

NOI – Webinar Q&A for NFRF-Exploration 2020 – July 7, 2020

Eligibility questions and answers

Q: for the ECR-reserved grants, do both the NPI and co-PI need to be ECRs, or just the NPI?

A: both NPI and co-PI need to be ECR for an application to be considered led by ECR.

Q: For a proposal to be considered led by early career researchers (ECRs), co-applicants do not need to be ECRs, right?

A: Correct, only the NPI and Co-PI if applicable.

Q: In slide it said "1 NPI and 1 co-PI and / or co-applicant". Does that mean that "1 NPI and 1 co-applicant" is okay (no co-PI)?

A: That is correct.

Q: If a grant does not have a Co-PI and the NPI is an ECR, will that qualify as an ECR application?

A: Yes it will.

Q: Can co-PI/co-As be added/removed following the NOI stage?

A: Members can be added after the NOI. It is expected that individuals will not be removed.

Q: Can Co-Apps be moved to collaborators between NOI and full application, or collaborators be moved to Co-App roles between NOI and full application?

A: It is expected that roles will not change between NOI and Full Application. An individual cannot be removed to join a different application. If individuals are moved, the proposal may no longer be eligible.

Q: If someone is a Co-PI on a current grant - can they submit another application?

A: You can only appear once on an Exploration grant, as a NPI, Co-PI or Co-App. As such, they cannot participate on another grant. A Co-PI on a current NFRF-Exploration grant is therefore NOT eligible to submit an application.

Q: Once the grant ends – can NPI, Co-PI and co-App then apply for another Exploration?

A: Grantees can only apply once they have submitted the final report for their grant. The final report must be submitted before the application deadline in order to be eligible to apply.

Q: Would it be ok if all investigators/applicants are from the same university?

A: There is no restriction against this.

Q: can a Research Associate be a Co-PI or Co-Applicant?

A: Generally, no.

Q: Can a collaborator be from a "for profit" company?

A: Yes, a collaborator can be from a for-profit company as they do not access funds.

Q: Are provincial government agencies (such as Public Health Ontario) eligible to be awarded funds in this competition?

A: No.

Q: Can a co-applicant who IS an independent researcher (faculty appointment) who also owns a company that is providing material still serve as a co-applicant? I interpret the eligibility requirements as permitting this situation .

A: The primary affiliation must be with the university.

Q: Do you know if a holder of a CIHR foundation grant can apply as NPI?

A: Please send an email for specific questions.

Q: Can the co-applicant be an industry partner?

A: Please see our website for eligibility.

Q: what about foreign collaborators?

A: You can include international participants in your team, as collaborators or as co-applicants/co-PIs.

Q: What are co-PI, co-applicants and collaborator supposed to contribute that are different?

A: You can review the eligibility criteria for team members on our website, as it gives you a clearer picture of each participants role in a project: <https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/nfrf-fnfr/exploration/2020/competition-concours-eng.aspx#4>.

Q: Can current grantees apply for the other 2 NFRF streams?

A: Yes.

Q: A previous Exploration grantee will only be eligible to reapply once the final report has been submitted? What if they are still in the automatic extension year, but the report has been submitted?

A: In order to apply to a new Exploration grant, the final report must be submitted by the NOI deadline

Q: For those on a grant ending next March 2021 who received a 1 year extension due to Covid-19, the earliest they would be able to apply would be to the 2022 competition after the completion of the extension?

A: The date for eligibility depends on submission of the final report. If the grantees do not need the extra time, they can submit their final report and be eligible to apply in the 2021 competition.

Q: Must the proposed research team consist of members from all four underrepresented groups?

A: No, it is not a requirement.

Q: Can a postdoc apply as a NPI?

A: No. They are not eligible.

Q: Practitioners, policy-makers, educators, decision-makers, health-care administrators, Indigenous elders, Indigenous knowledge keepers, community leaders, or individuals working for a charity - should they be independent researchers or affiliated to any institution?

A: People who are not professors or researchers do not need to meet the "Independent Researcher" criteria. They cannot be Co-PIs however, as it is a requirement for Exploration.

Q: can a PhD student be a co-applicant?

A: Generally, no.

Q: Are members of intergovernmental organizations eligible as Co-PIs?

A: More information re: eligibility is on our website. If that doesn't answer your question, please send us an email for a specific question.

Q: Can a Foreign PI be one of the two the co-PI for the applications?

A: The co-PI must also be considered an independent researcher. They may be affiliated with a Canadian or international organization. There is a maximum of one co-PI for Exploration stream applications. They do not need to be in Canada.

Q: Can international co-PIs be assigned % funding?

A: Yes.

Q: what about foreign collaborators?

A: You can include international participants in your team, as collaborators or as co-applicants/co-PIs

Q: Can a co-PI or co-App be an independent investigator at NIH, which is a US governmental institution?

A: If they are affiliated with government, no.-

Q: Can postdocs be co-applicants or collaborators?

A: A post-doc can only be a collaborator, and may not be supervised by one of the team members. If they are not supervised by anyone else on the project, they can be a collaborator.

Q: Can a researcher who is going to start an independent researcher position later this year be included as a Co-PI or co-applicant?

A: Yes, but it has to be before the Full Application deadline of October 20th, 2020

Q: It is the department/appointment that matters for showing interdisciplinary minimum of two codes from the list?

A: It has nothing to do with the department. It has to do with the proposed project.

Q: Does the grant prioritize research to be conducted in Canada, or will research based in other countries equally be considered?

A: There is no program requirement for research to be conducted in Canada.

Q: Our application has only NPI; No Co-PI.

A: That is ok, however, you will need at least another Co-App to be able to submit. There is a minimum of 2 team members for Exploration.

Q: Is it possible to have one person start an application as NPI and then transfer NPI status to another applicant? My co-applicant who would be NPI is currently on maternity leave and thus I would be primarily putting the application together for now.

A: Generally, no - it is not possible to change the NPI. However, contact us with specific questions.

Q: Is confirmation of eligibility needed at the NOI stage or only at the full application stage?

A: At the NOI stage.

Q: Do RGOs have to have eligibility of all applicants confirmed at the NOI stage?

A: Yes it is the responsibility of RGOs to verify the eligibility of participants at all stages of submission.

NOI and Full Application questions and answers

Q: Is the NOI summary locked at that stage, or can it be edited for the full application stage?

A: It is locked once submitted.

Q: Why can the summary not change from NOI to full?

A: in order to ensure that NOIs submitted are an accurate reflection of the Full Applications to be submitted.

Q: Will there be aspects of the proposal that must be anonymized at both stages?

A: Yes. The NOI Summary must be anonymized at the NOI stage. Most sections must be anonymized at the Full Application stage. More information is available in the instructions on the website.

Q: Can the team configuration be modified after the NOI is submitted?

A: Team members can be added.

Q: Can there be overlap with an application submitted to the Transformation stream?

A: The types of projects to be funded through both streams is very different. It is unlikely that the same project would fit the objectives of both streams. However, there can be overlap in the general area, but the projects should not be the same.

Q: Does the project need to cross Agency boundaries?

A: For the Exploration stream, it is not required that it cross the mandates of more than one agency.

Q: Will the profiles provided be the same as previously, i.e., no CVs, Research Offices to confirm eligibility independently?

A: Yes that is correct.

Q: Can two different disciplines within the same department apply? for example robotics engineering and software engineering?

A: The basic requirement is that the project must include disciplines from at least two group-level disciplines in the CRDC codes. However, this does not mean that it will meet the interdisciplinarity criterion according to the reviewers.

Q: To meet the two codes requirement you must demonstrate the proposed work includes research from within those two codes, not the appointment of the investigators?

A: That's correct.

Q: Is it sufficient to have interdisciplinary team that is clinically oriented (SLP, OT, MD, Psych, etc) OR

we will need to incorporate other professionals such as education professionals as co-Is?

A: The "right" team will depend on the expertise required to execute the project.

Q: hard to find a code from the list that has not already worked together with the medical field, for ex. How to assess interdisciplinarity? Would mathematics and medicine be considered ok for a team?

A: This would be determined by the merit review process.

Q: will interdisciplinarity be assessed at NOI stage (pass/fail)?

A: there is no adjudication at the NOI stage, that will be assessed at the full application stage only.

Q: Is it OK for the NPI and Co-App to be from the same department? Is it preferred to have participation from more than one department?

A: This would be evaluated by the merit review process. Look under the 2018 Exploration competition on the website to find some general feedback about proposals for some guidance.

Q: What if we are two faculties from one discipline and one faculty from another knowledge area. Can the application include 2 NPIs?

A: No - only one NPI.

Q: If my proposed NFRF project extends work in a new interdisciplinary direction from an existing NSERC Discovery-funded project, is it still eligible?

A: Exploration grants are to fund high-risk, high-reward, interdisciplinary research. If you have an idea that fits this description and builds on research already supported by another grant, you may apply for funding through this opportunity to support it.

Q: What is the key difference between the double-blind review and multidisciplinary panel review?

A: External review is a double-blind process. Multidisciplinary review panels see entire proposal - including biosketch - it is not double-blind.

Q: Regarding double-blind: My project involves collaboration with a particular scientific research facility which will be hard *not* to identify, when discussing the data we will be working with and the experiments we want to conduct. Any advice?

A: Please contact us at nfrf-fnfr@chairs-chaires.gc.ca. It will be easier for us to help you out then through a chatbox :)

Q: Will reviewers be assessing with respect to feasibility in terms of restrictions due to the pandemic, should pandemic contingency be built into the research plan?

A: In general, contingency plans were viewed favourably in previous competitions. See the Feedback to Applicants from the 2018 competition.

Q: what do you mean exactly by high risk, high reward?

A: Please find the description on our website. <https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/nfrf-fnfr/exploration/2020/competition-concours-eng.aspx>

Q: I went to the link above for high risk/high reward. Just a quick read tells me what is *not* considered high risk. I therefore assume that anything much broader or innovative would therefore qualify as high risk/high reward.

A: If you look under the evaluation matrices, there are a number of indications of projects considered high risk.

Q: Will all the submitted NOI be invited to submit a full proposal? if not, what are the selection criteria at the NOI stage?

A: Yes, all will move to the application stage, the NOI is a registration phase and facilitates reviewer recruitment.

Q: For the NOI, if we just have an NPI and a co-applicant, only the NPI would have to complete the profile?

A: No - the co-applicant will as well.

Q: Is there somewhere to see previous successful recipients of the grant and their projects?

A: The list is available on our website <https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/nfrf-fnfr/exploration/exploration-eng.aspx>.

Q: Does the character count for the Summary include spaces?

A: Yes.

Q: You mentioned the evaluation criteria of 40% on 'high-risk' and 40% on 'reward'. How 'high-risk' is evaluated separately from 'reward'? Does it mean less feasible proposals will get higher % on the 'risk' factor?

A: No. High risk does not refer to feasibility.

Q: Would prior experience in interdisciplinary research be an asset, or is there no advantage given the anonymity of the applicants?

A: The applications are only anonymous for external reviewers. So prior experience may be an asset as reviewed by the multidisciplinary review panel.

Q: I was wondering if research conducted in Canada is prioritized over research conducted in other countries (with an international team)?

A: There is no program requirement for research to be conducted in Canada.

Q: Are the expectations for pilot data factoring in the difficulty in performing preliminary experiments during restrictions on laboratory work this summer?

A: There are no expectation for pilot data in Exploration applications.

Q: Are there any specific statements released by the agency that indicate whether the panel understands proposals may be more preliminary in nature than usual?

A: Given the nature of Exploration projects and the Exploration stream, this is not really relevant. It is in other programs, but not for this one (high risk, high reward...).

Q: Is the CCV used or is there a special CV module that the multidisciplinary review panel has access to?

A: The CCV is not required at all for the exploration 2020 grant.

Q: How are co-PI, co-applicant, collaborator judged differently in an application? Is it better to have 2 co-PI vs one PI and a bunch of co-applicants?

A: It will depend on the project needs. You can only have 1 NPI and 1 co-PI. You can have as many co-Aps as you want.

Miscellaneous questions and answers

Q: Are there a set number of grants awarded per topic area?

A: No.

Q: Is the NFRF a yearly competition?

A: The Exploration stream competition is annual. The competitions under the other streams are not annual.

Q: Do any of the collaborators (e.g., companies, non profit) need to provide in-kind or cash support?

A: No they do not.

Q: Are there examples of high risk studies that were funded before?

A: You can find the 2018 and 2019 awardees on our website. <https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/nfrf-fnfr/exploration/exploration-eng.aspx>

Q: Is there a field that we can identify the diversity of suggested reviewers? Gender, minority etc?

A: No this is not available on the portal.

Q: How are ECR applications processed? Is there a specific funding allocation for ECR projects only?

A: A minimum floor will be set based on the % of ECR-led applications. As such, if 30% are from ECRs, there will be a minimum of 30% of awards that go to them.

Q: Must indirect costs be distributed to co-PI/co-app institutions, as is required with Transformation? Even if international?

A: The intention is that it will.

Q: Can we use other funds for that 25% indirect cost?

A: No. The amount for indirect costs cannot be used for direct costs of research.

Q: Can the NFRFE still be used to purchase equipment?

A: The focus should not be on equipment purchase.

Q: Can a co-PI or co-applicant from outside Canada have access to some of the funding?

A: Yes.

Q: What does "PIs must budget 25% for indirect costs" mean?

A: Up to 25% of the direct costs of research may be requested for indirect costs. This portion (indirect costs) goes to the university.

Q: Will there be a webinar on the full application stage?

A: Yes there will be a webinar at the next stage.
