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New Frontiers in Research Fund
Fonds **Nouvelles frontières** en recherche

2025 Exploration Competition
Information Webinar

May 22, 2025

CIHR IRSC

NSERC CRSNG

SSHRC CRSH

Government of Canada   Gouvernement du Canada

Canada

Overview

1. Program description

2. Eligibility and roles

3. Review process

4. Notice of Intent (NOI) requirements

5. Information for RGOs

6. Questions and resources

New Frontiers in Research Fund
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Program Description
Exploration Competition

CIHR
IRSC

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Program Description

Exploration Stream Objective

<u>Goal</u>: Inspire research that is **high risk**, **high reward**, and **interdisciplinary.**

<u>Support projects that</u>:

- **bring disciplines together** beyond traditional disciplinary or common interdisciplinary approaches;

- propose to **explore something new**, which **might fail**; and

- have the **potential for significant impact.**

<u>Range of impacts:</u>
Social, cultural, economic, health-related, technological, etc.

<u>Proposals led from any discipline:</u>
Social sciences and humanities, health, natural sciences and engineering.

Program Description

Competition Stages - Exploration Stream

Two-stage competition

1. Notice of Intent (NOI).

2. Full Application.

Program Description

Value and Duration

Value → Up to $125,000 per year (including indirect costs of up to 25% of direct costs).

Funds should be used primarily to support research activities, **not to acquire or maintain infrastructure**.[1]

[1]*Tri-Agency Guide on Financial Administration*

Duration → Up to 2 years.

Number of grants → Minimum of 100 grants.

A proportion of awards will be reserved for Early Career Researchers (ECRs).[2]

[2]*Research interruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic are recognized as an eligible delay* → **starting on March 1, 2020.**

Program Description

Exploration Competition Timeline

August 19, 2025 - 8:00 p.m. (Eastern)

NOI deadline

October 21, 2025 - 8:00 p.m. (Eastern)

Full Application deadline

February 9 to February 13, 2026

Multidisciplinary review panel meetings

March 31, 2026

Start date of awards

Program Description

Interdisciplinarity / Fit to Program

Interdisciplinarity requirements:

- **at least two different disciplines** (as defined by the group-level classification of the Canada Research and Development Classification codes, CRDC); and

- the onus is on the applicant to explain **the novelty of the interdisciplinary approach** to justify the fit to program.

Program Description

Interdisciplinarity / Fit to Program

Interdisciplinarity can be defined by elements such as, but not limited to:

- Novelty of the Perspective → integrating two or more disciplines not commonly combined.

- Novelty of the Approach → application or adaptation of frameworks/tools/methods/ techniques from one discipline to solve a problem in another discipline.

- Project Design → designed from an interdisciplinary perspective.

Subcriterion

- Fit to Program → *pushes the boundaries of what can be funded through the agencies.*

Program Description

Multidisciplinary versus Interdisciplinary Research

Multidisciplinary Teams

Each member operates as a part of a chain of responsibility

Members working in silo, by disciplines

Interdisciplinary Teams

Individuals from different fields are expected to contribute ideas to the entire project stack
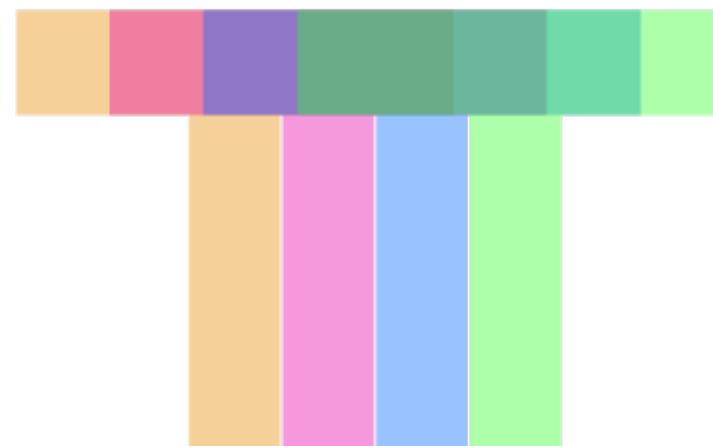
Members listen to and learn from others

Program Description

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Research Practice (EDI)

EDI in research practice is a core element of the NFRF program
and is comprised of **three key areas**:

1. team composition and recruitment processes;

2. training and development opportunities; and

3. inclusion.

For each of the three key areas above, applicants must explain:

❑ what actions they will take;

❑ the outcomes expected; and

❑ the assessment planned.

Program Description

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Research Practice

Actions proposed are expected to:

- **remove barriers;** and

- **provide opportunities** for the meaningful integration of individuals from all groups, including the four designated groups (women, Indigenous peoples, members of visible minorities and persons with disabilities).

Refer to the

[NFRF Best Practices in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Research](#)

Program Description
High Risk

High risk can be defined by elements such as, but not limited to:

- proposing unique directions;

- challenging current research paradigms;

- enhancing understanding of complex and challenging issues;

- bringing new disciplines together with different perspectives, to use novel approaches for solving existing problems; and/or

- developing or adapting frameworks, methods and techniques.

Program Description
High Reward

High reward can be defined by elements such as, but not limited to:

- having an economic, scientific, artistic, cultural, technological or health impact;

- impacting large communities, or a single or small number of unique communities/subpopulations with the potential to provide lessons for other contexts;

- transforming and/or disrupting conventional thinking;

- resolving a longstanding issue or debate; and/or

- significantly advancing current knowledge, methods and/or technologies.

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Program Description
Feasibility

Feasibility considers elements such as the:

- research problem being addressed;

- knowledge, expertise and capacity of the research team;

- current research in the field;

- workplan and timeline;

- proposed approach, including **EDI in research design (EDI-RD)** where appropriate;

- project's engagement and reciprocity with First Nations, Inuit and/or Metis peoples (for [Indigenous research](#)), where appropriate; and

- suitability of the research environment.

Eligibility and Roles
Exploration Competition

Eligibility and Roles

Project Team Eligibility

At least two participants:

- a nominated principal investigator (NPI) who is an independent researcher at an eligible institution

AND

- a co-principal investigator (co-PI), who must also be an independent researcher

OR

- a co-applicant (co-App), who may be a:

  o researcher / professor → independent researcher ; **or**

  o practitioner, policy-maker, educator, decision-maker, health-care administrator, Indigenous Elder, etc.

Eligibility and Roles
Team Roles

Nominated Principal Investigator (NPI)

- Responsible for the direction of the project and the coordination of proposed research activities.

- Completes the NOI and full application on [Convergence portal](#) and submits to their research administrator.

- Assumes administrative and financial responsibility for the grant.

Co-Principal Investigator (co-PI)

- Shares responsibility with the NPI for the direction of the proposed activities
- May access grant funds

Co-Applicants (co-App)

- Contribute to the execution of the project
- Various backgrounds and affiliations
- May access grant funds

Collaborators

- Can be any individual who contributes to the project
- Cannot be supervised by the team
- Do not have access to grant funds

Eligibility and Roles

Project Team Eligibility

NPIs, co-PIs and co-Apps:

- **must not** be affiliated with a government* or for-profit company; and
- can participate in **only one Exploration stream application or grant at one time****.

With some exceptions; please refer to our website.

**Exploration grantees must submit their final report before the full application deadline of a subsequent competition to be eligible to apply.

For a proposal to be considered led by early career researchers (ECRs), **both the NPI and co-PI** (if applicable) must be ECRs.

Refer to the Eligibility section of the Competition Overview

Eligibility and Roles

Final Reports – Current Exploration grantees

Only one Exploration grant can be held at a time, as either an NPI, Co-PI or Co-App.

In order for any of the co-grantees to be eligible to apply, the NPI must have:

- Submitted their final report for their previous Exploration grant-funded project **one month before the current competition's full application deadline**

- Had their reports approved by NFRF staff.

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Review Process
Exploration Competition

Review Process

Notice of Intent and Full Application

Notice of Intent (NOI) (not adjudicated)

Purpose:

Used by staff to:

1. Identify persons to compose of the multidisciplinary review panel.

Full Application (adjudicated)

Purpose:

Used in the review process .The most meritorious applications will be recommended for funding by the multidisciplinary review panel.

Multidisciplinary Review Panel

Adjudication by the Panel involves scoring according to the evaluation matrices for the selection criteria:

- Interdisciplinarity / Fit to program (**pass/fail**);

- Equity, diversity and inclusion in Research Practice (**pass/fail**);

- High risk: **40%** of overall score;

- High reward: **40%** of overall score; and

- Feasibility: **20%** of overall score.

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NOI Requirements
Exploration Competition

NOI Requirements

NOI Requirements and Content

NOI Requirement

- The NPI must submit a NOI to be eligible to create and submit a full application.

- It must include completed profiles of at least two team members.

- Additional members can be added at the full application stage.

NOI content*

A completed NOI must include:

application title;

- fields of research (CRDC codes);

- keywords; and

- summary of the proposal.

*Once submitted by the RGO, these fields are locked in for the rest of the competition

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NOI Requirements

Summary of the Proposal

Maximum 2,500 characters.

The summary must:

1. include the objectives and summary of the research approach; and

2. highlight the novelty and expected significance of the work.

Once submitted by the RGO, it cannot be modified.

NOI Requirements
Collection of Personal Information

Collected for the purpose of program performance management

Self-ID data collected as part of the user profile is **NOT shared with reviewers** (or agency staff) and is not accessible by RGOs or any other users of the Convergence Portal.

Please consult the

[Data Collection policy](#)

for more information

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STRAC Policy – New for 2025
Exploration Competition

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STRAC POLICY *NEW*

↘ On January 16, 2024, the Government of Canada announced the [Policy on Sensitive Technology Research and Affiliations of Concern](#) (STRAC Policy).

↘ The policy operates using two lists that must be used in conjunction — a list of [Sensitive Technology Research Areas](#) (STRA) and a list of [Named Research Organizations](#) (NRO).

↘ Grant applications that involve conducting research and related activities that aim to advance a sensitive technology research area will not be funded if any of the researchers involved in activities supported by the grant are affiliated with, or in receipt of funding or in-kind support from, a university, research institute or laboratory connected to military, national defence or state security entities that could pose a risk to Canada's national security.

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada
Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines du Canada

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STRAC POLICY *NEW*

↘ In the application form, applicants will be asked if the proposed research grant aims to advance a STRA. **If not, no further action is required.**

↘ If so, applicants and other named roles (i.e., co-principal investigator, co-applicants and collaborators) must each complete an attestation form, available through a link in the application form, to certify they are not currently affiliated with an NRO.

↘ Those with named roles must provide the completed attestation form to the applicant, who must save them as a single PDF and upload it to the STRAC Attestation module of the application form.

↘ For applications aiming to advance a STRA, the inclusion of completed attestation forms is an eligibility issue. However, whether an application aims to advance a STRA or not will **not** affect merit review.

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STRAC POLICY *NEW*

↘ If an application aiming to advance a STRA is successful, any post-award additions of participants with named roles will require completed attestation forms.

↘ Grantees must also inform SSHRC if the nature of their research evolves such that activities supported by the grant would aim to advance a STRA. Grant recipients cannot proceed with these new research activities until the appropriate granting agency's approval has been obtained.

↘ For further guidance and FAQs: [Tri-agency guidance on the Policy on Sensitive Technology Research and Affiliations of Concern (STRAC Policy) - Research security (nserc-crsng.gc.ca)](#)

↘ Questions related to the STRAC policy:

Researchsecurity-securiterecherche@sshrc-crsh.gc.ca

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Information for RGOs
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Information for RGOs

RGO Role

RGOs can:

- view NOIs from NPIs at their institution (expired, in progress and submitted);
- return submitted NOIs to the NPI; and
- forward submitted NOIs to the agency.

Before forwarding an application to the agency, **you will be asked to confirm**:

- that the participants meet the eligibility requirements; and
- that the proposed research project meets the eligibility requirements.

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Information for RGOs

RGO Role

By forwarding the application, you will also be certifying, on behalf of the institution, that the NPI:

- is affiliated with the institution or organization;

- has the necessary time and resources to carry out the activity; and

- will notify NFRF by email (NFRF-FNFR@chairs-chaires.gc.ca) of any changes during the tenure of the grant, including changes in the composition of the partnership, such as the addition of new co-principal investigators, co-applicants or collaborators.

Information for RGOs
RGO Role

Use the "Research Administrator" button to access your institution's applications
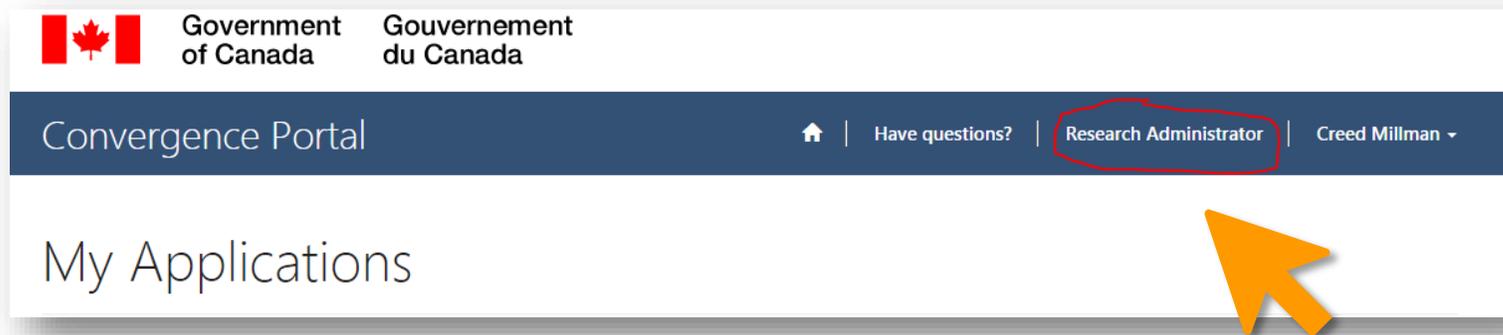
If you do not have this option, please contact websupport@chairs-chaires.gc.ca

NFRFE 2020 NOI Convergence Walkthrough (18:45)

Questions and Resources
Exploration Competition

New Frontiers in Research Fund
Fonds Nouvelles frontières en recherche

Questions and resources
Questions?
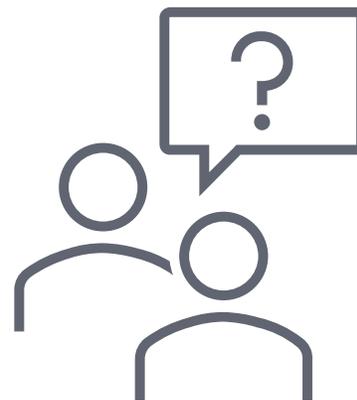
Questions and resources

Resources

Contact Information

NFRF-FNFR@chairs-chaires.gc.ca

Online Services Helpdesk

Phone: 613-995-4273
Email: websupport@convergence.gc.ca

Program Links

NFRF Website
Competition Overview
Reviewer Manual
Evaluation Matrices

Questions and resources
Video Capsule

[NFRFE 2020 NOI Convergence Walkthrough](#)