

Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) Innovation Fund (IF) Information Session

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Office of Research Services
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DALHOUSIE
UNIVERSITY



Acknowledgements



Dalhousie University is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq. We are all Treaty people.



We recognize that African Nova Scotians are a distinct people whose histories, legacies and contributions have enriched that part of Mi'kma'ki known as Nova Scotia for over 400 years.



Agenda

1. Background on CFI
2. Innovation Fund (IF) Objectives
3. Matching Funds
4. IF Competition Results
5. Review Process
6. Application Process
7. Keys to Success
8. Panel Discussion
9. Additional Resources





Background on CFI

The Canada Foundation for Innovation was established in 1997 by the Government of Canada to provide researchers and research institutions with state-of-the-art equipment, laboratories and facilities essential for conducting world-class research that produces benefits for Canadians.

= Research equipment and renovations of research space

≠ Trainees, materials and supplies

CFI Competitions

- John R. Evans Leaders Fund (JELF)
- Major Science Initiatives
- Exceptional Opportunities Fund
- **Innovation Fund**

CFI is a matching funds program, contributing up to 40% of total funds

Budget: Minimum \$1-2M CFI request, leveraging \$2.5-5M total project costs



Innovation Fund (IF) 2023 Competition Timeline

	Important Dates *Anticipated
Dalhousie Internal Call for Proposals	Faculties submit to ORS by October 3, 2023. Faculties and Departments may have different internal deadlines.
CFI issues Draft Call for Proposals	Before the end of 2023
CFI issues Call for Proposals	Spring 2024
Deadline to Submit Notices of Intent	October 2024
Deadline to Submit Proposals	February 2025
Decision by CFI Board of Directors	November 2025
CFI Finalization, including confirmation of matching funds, finalization of agreements	Up to August 2026



Innovation Fund (IF) 2023 Objectives

Overall Objectives

- Enable internationally competitive research or technology development through the equitable participation of expert team members
- Enhance and optimize the capacity of institutions and research communities to conduct the proposed research or technology development program(s) over the useful life of the infrastructure
- Lead to social, health, environmental and/or economic benefits for Canadians



Innovation Fund (IF) 2023 Objectives

Objective 1:

Enable internationally competitive research or technology development through the equitable participation of expert team members

Assessment Criteria:

- Research or Technology Development
- Team Expertise
- Team Composition

Criterion Standards:

- The research or technology development program(s) are innovative, feasible and internationally competitive.
- The team comprises the breadth of experience and expertise needed to conduct the proposed program(s).
- Principles of equity and diversity were considered in the team composition including in its leadership. There is a commitment to create an inclusive environment where all team members are fully integrated and supported in the research team.



Innovation Fund (IF) 2023 Objectives

Objective 2:

Enhance and optimize the capacity of institutions and research communities to conduct the proposed research or technology development program(s) over the useful life of the infrastructure

Assessment Criteria:

- Infrastructure
- Sustainability

Criterion Standards:

- The requested infrastructure is necessary and appropriate to conduct the proposed research program(s) and optimally enhances existing capacity.
- The infrastructure will be optimally used and maintained over its useful life through tangible commitments.



Innovation Fund (IF) 2023 Objectives

Objective 3:

Lead to social, health,
environmental and/or economic
benefits for Canadians

Assessment Criterion:

- Benefits to Canadians

Criterion Standard:

- The team and its partners have a well-defined plan to transfer the results of the research or technology development program(s). The results are likely to lead to social, economic, health or environmental benefits for Canadians.



Matching Funds

Budget and Requirements

- CFI will provide up to 40% of the total project costs
- Remaining 60%:
 - In-kind contributions from vendors
 - Based on quotes, above and beyond an educational or academic discount
 - Eligible cash contributions
 - Industry partners
 - Institutional contributions
 - Provincial/Government contributions
 - Tri-Agency funds are ineligible as a contribution

It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure the budget is balanced prior to submission of the application.



Research Nova Scotia (RNS)

Matching Funds Application



RNS Missions



IF Competition Results

- 297 proposals received, requesting a total of \$1.1B from CFI
- 100 proposals approved for \$400M funding from CFI

Historical Competition Results

2023: Under Embargo

2020: Administrative Lead – 5 proposals, >\$12M (Dal Total)

- Partnered – 3 proposals, \$1.24M
- Total Dal CFI funding: >\$13M

2017: Administrative Lead – 1 proposal, >\$2M

- Partnered: 7 proposals, >\$8M
- Total Dal CFI funding: >\$11M

Requests to CFI are moderated by institutional envelopes.



Multi- Institutional Projects

- Which institution makes the most sense to lead the project?
 - Where is the infrastructure located?
 - Team members at other institutions will need to be aware of their own internal competitions.
- Each institution is responsible for securing matching funding for their own portion of the award.
- Start discussing ideas with your collaborators 😊



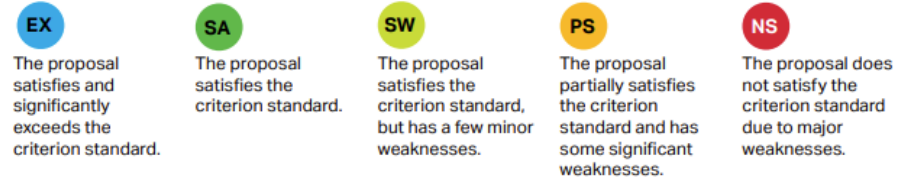
Innovation Fund Review Process

Scoring System

Rating scale

We use a five-point rating scale with statements about the degree to which a proposal meets each criterion standard or competition objective.

Figure 1: Rating scale



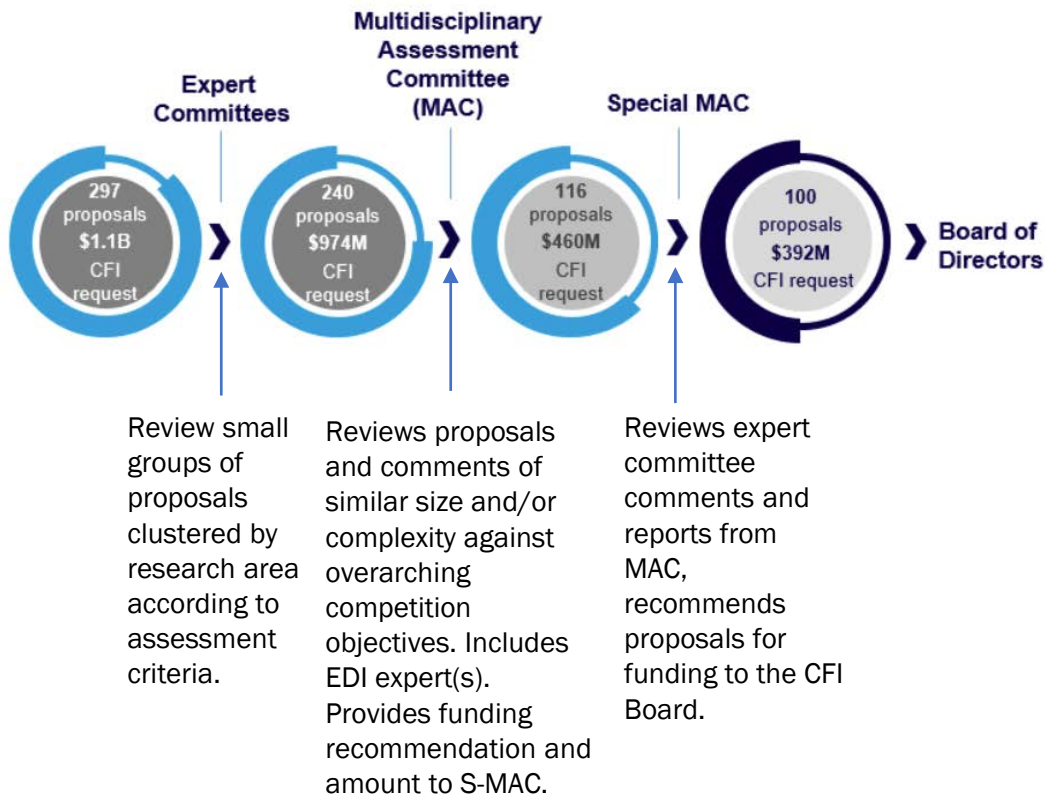
In general, to be successful, you must score Exceeds or Fully Satisfies across all criteria and objectives.



Innovation Fund Review Process

Committee Review

Review results by stage for the 2023 Innovation Fund competition





Innovation Fund Application Process

Internal Envelope and
Process

- CFI allocates an Institutional Envelope
 - In 2023, Dal's envelope was \$24.3M
 - Allocation, not a guarantee – includes funds allocated to multi-institutional projects.
- Dalhousie Internal Process
 - [Call for EOIs is live!](#)
 - Faculties rank order proposals
 - VPRI-led Committee reviews proposals
 - Additional details may be requested, in particular for larger proposals
 - Includes requests for multi-institutional projects



Innovation Fund Application Process

External Process and
Application Development

1. Internal Application
2. Notice of Intent (October 2024)
 - 5 pages, no CVs, budget total
3. Full Application (February 2025)
 - Assessment Criteria (30-35 pages)
 - Project Summary (3 pages)
 - CVs for 10 Team Members
 - Detailed budget and renovation plans (if applicable)

- Guidance, oversight and review provided by ORS, Institutional and International Programs
- Additional support available upon request
- Internal deadline for complete draft (including final budget) 6-8 weeks prior to CFI deadline



Keys to Success

- World-class team in which EDI is embedded
- Cutting-edge and globally competitive research program
- Defined pathway to realize benefits for Canadians

In action:

- Anticipate needs and discuss with your Faculty
 - Space and/or renos, matching funds, support during application development
- Build your team
 - Consider EDI
 - Think beyond Dept/Faculty/Institution
- Develop a communication strategy
 - Meet monthly to discuss research proposal ideas
- Think forward to knowledge mobilization
 - Connect with OCIE about industry partnerships
 - Consider potential end-users
 - Connect with government and/or community groups



Common Reviews (and actions to address!)

- Research or Technology Development
 - More detail on activities needed.
 - Should be focused, feasible/realistic, integrated, cohesive, and innovative.
- Team Expertise
 - Should include all expertise needed to perform the proposed research program.
 - The team should have a track record of partnership or collaboration.
- Team Composition
 - Barriers to EDI are specific and indicate targeted actions to reduce the stated barriers.
 - EDI is thoughtfully integrated in the research and design as well as the team.
 - Situated within Dal's/the Faculty/Dept's policies and strategies.
- Infrastructure
 - Infrastructure must be linked back to what is needed to support the proposed research program and justified.
 - Existing or similar infrastructure available should be noted and justified as to why it cannot support this research program.
- Sustainability
 - Sustainability plans need to be realistic, with details included for costs/revenues.
- Benefits
 - Pathways to end users or stakeholders is well defined.
 - Benefits are focused and linked appropriately to the research.



Panel Discussion

- Dr. Katja Fennel (Faculty of Science; Oceanography)
- Dr. Thomas Pulinilkunnil (Dal Med New Brunswick)
- Dr. Michael Freund (Faculty of Science; Chemistry)

- 1) What would you recommend as strategies for success *in the application* to the Innovation Fund?
- 2) What advice would you give to researchers interested in applying to the Innovation Fund?



Extra Advice

Do..	Instead of..
Develop a cohesive research program that requires the requested equipment	Creating an “equipment wish list”
Bring together researchers with the necessary expertise to accomplish the research goals	Building a team based on shared use of the infrastructure
Develop a realistic plan to transfer knowledge to end-users	Waiting to contact potential research end-users
Start discussions early and develop draft documents and budgets	Underestimating the time required to prepare a competitive IF application



Resources

Institutional and International Programs Unit Office of Research Services

- Veronica Bacher
 - Elspeth White
 - Erin Murphy
 - Arati Patel
 - Kait Tornblom
 - Ida De Oliveira
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- [CFI Website](#)
 - [2023 Innovation Fund Call for Proposals](#)
 - [CFI Updates](#)
 - [Past Competitions](#) (2020 and 2017; 2023 information not yet available)