

NFRF Exploration 2022 NOI Webinar Q&A

Eligibility

Q: If a Co-PI is an Early Career Researcher, does that qualify them for that category

A: ECRs may act as Co-PIs. A proposal is considered to be led by early career researchers (ECRs) if both the NPI and co-PI (if applicable) are ECRs.

Q: Is it considered ECR led if there is an ECR NPI and a non-ECR Applicant leading the grant?

A: A proposal is considered to be led by early career researchers (ECRs) if both the NPI and co-PI (if applicable) are ECRs.

Q: I understand that a proposal is considered to be led by an ECR if both NPI and co-PI are ECRs. But what if there is no Co-PI? For example, if a proposal has only an ECR NPI and Co-applicants.

A: It would be considered ECR-led

Q: Can a current recipient of the funding, finishing this year May 2022 eligible for applying? Should the NFRF project report and goals achieved for current funding be submitted at the time of NOI submission?

A: Individuals can participate in only one application of the NFRF Exploration grants stream at a time, as either an NPI, co-PI or co-applicant. If an NPI, co-PI or co-applicant also had such a role on a previous Exploration grant-funded project, they must have submitted their final report for the previous project at least one month before the full application deadline for the present competition.

Q: Would the integration of new technologies (AI, big data) as methodology to conduct traditional' research be considered high risk and interdisciplinary ?

A: Generally speaking, not in and of itself. The use of new technology would be seen as akin to using new software - if it does not require new development of the AI/big data/ML and true integration. It can be considered high risk and interdisciplinary but it depends a lot on how the project is designed.

Q: Are college researchers (Research Associates) eligible?

A: Generally speaking, yes

Q: Can a co-applicant of one proposal also lead another proposal as the PI?

A: No - individuals are limited to participating on a single project.

Q: Can an industry partner be paid for building technology/software?

A: Not normally. Although this can be considered an expense that may be eligible to be paid from the grant

Q: You can provide a collaborator who is a knowledge-user or Elder an honorarium from the budget, correct?

A: According to the principles laid out in the TAGFA, yes.

Q: Can a co-applicant be a principal investigator at a national research institute?

A: It depends on the nature of the national research institute. If you send us an email, we can be more specific in our response.

Q: My research project will require a digital application development. Can the industry partner be paid for building this?

A: Are they really a partner if they are being paid? Or are they a contractor?

Q: For previous awardees who also got extension for submission of the final report due to COVID, do they still need to submit the final report before the proposal submission deadline of this year? -

A: Yes

Q: A question about eligibility - do projects that were previously submitted to the SSHRC Insight Grant eligible for the Exploration program? Thank you.

A: It depends on the project. They must be high-risk, high-reward and interdisciplinary in nature.

Q: Can the salary of international co-PIs be partially covered by this grant.

A: According to principles in the TAGFA, in some cases, yes.

Q: Likely transitioning into a faculty position in September. How can I prove this and can I apply as PI if I have a letter stating that I will be starting before Sep 13 2022, the full application deadline.

A: Yes. You don't have to prove it to us. Since the application has to be submitted through an RGO - the RGO's willingness to submit it from you is a sort of attestation that you will have a position.

Q: Are two areas belong to the same group defined by CRDC but different classes recognized as the multidisciplines?

A: No. The two disciplines must be from different groups. For the Exploration program, Interdisciplinarity is defined at the group level of the CRDC codes.

Q: Can you clarify that if there is an accidental instance of anonymity not being filtered out, that the application will be disqualified?

A: It may be.

Team

Q: what is the difference between a designated PI and a co-applicant?

A: An important difference between the NPI and a co-applicant is that the NPI leads the research while the co-applicant contributes to the execution of the research.

Q: Would an industry partner be considered as part of an interdisciplinary team?

A: An industry partner is limited to being a collaborator (not a co-app or co-PI). However, they may be considered part of the interdisciplinary team.

Q: Can you confirm that Co-applicants don't have to be independent researchers?

A: Co-applicants must be considered an independent researchers.

Q: We have international collaborators in the proposal. What the maximum allocations of fund we can assign for them?

A: There is currently no maximum set.

Q: Would it be okay to add/remove co-PI and Co-A at the final application stage?

A: As long as the minimum number is respected, members can be added/changed between the NOI and Full Application stages.

Q: Can co-PIs and co-Aps be from international institutions?

A: Yes

Q: Can there be an international as Co-Applicant?

A: Yes, Co-applicants may be affiliated with a Canadian or international organization, but must not be affiliated with a federal, provincial, territorial or municipal government department or a for-profit organization.

Q: If the Co-Apps are from international institutions, can they access grant funds?

A: Grant funds can be used to support the direct costs of research undertaken by co-PIs and co-Apps whether they are in Canada or international

Q: To confirm... a student, PDF, etc., could participate as a collaborator. They are supervised by someone else, but as long as their supervisor isn't on the Exploration team, then it's okay?

A: That is correct.

Q: Is it okay to have a collaborator currently holding an NFRF grant participate in the current grant proposal?

A: Yes. Collaborators can participate on an active grant and apply for a new one.

Q: Why do you allow the co-applicants to have different affiliations if they still have to be independent researchers? E.g., many Indigenous Elders are not independent researcher and should be able to access funds.

A: I'm not sure I understand the comment. Indigenous Elders are eligible to be co-applicants and grant funds can be used to support their contributions to the project.

Q: Regarding team composition, is there a minimal percentage of co-PI or co-applicant that have to be from Canadian Institutions?

A: No minimum!

Q: Can a Co-PI or Collaborator be added to the team after NOI deadline?

A: Yes! But the minimum team size of 2 must be present at the NOI deadline.

Q: can an industry partner be a collaborator?

A: Yes

Q: For applicants (NPI, co-PI or co-applicant) with an interdisciplinary background (e.g. expertise in computer science and health sciences), can we create a profile including several fields?

A: Yes! You can choose several fields (at least 5, maybe more) in your profile

NOI requirements

Q: Is the NOI the same as LOI? also did you say its not required this year?

A: This competition is a two step competition - a notice of intent and a full application. There is no letter of intent step. Please consult our NOI guide for more information on what is required during that step: https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/nfrf-fnfr/exploration/2022/guide_NOI-guide_AIPD-eng.aspx

Q: Is the NOI competitive? Or all NOIs will be invited for full application?

A: NOIs are not adjudicated and all NOI applicants are able to submit a full application at that stage.

Full proposal

Q: Should EDI also be addressed in the study design?

A: Yes, EDI should be addressed at the level of the research team and also the execution of the research itself.

Q: How does the HQP training fit within the 2yr-funding given that a PHD would take at least 3 years to complete?-

A: There is no criterion related to training for Exploration.

Q: Concerning EDI - do research admin staff supporting researchers and project - and who have disabilities - does this figure into EDI pass/fail? Are research admin part of the overall "team"?

A: The assessment of EDI is not an "accounting" process or tick-box exercise - we never ask for and applications should never include information about the identity of any member.

Q: Only 4 pages for project description in the application. Not much room for details to address all of the feasibility issues and adequately describe the project for both Reward and Risk

A: Please send us an email to provide feedback on the application process: NFRF-FNRF@chairs-chaieres.gc.ca Evaluating feasibility, reward and risk are not limited to the research proposal but Multidisciplinary Review Panel members receive access to all content from the NOI and full application stages. Please consult the Reviewer Manual for more details on what they will be evaluating: https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/nfrf-fnfr/exploration/2022/reviewers_manual-guide_de_l_evaluateur-eng.aspx

Q: What are some typical "indirect costs"?

A: <https://www.rsf-fsr.gc.ca/administer-administrer/depenses-eng.aspx>

Review

Q: If someone receives "mixed" under the interdisciplinary score, does that mean that they 'failed' on that criterion?

A: Applications that receive a mixed score can still be funded if they receive high ratings for the other criteria. "Mixed" is equal to a pass overall, but we provide the rating of "mixed" to let the applicants know that it was not unanimous (and therefore could be strengthened in future applications)

Q: Past Exploration applications from our institution that were funded by Exploration could have been funded by standard Tri-Agency competitions, and our research facilitators could not determine why Exploration funded some interdisciplinary proposals and not others. Is the interdisciplinary requirement tighter than it used to be now?

A: Please send us an email with further details so that we can reply to your question: NFRF-FNRF@chairs-chaire.gc.ca. Indeed the weighting and definition of each criterion, and the elements considered for each, may vary between streams and competition stages to reflect their unique objectives. Without more information we can't speak to this. It is not simply the interdisciplinary nature that determines this. It is the high-risk/high-reward nature - as assessed through merit review - that factors heavily in the assessment.

Q: Double anonymous? Refer to a member of the team? The researchers in this project? List in References how?

A: Double anonymous used to be referred to as double-blind.

Q: How does the external reviewer evaluate feasibility without the biographical or identifying info on what the applicants previously accomplished?

A: They only comment on feasibility as it relates to the project plan.

Q: Several researchers at our institution have expressed disappointment and frustration and the lack of feedback they receive, and applications have been declining a lot just because of this. Will more feedback be offered in this round?

A: All applications receive their scores on each criteria. However, only applications which are discussed at the committee deliberations but were not funded will receive a message to applicants

Q: Can you tell who will review the EDI-RP section this year? External reviewers, multidisciplinary committee? I recall that previously it was NFRF staff. Can you please confirm?

A: Since the 2019 competition, this has been evaluated by the multidisciplinary review panel.

Q: Is Interdisciplinarity assessed on collaborators as well?

A: Please review the Evaluation matrices to see how this is assessed.

Q: Could you explain meaning of "synergy"? What if knowledge practices are meant to be kept distinct as part of the design, but they will be in dynamic conversation and developing common understandings, learning from one another? Or is the expectation to "merge" knowledges? Synergy can mean both of these things.

A: Please consult our Evaluation Matrices for clarity regarding interdisciplinary and how it will be evaluated. It is up to the project team to explain the approach and how it fits the program requirements. Please send us an email if after looking at the matrices you have further questions https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/nfrf-fnfr/exploration/2022/merit_indicateurs_indicateurs_du_merite-eng.aspx

Q: Feasibility of the project plan depends on whether the applicants have any expertise (i.e. relevant models developed central to the experiments proposed) on the proposed work no?

A: That is only one aspect of feasibility, which members of the multidisciplinary review panel assesses. The external reviewers only assess feasibility in terms of the project plan.

Q: Does the system automatically find instances where anonymity is not followed...i.e. accidentally a references gives away the applicant identify? Or is this anonymity completely on the onus of the applicant?

A: It's on the onus of the applicant and also noted by external reviewers and members of the multidisciplinary review panel. If they notice instances where it has not been respected, the application will be removed from the competition.

Miscellaneous

Q: Are there statistics from last years competition (e.g., how many ECR teams won the award)?

A: For the 2021 competition, the overall success rate was 23%, and 37% for ECRs.

Q: How is this funding application different from NSERC Discovery Horizons? Is it the high-risk high-reward component?

A: Yes. Discovery Horizons is a way to support interdisciplinary research - but it does not have to be novel. Projects funded through NFRF must be high-risk and high-reward, in addition to being interdisciplinary.

Q: Can you speak about COVID 19 pandemic delay?

A: Please consult our Frequently Asked Questions: section on ECRs for more information on how pandemic-related interruptions affect ECR status: <https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/nfrf-fnfr/exploration/2022/faq-eng.aspx#4>

Q: Have the NFRF normally finishing in 2022 been extended because of COVID?

A: the COVID extensions were awarded for 2018 and 2019 Exploration projects

Q: We've been making the case for HHS and related disciplines to apply for NFRF. Can you give examples of successful applications that are Humanities and Social Sciences topics that are high-risk and high-impact?

A: We recently had a panel at Congress that highlighted this.

Q: Can we access the Congress panel slide deck or information that listed successful HSS and related NFRF applications?

A: There was no slide deck from Congress. The video will be made available as soon as possible and posted on our website.

Q: Looking at past projects, there seems to be strong support for health-related proposals. Is there an obvious reason for this?

A: https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/nfrf-fnfr/exploration/2021/award_recipients-titulaires_subvention-eng.aspx

Q: Who answers email queries from your team and on what aspects? should we be directing to different individuals or specialists?

A: If you send emails to the NFRF email address, it will be answered by the most appropriate person.

Q: Who is funding that NFRF - is it the federal government or one of the 3 research agencies- CIHR SSHRC or NSERC, or other?

A: It is the federal government. Funds come through SSHRC on behalf of the three agencies.