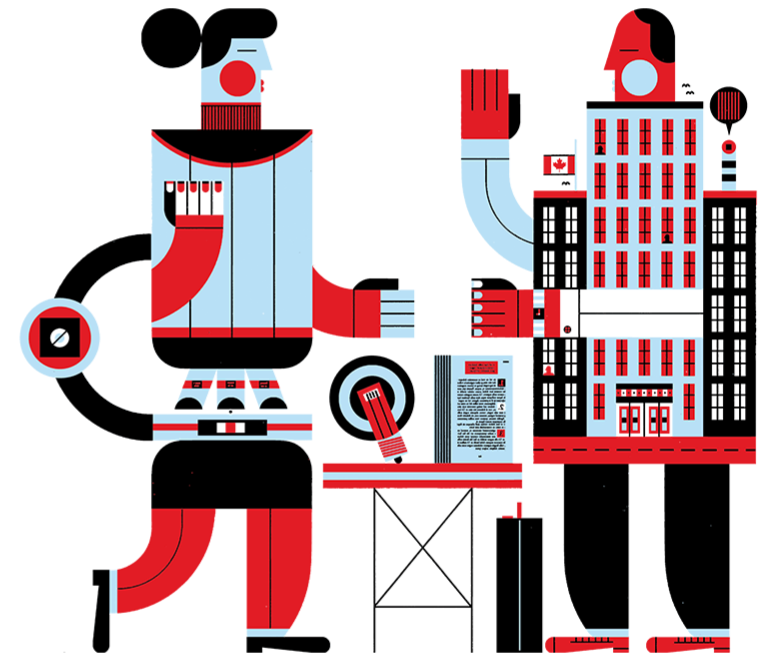
Merit evaluation is based on four criteria

- two sub-criteria per criteria





# Alliance Mitacs Accelerate joint funding opportunity



## Alliance Mitacs joint funding opportunity

# NSERC Alliance-Mitacs Accelerate grants

- **NSERC cost-sharing ratio 2:1; Mitacs cost-sharing ratio 1:1.**
  - Applicants complete an Alliance Advantage application and include a Mitacs form to request additional support through Mitacs Accelerate internships as a component of the training of highly qualified personnel (HQP).
  - As in all Mitacs internships, a cash contribution from an eligible partner is required. Mitacs internships cannot be the only mechanism for HQP training in the joint proposal; HQP should also be supported by NSERC funds.
- Streamlined submission and review process with a single review process at NSERC (Alliance Advantage grants). Funding for up to five years.
  - Applicants must meet both NSERC's and Mitacs' eligibility criteria.
  - Number and role of the Mitacs interns, as well as the supervision and mentorship by the partner organization are described.
  - NSERC and Mitacs communicate the funding decisions to the applicants under separate cover.

# Alliance Society



Alliance Society

## Overview

- Who can apply?** University researchers working with partner organizations, co-applicants and collaborators
- When to apply?** Anytime
- Essential?** **Active societal groups participation and societal impact**
- Cost-sharing?** No cost-sharing. 100% NSERC funding.
- How much?** \$20,000 to \$1 million per year
- How long?** 1 to 5 years

## Alliance Society

# Projects that aim for society-wide impact

Societal challenges and societal impacts are the main drivers

**Societal  
Impact**

Teams include societal groups representing the people affected by the issue

**Making  
Connections**

Project organized for active collaboration, dissemination and translation of results

**Broad  
Outputs**

## Alliance Society

# Societal impact

- **Identify a societal challenge** for which a solution requires a novel approach, involving various expertise and points of view, at the regional, national or global level.
- Identify and include **all relevant and engaged stakeholders**, with their respective contributions.
- Ensure that the generated knowledge and results are **widely disseminated and mobilized**, so that they can be accessed, used and advanced by society.

*The project must respond to a well-identified societal need and have a **direct and positive impact on society, that goes beyond the direct interests of participating partner organizations***

## Alliance Society

# Making connections

- Identify the **key stakeholders** (partner organizations and societal groups affected by the problem), **including those outside natural sciences and engineering**.
- Engage them to bring their knowledge to the project and **involve them in integrating the solutions** within and across sectors, as these stakeholders:
  - bring relevant societal perspectives/skill sets
  - help merge ideas, overcome barriers
  - find creative solutions
  - ensure the project is need-driven

*Partners organizations must be **strongly committed & active**, and provide valuable opportunity to connect, disseminate knowledge & share results with other organizations.*

## Alliance Society

# Broad outputs

- ***Outputs generate benefits beyond the participating partner organizations and academic world***
- Clearly planned activities to **communicate progress and results** to the targeted groups:
  - Results in formats that are appropriate and accessible by all stakeholders in society
  - Strategy to raise awareness of the resulting products, services or policies among potential users
  - The management of the intellectual property generated by the project must not be a barrier to the use of the results

*The project must not only benefit partner organizations or be limited to short-term economic success.*

*All stakeholders must understand and accept the principle that the management of the **intellectual property generated through the project cannot become a barrier to the dissemination and use of the results.***



## Alliance Society

### Key steps

- Identify all relevant stakeholders, including societal groups outside natural sciences and engineering when appropriate.
- Integrate scientific, technical and societal perspectives and skill sets throughout the collaboration's activities.
- Plan how all stakeholders will benefit from the knowledge and results being disseminated and mobilized through the collaboration's activities.

### How to apply

- Apply at any time. Fill out the [proposal template](#) and complete the three-page Public Impact Value Proposition (PIVP) section.
- Submit a complete application through [NSERC's online system](#)

## Alliance Society

# Public Impact Value Proposition template (3 pages)

- Describe the issue the project aims to address and explain the societal impact the project results will have. Describe the new technical knowledge that will be generated.
- Describe the current barriers impeding a solution and the proposed novel strategy for addressing the issue. Explain why and how the research team and partner organizations are positioned to address the challenge.
- Describe how the project is designed to take into account the needs of end-users and implementers. Outline the project's plan to involve groups in your partner organizations' network to achieve optimal results and impact.
- Explain how the project outcomes will reach beyond the partner organizations to impact society. Describe the ways in which interested individuals or groups will be able to learn about and use the products, services or policies that stem from this research

## Evaluation process

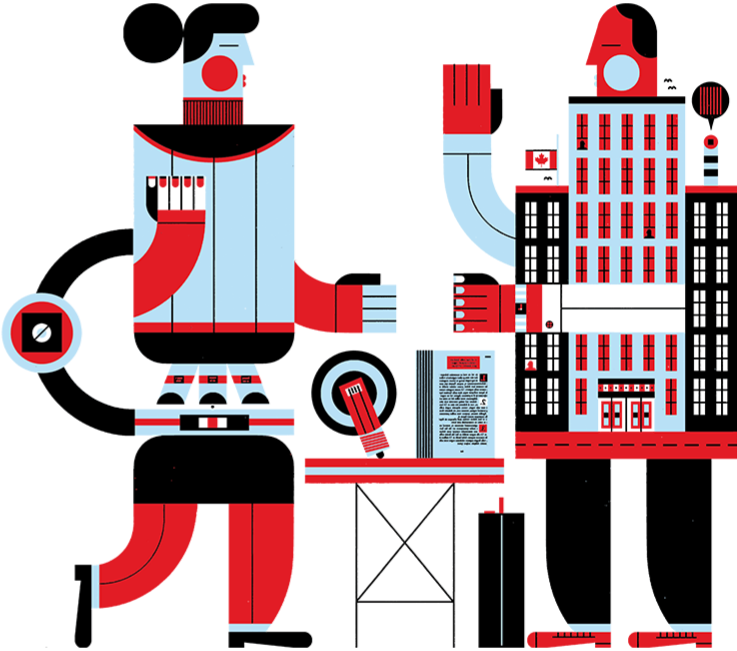
- 1 Administrative assessment
- 2 Risk assessment (when applicable)
- 3 **PIVP selection committee**
- 4 Merit assessment
  - I. Review mechanisms
  - II. Evaluation criteria
  - III. Determining the overall merit
- 5 Funding decision

A committee with broad knowledge and multisectoral expertise **focuses on the 3-pages PIVP section** to determine whether the project meets Alliance Society objectives.

After a positive administrative review, security assessment and PIVP selection, the merit of the application is assessed according to the same criteria and mechanisms used for the Alliance Advantage grant.

The PIVP section is not shared with peer reviewers.

# Alliance International



Alliance International

## Alliance International - Catalyst grants

**Up to \$25,000 for one year \***

**Goal:** Support Canadian researchers\*\* in initiating international research collaborations in the NSE disciplines with foreign academic researchers. The aim is to:

- Ensure that the first personnel exchanges for Canadian researchers can take place
- Support exploratory research activities that will pave the way for sustained collaboration

**Your international collaborator(s) must:**

- **Be exclusively from the academic sector**
- Have secured funding to cover their participation in the project.
- Play an active role in the project (research activities, providing enriched training, using results to achieve outcomes)

\* One application with a 12-month period

\*\* Canadian applicant and co-applicants must hold an active NSERC peer-reviewed grant at the time of application.

Alliance International

## Alliance International - Collaboration grants

Up to \$100k /year, for up to three years\*

**Goal:** Allow Canadian researchers\*\* to participate in international NSE projects with foreign academic researchers. The aim is to:

- Help leverage world-class expertise in NSE disciplines for research and training
- Participate in the development of solutions that are likely to generate outcomes and benefits for Canada
- Cover the direct costs of research of the Canadian research team

### Your international collaborator(s) must:

- Be exclusively from the academic sector
- Have secured peer-reviewed funding from their national granting agency, in which the Canadian participants and their role in the project are detailed.
- Provide a copy of the submitted proposal and proof that the grant was awarded to them\*\*\*, within three months preceding the submission of the Alliance International Collaboration application\*\*\* to NSERC.

\* One application with a 12-month period

\*\* Canadian applicant and co-applicants must hold an active NSERC peer-reviewed grant at the time of application.

\*\*\* To be eligible, the foreign project and Alliance application cannot include non-academic participants

# The Policy on Sensitive Technology Research and Affiliations of Concern (STRAC)



# The Policy on Sensitive Technology Research and Affiliations of Concern (STRAC)

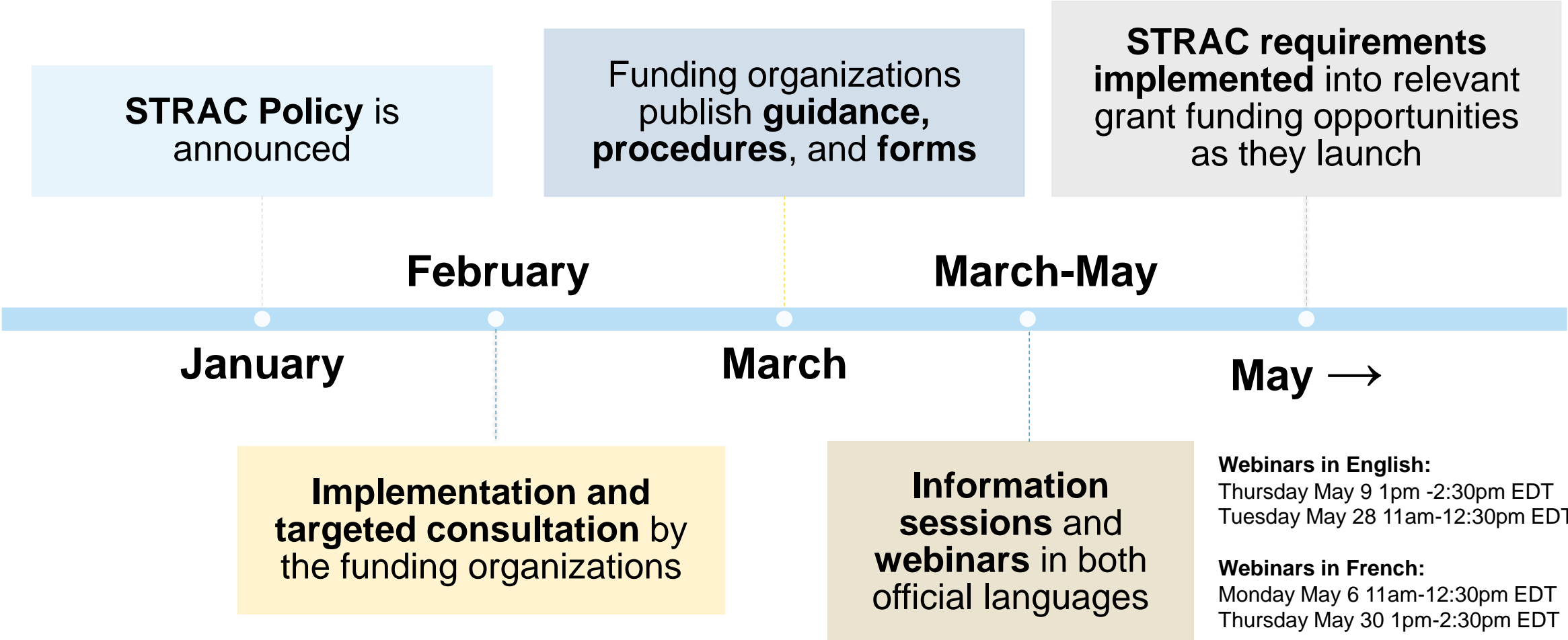
## Overview of the STRAC Policy

- On January 16, 2023, the Government of Canada announced the Policy on Sensitive Technology Research and Affiliations of Concern (STRAC Policy).
- The policy operates using two lists that **must be used in conjunction** — a list of Sensitive Technology Research Areas (STRA) and a list of Named Research Organizations (NRO).
- The granting agencies and the CFI will implement the policy in harmonized manner, starting with funding opportunities launching as of **May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024**.
- At the application stage, applicants will be asked to identify whether the research supported by their grant will **advance a STRA**. If it will not advance a STRA, no action is required.
- If the grant will **advance a STRA**, researchers with named roles in the application (applicant, co-applicant, collaborator) must complete **attestation forms** to certify their compliance. In addition, for the duration of the grant, no researchers involved in activities supported by the grant can be affiliated with, or in receipt of funding or in-kind support, from an **NRO**.



# The Policy on Sensitive Technology Research and Affiliations of Concern (STRAC)

## Next Steps



# New Tri-Agency Guidance on Research Security

## Inter-agency

Equity, diversity and inclusion

Tri-agency financial administration

**Research security**

Tri-Agency Guidance on the Policy on Sensitive Technology Research and Affiliations of Concern (STRAC Policy)

Tri-Agency Guidance on the National Security Guidelines for Research Partnerships (NSGRP)

Resources

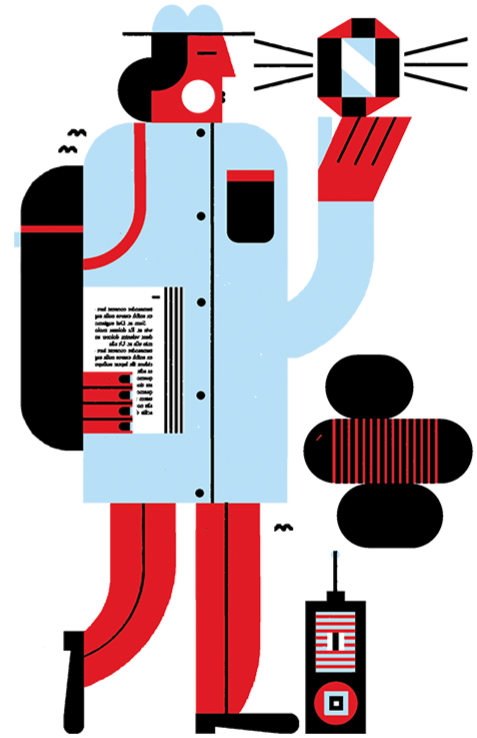
- This new webpage provides guidance regarding the implementation of research security measures by the federal granting agencies (NSERC, SSHRC, and CIHR).
- We encourage all members of the research community to familiarize themselves with this guidance, and as well as the linked policies, guidelines, and resources

## On this page:

- [General guidance and guiding principles](#)
- [Tri-Agency Guidance on the STRAC Policy](#)
- [Tri-Agency Guidance on the National Security Guidelines for Research Partnerships](#)
- [Resources](#)

Please address your questions to: [researchsecurity@nserc-crsng.gc.ca](mailto:researchsecurity@nserc-crsng.gc.ca)

# Conclusion

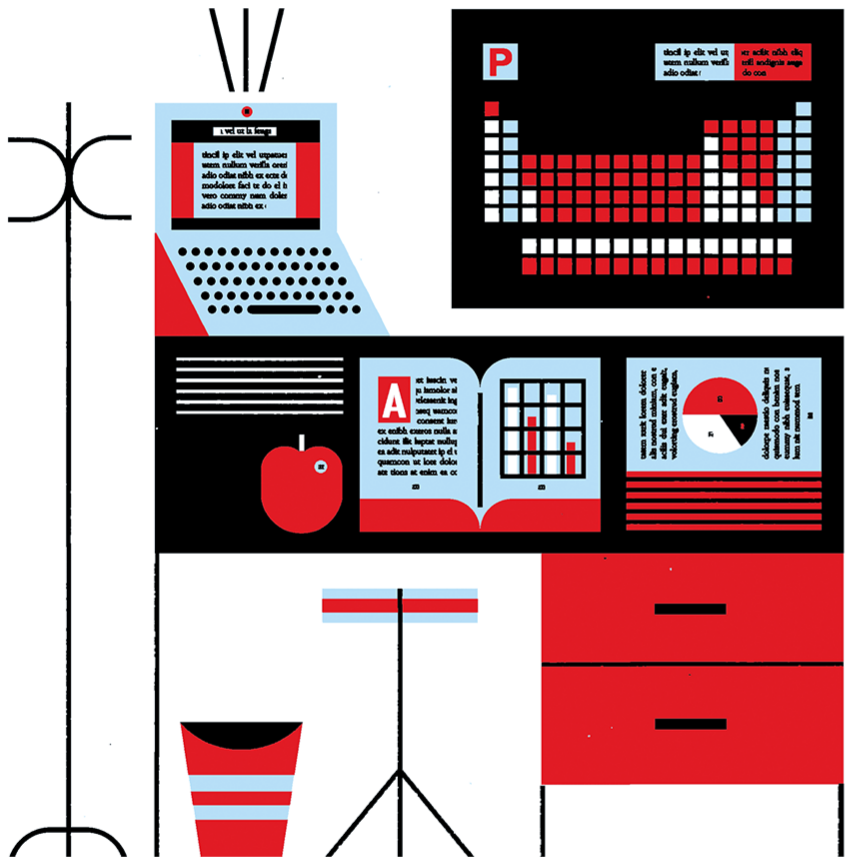




Alliance grants provide you with  
**flexibility in building partnerships**

The recent improvements to the Alliance grants program should help you effectively generate new knowledge and accelerate the application of research results for the benefit of Canadians.

NSERC Alliance grants



# Questions?

**NSERC Alliance grants team**

1-855-275-2861

[alliance@nserc-crsng.gc.ca](mailto:alliance@nserc-crsng.gc.ca)

[Shirine.jeradi@nserc-crsng.gc.ca](mailto:Shirine.jeradi@nserc-crsng.gc.ca)

**Research Security Team**

[researchsecurity@nserc-crsng.gc.ca](mailto:researchsecurity@nserc-crsng.gc.ca)

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# Useful links



Alliance grants

## Useful links

[Alliance Website](#) (with links to all Alliance opportunities)

[Alliance Advantage](#)

[Alliance Society](#)

[Equity, diversity and inclusion in your training plan](#)

[Alliance Advantage resources, FAQ](#)

[Alliance Society resources, FAQ](#)

[Alliance Advantage Partners page](#)

[Partner organization self-assessment tool](#)

[Instructions for completing an application](#)

[Application checklist](#)

[Alliance Society - PIVP selection committee review instructions](#)

[Use of grant funds](#)

[Safeguarding your research](#)

## Alliance grants - Best practices

# Alliance dashboard, funding decisions, database and news



### NSERC's Awards Database

**Search**

**Fiscal Year** From [ ] To [2022-2023] **OR** **Competition Year** From [ ] To [ ]

**Name of Person** [ ]

**Keywords in** (Application Id, Award Title and Summary) [ ]

**Institution & Province** [ All Universities Colleges All ]

**Area of Application** [ All ] **Code** [ ] **OR** [ ]

**Research Subject** [ All ] **Code** [ ] **OR** [ ]

[Advanced Search](#)

**Display Results By** [ Detailed List of Awards ]

**Reset Search**

Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada

Students and Fellows Professors Colleges Information for About

Home Media rooms Latest news NSERC announces improvements to Alliance grants program **Login**

### Latest news

#### NSERC announces improvements to Alliance grants program

December 5, 2023

NSERC is pleased to announce the launch of several improvements to its Alliance grants program. This update is in response to feedback received and builds on our experience with the program over the last four years.

Alliance grants were launched in 2019 to encourage university researchers to collaborate with partner organizations from the private, public or not-for-profit sectors. By partnering with organizations that can use their work, researchers can turn their discoveries into impact.

In 2022-23, NSERC evaluated the program through surveys, consultations and interviews with stakeholders. The perspective of the community, along with NSERC's experience to date, shaped the changes described below.

These changes aim to make the Alliance grants program even more simple, flexible, modernized and responsive. They will help to:

- remove barriers to collaboration
- champion more research partnerships
- provide efficient and responsive proposal assessment
- strengthen relationships with the research community

- [https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Innovate-Innover/alliance-alliance/results-resultats\\_eng.asp](https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Innovate-Innover/alliance-alliance/results-resultats_eng.asp)
- [https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/ase-oro/index\\_eng.asp](https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/ase-oro/index_eng.asp)
- [https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Media-Media/NewsDetail-DetailNouvelles\\_eng.asp?ID=1433](https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Media-Media/NewsDetail-DetailNouvelles_eng.asp?ID=1433)