

## SPARC Exploration Information Session, July 22, 2021 Q&A

**Q:** What is the cut-off scores last year?

**A:** NFRF does not provide "cut-off scores". They use an evaluation matrix: [https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/nfrf-fnfr/exploration/2021/merit\\_indicators-indicateurs\\_du\\_merite-eng.aspx](https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/nfrf-fnfr/exploration/2021/merit_indicators-indicateurs_du_merite-eng.aspx). Aim to be 'scored' Excellent in all categories. The 2020 national success rate was 19%.

**Q:** Do we need to submit the NOI to ORS?

**A:** When you submit through the Convergence Portal, the NOI (and Full Application) goes into a queue for ORS to log in, check, and submit to NFRF. Please check the ORS site for deadlines and requirements: <https://ors.ubc.ca/proposal-development-submission/agency-application-requirements-procedures#18>

**Q:** What is the PDF has their own funding to work with one of the Co-Is, but for a different project?

**A:** PDFs are only eligible to be on an application as a collaborator if they are not supervised by a member of the team. What matters is the supervisory relationship, not the funding arrangement.

**Q:** Can my Co-PI be a researcher at an international research institution? Or do they need to be a Co-Applicant instead?  
and

**Q:** Can we have co-PIs/co-applicants based at non-Canadian institutions, or is there a requirement (formal or informal) that all participants be Canadian?

**A:** Yes, the NPI must be affiliated with an eligible Canadian institution but the co-PI/co-applicants can be international. Note: you can only have up to 1 co-PI.

**Q:** Can the title change between NOI and full application?

**A:** No, almost all aspects of the NOI are locked after submission. Suggested/excluded reviewers is the only editable field.

**Q:** After attending the NFRF info session held last week, we wanted a little clarification on the review process, specifically the external review vs. the multidisciplinary review panel. We understand that the external review is double-blinded but they do evaluate (in part) based on feasibility.  
and

**Q:** How do you suggest striking a balance between maintaining anonymity and also illustrating feasibility of the project based on team members, collaborations, and access to resources?"

**A:** External reviewer are only assessing feasibility based on Research Proposal which cannot include identifying information. So they will examine your proposed goal/objectives with your appropriate approaches/methods, rather than your expertise/experience. So they do not address FULL feasibility, this is done by the multidisciplinary panel, which also receives your Team Biographical details, where you would show feasibility in terms of team and resources.

**Q:** Are there any examples of successful proposals (titles, team) from the past years?

**A:** We have a sample grant library. Note: Sample grants from 2019 are useful for the EDI content for ideas, but the application format is VERY different: <https://vpri.share.ubc.ca/sparc/Pages/NFRF.aspx> (CWL required)

**Q:** Can the name of a novel device/patented technology developed by the PI be mentioned? The technology is crucial for the project. Not directly identifiable, but wanted to double-check as the name is unique enough.

**A:** As long as you do not specify you developed it/hold the patent. E.g., we will be using patented technology", not "We will be using our patented technology. You could state this was your invention in the team biographical section under "resources".

**Q:** Can you reference the fact that your team has already worked together in a pilot (as a question of feasibility) as long as you don't identify yourselves?

**A:** Yes although there is no requirement for teams to have worked together before. You could use language like: "our unique interdisciplinary team has already worked on a pilot project" but with no project-specific details that could identify you. You can also cover this component of feasibility in the Team Biographical section.

**Q:** If the team members are from similar fields, but the research approach combines multiple fields, would the proposal still be interdisciplinary? (e.g. is that criterion evaluated more on the approach than the team?)

**A:** Interdisciplinarity is a pass/fail criterion, so at least 2 group-level disciplines from the classification codes must be identified. The Convergence Portal will flag an error if the basic interdisciplinary eligibility requirement is not met. That said, interdisciplinary in Exploration does not require cross Tri-Agency (e.g., CIHR and SSHRC), just fields/disciplines, particularly those who don't naturally collaborate. If the fields are similar we recommend you highlight how the fields are combining to answer a question in a unique way that would not be possible by one field alone.