

## September 23, 2021 Q&A Session for NFRF-T NOI Webinar

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### **Budget / Funding**

Q: How long after the decisions can funds expect to flow?

A: Grant start date = March 2023.

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Q: Is there an automatic one-year extension on spending for Transformation grants, as there is for many SSHRC grants?

A: No there is no 1 year automatic extension for the transformation program.

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Q: Did I hear correctly, that funds could be transferred to US and/or international universities?

A: Yes.

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Q: Can funds from this grant be used to purchase private programming that is copyrighted or only available through purchase/access agreements as part of an intervention program?

A: Funds can be used to purchase software as long as the financial guideline of the tri-agencies (TAGFA) and your institution are followed.

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Q: Are for-profit collaborators eligible to be paid for, say, consulting services? How for-profit collaborators are compensated for their participation?

A: Collaborators cannot access funds of any kind.

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Q: If collaborators cannot access funds of any kind, what's the incentive for them to participate in this "cross-disciplinary" undertaking?

A: For many the visibility, the publications and opportunity to expand their network are their incentives.

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### **NPI Eligibility**

Q: If you currently hold a small NFRF grant, are you eligible to apply for this Transformation grant?

A: If you are holding a grant from another NFRF stream than Transformation, you are eligible to apply to Transformation.

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Q: I am currently an assistant professor at Arizona State University, arriving at UWaterloo in January 2022. Can I be the NPI for the NOI?

A: Your independent position must begin by August 1st, 2021. January 2022 should be good!

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Q: Can a NPI be affiliated with a start-up company?

A: No, the NPI's primary affiliation must be with a Canadian institution currently holding full institutional eligibility with one of the agencies.

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Q: Can a federal government employee who has adjunct status at an institution and whose students will perform the research be an NPI?

A: They are eligible to be a Co-Applicant, not an NPI.

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Q: Can the NPI change in the process (i.e., between NOI and LOI)? Or is it set once the NOI is submitted?

A: It is a case by case situation to be evaluated by management. It is not expected for the NPI to change during competition.

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### **Team Eligibility**

Q: How many NPI and Co-PI and co-applicants are required to file the NOI?

A: The min. team size is 5.

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Q: Are there limits on people involved in a current Transformation participating in a new application? If so, will team members associated with funded Transformation 2020 projects be published to allow RGOs to verify eligibility, and by when?

A: Only Collaborators can be on more than 1 successful application of transformation. Any NPI, Co-PI or co-app on a funded Transformation grant cannot apply. The funded projects will be posted to our website soon.

Q: Can co-applicants be on multiple applications or only one?

A: No, a co-applicant can only be on 1 active Transformation grant.

Q: So, co-applicants on non-Transformation NFRF grants are eligible to apply?

A: Co-applicants on other active grants (not Transformation) are eligible to apply.

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Q: Are RGOs expected to verify the eligibility of NPI, Co-PIs, and co-applicants prior to submitting NOIs, or only the eligibility of the NPI at the NOI stage?

A: It would be best to verify eligibility prior to submitting an NOI as to avoid complications and disappointments post-submission.

Q: How are we supposed to make sure they are eligible (i.e. not on an awarded grant), if we do not know the results?

A: By the time you will need to verify this, the information will be up on our website.

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Q: You indicated that all team members in academia must be independent researchers. If they are independent researchers, but decide to identify themselves as something else (e.g., Educator), do they need to change this at NOI, LOI stage?

A: It is best for the individuals to identify themselves as independent researchers at the NOI stage to avoid complications moving forward.

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Q: Will adjunct professors (part time) be considered eligible for independent researchers?

A: I suggest contacting your Research Grant Office to make sure you meet the NFRF criteria for an independent researcher.

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Q: Is a Postdoctoral Fellow eligible to be Co-PI in the Transformation stream?

A: Students, postdoctoral fellows, and research associates are not eligible to participate as a Co-PI or co-applicant.

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Q: Can co-PIs be added between the NOI and LOI stages?

A: Yes.

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Q: Can a nonprofit be a co-applicant?

A: Only individuals can be co-applicants.

Q: Can an individual from a Non-Profit serve as a co-applicant, or are they only eligible as a collaborator?

A: Yes an individual from a non-profit can serve as co-applicant.

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Q: Is a team member who has a spinoff company best placed as a collaborator, rather than a co-applicant?

A: If that person has an affiliation other than this company and that company will not benefit from the grant, they could have another role than collaborator if they meet the eligibility criteria.

Q: Given that the spinoff company is relevant to the proposal.

A: Individual working for for-profit companies can only be collaborator.

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Q: For different team members are we limited to Canadian researchers?

A: No, only the NPI needs to be affiliated to an eligible Canadian institution.

Q: Can members be from outside Canada?-

A: Hello, yes Co-PI and co-app and collaborators can be from outside of Canada.

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## **Early Career Researchers (ECRs)**

Q: Does an early career researcher need to be named to the research team for the NOI or can this requirement be fulfilled for the LOI?-

A: It can be fulfilled at the LOI stage. Please refer to the LOI guide online.

Q: Just to clarify, an ECR needs to be a confirmed member of all teams at NOI stage? This isn't clear from the website.

A: They must be selected at the LOI stage. You can refer to the LOI guide on our website.

Q: I thought I heard that ECRs must be included at EVERY application stage, but are you saying that ECRs must be involved by LOI only? Meaning that an NOI team need not have any ECR participants?

A: ECRs can be included at the NOI stage, but must be confirmed by the full application state. Once you move over to the LOI there will be a section devoted to ECR integration in the project.

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Q: Is there an extension to ECR status, given the COVID-19 pandemic? CIHR has extended ECT status for two years.

A: Research interruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., closures) are recognized as, and may be counted as, an eligible delay (credited at twice the amount of time) beginning March 1, 2020. Please see the ECR section of the competition overview for more information.

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## **Project Topic**

Q: What constitutes 'fundamental' in the contexts of the Humanities & Social Sciences? Can the funding be used to address fundamental applied issues in these disciplines? This language seems very misleading and oriented towards specific kinds of methodologies / disciplines. Can you clarify?

A: The challenge addressed may be fundamental, leading to a scientific breakthrough, or applied, with a social, economic, environmental or health impact, and so projects from the SSH which address a fundamental applied issue would be eligible. Please refer to the evaluation matrices for more information on how this will be reviewed: [https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/nfrf-fnfr/transformation/2022/merit\\_indicators-indicateurs\\_du\\_merite-eng.aspx](https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/nfrf-fnfr/transformation/2022/merit_indicators-indicateurs_du_merite-eng.aspx).

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Q: Is Open Science acceptable? And Meta-Science?

A: Yes.

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Q: Does an application have to be an entirely new research program, or can it have linkages to existing currently funded research programs?

A: The application doesn't need to be an entirely new research programs.

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Q: Can an applicant apply to create an institute (including work packages) to help address a transformational problem?

A: The money as to be for the research and not creating institutes.

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## **Interdisciplinarity**

Q: Why does interdisciplinarity require the involvement of at least two agencies, e.g. NSERC and CIHR?

A: If the project fits under 1 of the Agencies' mandate, they are not considered interdisciplinary.

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Q: When you say "If the project fits under 1 of the Agency's mandate it is not eligible", does this refer to the problem to be solved, or the team members and ideas brought to solve the problem?

A: It refers to the disciplines involved in the project and the outcomes.

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Q: Is the representation across the tri-council disciplines explicitly scored for team composition?

A: Yes and no. Interdisciplinarity is scored and so is feasibility where the need and role for each disciplines in the project is evaluated.

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Q: I understand that the guidelines require research span the mandates of at least two tri-agencies. Can you comment on whether funded 2020 projects spanned all three (i.e. that the measure of interdisciplinarity in practice is higher than the minimum)?

A: We cannot comment on the strength of this criterion since we are using a Pass/Fail approach and any comments shared with the NPI are confidential.

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## **Peer Review Evaluation**

Q: In the 2020 round the metrics for the LOI stage was good to exceptional, can you give us a sense of the score received by the 30 LOI that proceeded to full application.

A: Well, the scores were closer to Excellent. But a strong LOI does not automatically translate into a strong full application.

Q: What were typical scores in each category last round for those LOIs that were invited to full proposal (for example, average of 'excellent' in each category?) Thanks.

A: We cannot share specifics about the LOI scores, however the reviewers used the entire range of ratings (from Poor to exceptional).

Q: I'm not looking for specific scores at LOI, but rather a sense of what is required to make it to full application. For instance how many excellents vs exceptional ratings (on average). Like would an application that got excellent on all criteria have likely been invited to full application? Or would you need an exceptional?

A: We cannot share that information and each competition is different and it may not be the same for this competition depending on the applications received.

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Q: Are EDI/ECR and Interdisciplinarity re-assessed by the multidisciplinary/multisectoral review panel from scratch at the Full Application stage? If passed earlier at the LOI review stage, might a section be failed at the later stage despite the fact that it is unchanged (e.g. because the reviewers are different or because projects are compared against one another and standards may be different)?

A: Those are not reevaluated but they will be confirmed at the following stage.

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Q: Could you please comment on what "confirmed" means?

A: For example, a pass was given at the LOI, but once there is more information in the full application, the score might not be fitting.

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### **Convergence Portal**

Q: Have the issues encountered by some participants in the last round with the Convergence Portal, where the eligibility profiles were not recorded properly, been resolved or is this still an issue?

A: As of today, this issue has been resolved. We just passed the deadlines for Exploration and Special calls and it all looks good.

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Q: When filling out the Convergence Portal the only option is NPI. Does the leader of the proposed project have to fill out a profile as an NPI first before other participants are able to select Co-I status?

A: The Nominated Principal Investigator invites the other participants through the portal. They receive an email with a link to accept the invitation to participate.

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### **2020 Applicants / Resubmissions**

Q: Are there substantive changes in process or criteria from last year's call?

A: There are no substantive changes in the process or criteria from last year's competition.

Q: Are the evaluation matrices for Transformation 2022 the same as for Transformation 2020?

A: They have been updated to address issues raised during competition ([https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/nfrf-fnfr/transformation/2022/merit\\_indicators-indicateurs\\_du\\_merite-eng.aspx](https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/nfrf-fnfr/transformation/2022/merit_indicators-indicateurs_du_merite-eng.aspx)).

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Q: Will researchers who were invited to the full application in the previous competition have the opportunity to respond to the reviewers comments?

A: Those invited to the full application after a successful LOI, may address the comments (if available) in their full application.

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### **2020 Competition Results**

Q: What is the success rate of the NFRF-T competition?

A: Those results are embargoed.

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Q: Where can we find the info of previous funded projects?

A: This information hasn't yet been posted to our website. It will be posted soon.

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