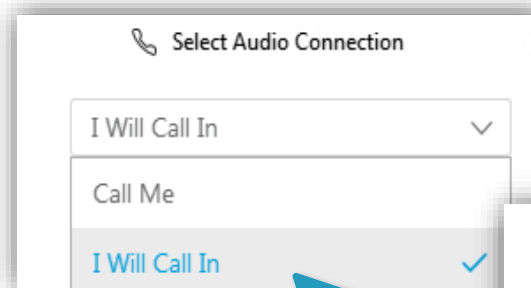If you are experiencing **technical difficulties with the audio**, please connect with a **landline or cell phone**.
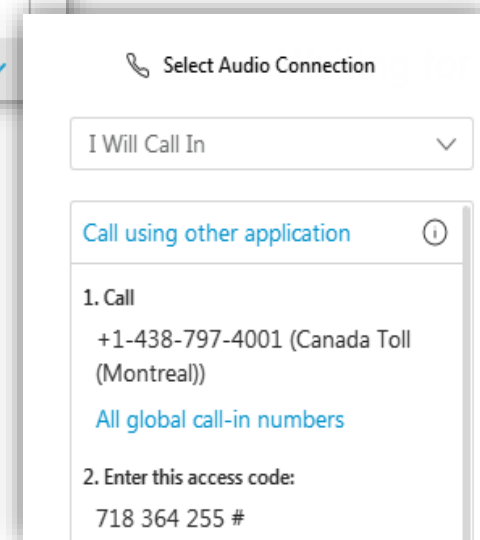
o Under **"Select Audio Connection"** choose one of the following:
  1. **"Call Me"** or;
  2. **"I Will Call In"**

o Follow the instructions
o **Use the Q&A box for questions**

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

2026 Transformation Competition
Letter of Intent to Apply (LOI)

Applicant Webinar

May 2025

CIHR IRSC

NSERC CRSNG

SSHRC CRSH

Government of Canada Gouvernement du Canada

Canada

Webinar Contents

1. Competition Timeline

2. Funding Opportunity Description

3. Eligibility and Roles

4. LOI Requirements

5. Evaluation Criteria

6. Review Process

7. STRAC Policy – New for 2026

8. Information for RGOs

9. Resources and Questions

New Frontiers in Research Fund
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Competition Timeline
2026 Transformation

CIHR
IRSC

NSERC
CRSNG

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Competition Timeline

Competition stages

Three-stage competition

1. Notice of Intent to Apply (NOI)
2. Letter of Intent to Apply (LOI)
3. Full Application

NOI

LOI

Full
Application

Competition Timeline

Important dates

June 17, 2025	• Letter of Intent deadline
March 3, 2026	• Full application deadline (by invitation)
August 2026	• Results announced
September 2026	• Awards begin

New Frontiers in Research Fund
Fonds Nouvelles frontières en recherche

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

Funding Opportunity Description
2026 Transformation

CIHR
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Funding Opportunity Description

Transformation - Objective

To support large-scale, Canadian-led **interdisciplinary** research projects that address a major challenge, and have the potential to realize **real and lasting change**.

The challenge the research addresses may be:

- fundamental, leading to a scientific breakthrough; or
- applied, with a social, economic, environmental or health impact

Projects are expected to be world-leading, and to draw on **global** research expertise when relevant

Funding Opportunity Description

Transformation Description

Transformation grants will support projects that:

1. tackle a **well-defined** problem or challenge;

2. propose a **novel world-leading** approach;

3. are **interdisciplinary**; and

4. have the potential to be **transformative**

Transformative research is defined as having the potential to **create a significant and real change or impact** — a noticeable leap or tangible breakthrough rather than an incremental advance.

Funding Opportunity Description

Transformation

Transformation grants support **clearly defined research projects**.

Transformation grants do **not** support programs of research, networks, or the setting up or further development of research institutes/centres.

Projects that focus on the application of existing technology, **provide routine analysis**, **collect data without interpreting underlying mechanisms**, or provide professional practice or consulting services (**contract research**) are not eligible.

Similarly, proposals that involve the set-up and operational management of an institute, a **formal or informal group of researchers**, or that are **principally associated with the acquisition and maintenance of scientific equipment** will not be considered.

New Frontiers in Research Fund
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Funding Opportunity Description

2026 Transformation – Value and Duration

Between $2M and $4M per year, including indirect costs

Applicants may request up to 25% of the value of the direct costs of research to **cover indirect costs**

Budget must be in line with the objectives of the project

Funds should be used to **support research activities**, not to acquire or maintain infrastructure

Duration : six years

Mid-term review is mandatory

Number of awards depends on the amounts requested in successful applications (expect a minimum of six awards)

New Frontiers in Research Fund
Fonds Nouvelles frontières en recherche

Eligibility and Roles
2026 Transformation

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Eligibility and Roles

Subject matter

Projects may involve **any discipline, thematic areas, approaches or subject areas** eligible for funding **across the three federal research funding agencies** (CIHR, NSERC, and SSHRC).

Projects should engage the **full range of disciplines** required to achieve the project goals.

To meet **the minimum requirement to be considered interdisciplinary**, the proposed research project must integrate elements from **at least two different disciplines** (as defined by a group-level classification based on the Canadian Research and Development Classification codes).

Projects must fall under the mandate of at least two of the three federal research funding agency.

Eligibility and Roles

Project Team

- Proposals must be submitted by **teams of at least five participants** (excluding collaborators)

- Teams **must** include a nominated principal investigator (NPI)

- Teams **may** include any number of co-principal investigators (co-PIs), co-applicants and/or collaborators

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, LOI and full application in the [Convergence Portal](#) and submits them to their research administrator

- Assumes administrative and financial responsibility for the grant

Co-Principal Investigators (Co-PIs)

- Share responsibility with the NPI for the direction of the proposed activities
- Research activities related to the project may be supported by grant funds

Co-Applicants

- Contribute to the execution of the project
- Research activities related to the project may be supported by grant funds

Collaborators

- Can be any individual who will contribute to the project
- Contribute to the execution of the project
- Grant funds may not be used to pay for collaborators' activities or expenses

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Eligibility and Roles

Project Team

The **NPI and team members can be from any discipline(s)**

The **NPI must be considered an independent researcher** at their primary affiliation, which must be a Canadian institution holding full eligibility with CIHR, NSERC or SSHRC

Other **team members may be from any sector**; however, **co-PIs and co-applicants may not be affiliated with a government or for-profit company** (this restriction does not apply to collaborators)

Team members in academia must be considered independent researchers

Full- or part-time students, postdoctoral fellows or research associates **are not eligible to participate as NPIs, co-PIs or co-applicants.**

Eligibility and Roles

Exceptions

A **federal government employee who is an adjunct professor at a Canadian institution** whose students are participating in the research project may be a co-applicant, with the use of funds limited to salaries or stipends and travel costs for the students.

A **federal government employee who is an adjunct professor at a Canadian institution** whose contributions to the project do not fall within the mandate of their federal organization and will not be performed within the employer's facilities or with the employer's resources may be a co-PI or co-applicant.

Individuals whose primary affiliation is with an Indigenous government are eligible to be co-PIs, co-applicants, or collaborators, with eligible expenses limited to those related to the execution of the project that are not within the mandate of the Indigenous government.

Refer to the **Eligibility** section of the competition description

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Eligibility and Roles

Independent researcher

An **independent researcher**

- engages in research-related activities that are **not under the direction** of another individual; and

- has an academic or research **appointment** that:

  - **begins by March 3, 2026 for this competition;**

  - allows the individual to pursue the proposed research project, engage in independent research activities for the entire duration of the funding,

supervise trainees (if applicable) and publish the research results; and

- obliges the individual to comply with institutional policies on the conduct of research, supervision of trainees (if applicable) and employment conditions of staff paid with tri-agency funding.

Eligibility and Roles

Early Career Researchers

Early career researchers (ECRs) must be included as confirmed members in all teams.

An ECR **is defined as a researcher within five years of the start date of their first research-related appointment**, minus the length of any eligible delays in research (for example illness, maternity or parental), as of the first of the month of the competition launch (February 2025 for this competition), where:

- **"research-related appointments"** are defined as those where an individual has the autonomy to conduct research independently;

- all **eligible leaves** (such as maternity, parental, medical or bereavement) are credited at twice the amount of time taken; and

- **professional leaves** (such as training, sabbatical or administrative) are not credited.

Eligibility and Roles

Participation on multiple grants

To ensure that teams awarded a Transformation grant have sufficient time to dedicate to the project, **award holders may serve as an NPI or co-PI on only one Transformation grant**. It is, therefore, recommended that individuals limit their participation as an NPI or co-PI to a single application **at the LOI stage**. If an individual is listed as an NPI or co-PI on more than one project, they will be required to remove themselves from all but one at the full application stage. After the removal of the individual as NPI or co-PI, the application could potentially be removed from competition if the team's minimal eligibility requirements are no longer met.

An NPI or co-PI of a funded Transformation project is expected to remain in that role for the entire term of the grant. An NPI or co-PI on an active grant cannot amend their role to become eligible to apply in another competition. In cases where a funded NPI or co-PI is removed from an active grant, or has their role changed to co-applicant or collaborator, **they will not be eligible to be an NPI or co-PI on another Transformation grant until the first grant ends.**

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Eligibility and Roles

STRAC Policy NEW

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

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.**

Policy on Sensitive Technology Research and Affiliations of Concern

New Frontiers in Research Fund
Fonds Nouvelles frontières en recherche

LOI Requirements
2026 Transformation

CIHR IRSC

NSERC CRSNG

SSHRC CRSH

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LOI Requirements

Collection of personal information

Personal information is collected for the **purpose of program performance management.**

Self-identification data collected as part of the user profile is **not shared** with reviewers and is limited to agency staff on a need-to-know basis.

Please consult the
data collection policy
for more information

LOI Requirements

Letter of Intent to Apply deadline

An NPI is eligible to create and submit an LOI only if they have submitted an NOI. Selected teams will be invited to complete and submit a full application.
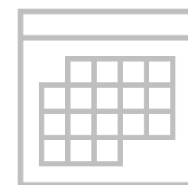
LOI deadline for submission **to NFRF**:

June 17, 2025

Check with the research grants office (RGO) at your institution for **internal deadlines**.

The **RGO is responsible for submitting the LOI by 8:00 p.m. (ET)** on the deadline date.

- Late LOIs will not be accepted.

- An LOI **cannot be changed** after the RGO has submitted it.

LOI Requirements

Required information on the Convergence Portal

1. Profiles for any additional members of the research team.

Members identified at NOI are expected to remain on the team;

Complete profiles include:

- Completed eligibility profile
- Fields of research and keywords
- EDI self-identification

2. Letter of Intent Content

All information submitted in the NOI, updated as necessary, as well as:

- Collaborators (any changes)
- Reviewers (suggestions and exclusions)
- **Proposed budget**
- **Equity, diversity and inclusion in research practice**
- **Equity, diversity and inclusion in research design**
- **Support for ECRs**
- **Supporting documents**

LOI Requirements

Suggested Reviewers and Reviewer Exclusions

A minimum of 20 suggested reviewers Reviewers should have the required expertise to **review and comment on the proposal and not be in a conflict of interest** with any team member.

At least 10 must be from outside Canada

You may also request that specific individuals be excluded from the review of your application in the **Reviewer Exclusions** section.

Suggest a diverse cross-section of reviewers:
- Canadian and international
- early-career and established
- under-represented groups
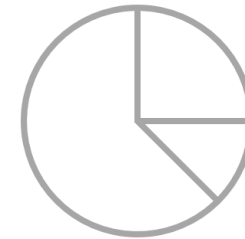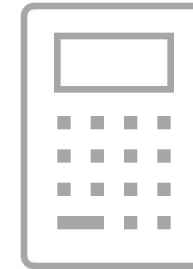- from academic and non-academic institutions

LOI Requirements

Proposed Budget

Planned amount of funds to be spent in direct and indirect costs for each year of the project.

Refer to Use of Grant Funds section for information about the eligibility for direct costs.

Please contact your research administrator for direction on how much to request for **indirect costs.**

LOI Requirements

Equity, diversity and inclusion in research practice

Applicants **must clearly demonstrate their commitment to EDI in research practice** in their research teams.

They must explain what actions they will take, the outcomes expected, and the assessment planned for each of the following three key areas:

- team composition and recruitment processes;

- training and development opportunities; and

- inclusion.

Actions taken are expected to **remove barriers and provide opportunities** for the meaningful integration of individuals from all groups.

Resources

- **NFRF Best Practices in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Research Practice and Design**

LOI Requirements

Support for Early Career Researchers (ECRs)

How will ECRs be **included in the team and integrated in a meaningful way**, including **plans to support their leadership and development** throughout the project?

Personal information about any individual must not be included in the EDI sections.

LOI Requirements

Supporting documents

Uploaded as **separate attachments** following [the instructions for attachments](#).

- **Research proposal** should address
  - Novelty of approach
  - Interdisciplinarity
  - Feasibility
  - Anticipated transformation/change/impact
  - Maximum 10 pages in length
- **References** (unlimited)

You must preview all attachments to ensure that the documents have been uploaded correctly and the content is viewable.

Non-compliance with the required page length or formatting may result in withdrawal of an application.

For more information, please review [How to Submit a Letter of Intent to Apply](#)

LOI requirements

Locked after the LOI stage

- Application Details
  - Application Title
  - Language of Application
  - Indigenous Research

- Fields of Research

- Keywords

- Project Description
  - Outline of Challenge
  - Overview of Approach and Potential Changes
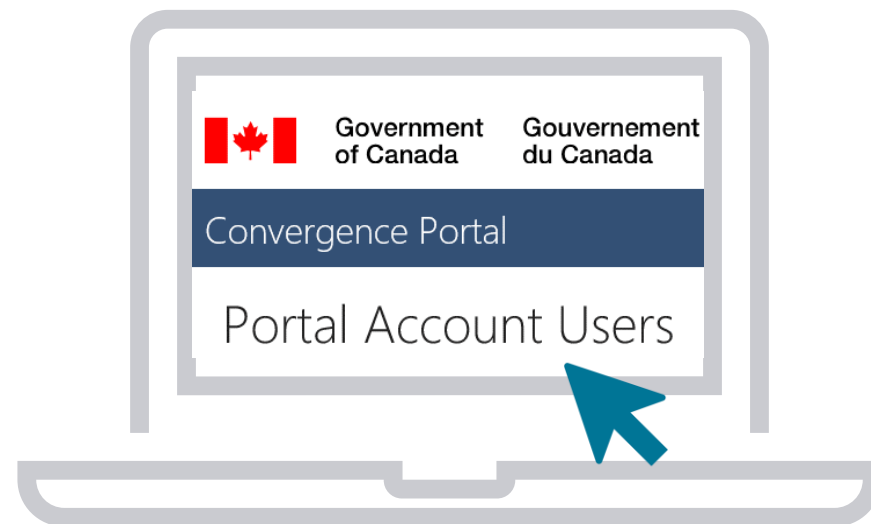
- EDI in research design

LOI Requirements

Submitting the Letter of Intent

Review your LOI to ensure that it is complete.

From the **Finalize Application section** in the Convergence Portal, follow the prompts to submit the LOI. After you accept the **terms and conditions**, the status of your submission will change to **Received by Administrator.** If you want to make any **changes** at this point, you may request that your research administrator return it to you.

Once your research administrator has submitted your LOI, the application status will be changed to **Received by Agency. No changes can be made at that point.**

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

Evaluation Criteria
2026 Transformation

Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria

The five evaluation criteria for NFRF funding opportunities are:

1. Interdisciplinarity (pass/fail)

2. EDI in research practice & support of ECRs (pass/fail)

3. High risk (20%)

4. High reward (60%)

5. Feasibility (20%)

Note that in the Transformation stream, all criteria are assessed at the LOI and full application stages but the weighting of criteria changes between stages

Evaluation Criteria

Interdisciplinarity

Projects must **integrate different disciplinary approaches** to bring a novel perspective to address the research challenge.

Proposals must explain how the disciplinary **perspectives, methodologies, and techniques will be integrated** and must demonstrate that the team has the **required expertise** to execute the interdisciplinary approach.

The proposal must also explain **why an interdisciplinary approach is required** and/or the **added value of this approach** to the research problem.
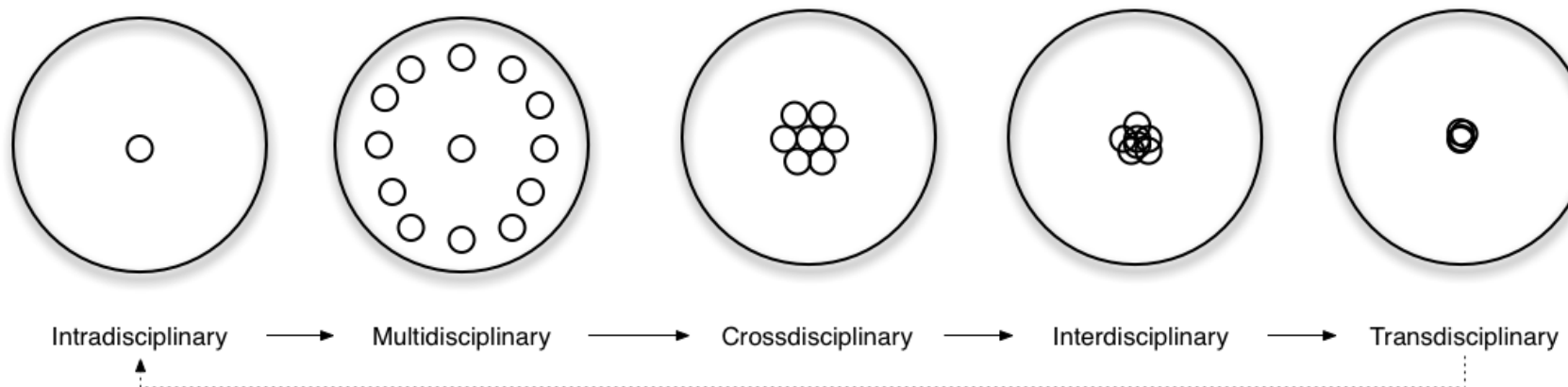
Multidisciplinary research = juxtaposing, coordinating

Interdisciplinary research = integrating, synthesizing

Evaluation Criteria

Disciplinarities: multi, inter, and trans

- **Multi**disciplinary: people from different disciplines working together, each drawing on their disciplinary knowledge

- **Inter**disciplinary: integrating knowledge and methods from different disciplines, using a real synthesis of approaches

- **Trans**disciplinary: creating a unity of intellectual frameworks beyond the disciplinary perspectives

Intradisciplinary → Multidisciplinary → Crossdisciplinary → Interdisciplinary → Transdisciplinary

Evaluation Criteria

Multidisciplinary versus Interdisciplinary Teams
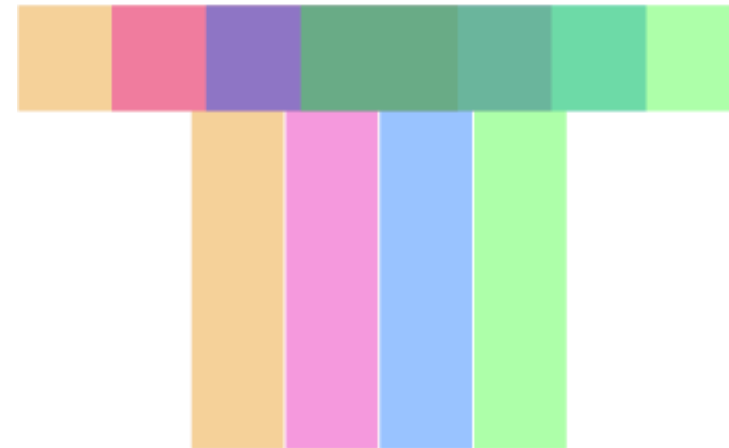
Multidisciplinary Teams

Each member operates as a part of a chain of responsibility

Members working in silos, by disciplines

Interdisciplinary Teams

Individuals from different fields are expected to contribute ideas to the entire project

Members listen and learn from others

Evaluation Criteria

Equity, diversity and inclusion in research practice and support of early career researchers

EDI in research practice and support of early career researchers (EDI-RP/ECR) is a core element of the NFRF program. Applicants must clearly demonstrate their commitment to EDI in their research practice, and must meaningfully integrate ECRs into the project team.

Actions proposed are expected to:

- **remove barriers** and

- **provide opportunities** for the meaningful integration of individuals from all groups

Refer to the

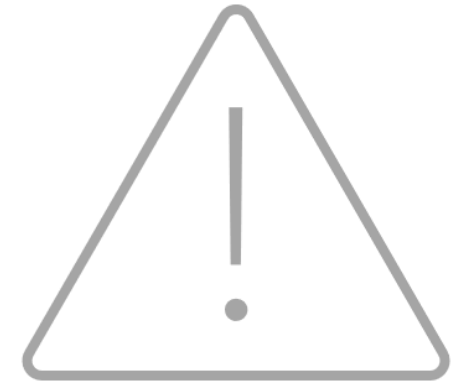[NFRF Best Practices in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Research Practice and Design](#)

Evaluation Criteria

High Risk

<mark>High risk</mark>, in the context of the Transformation stream, refers to the **novelty of the proposed approach to the challenge**.

Proposals will have to explain

- how the project is **novel**, as it relates to the latest methods, concepts, information, and techniques;

- how the approach builds on and benefits from **expertise and resources** across Canada and/or internationally;

- what makes the approach **world-leading**; and

- why the approach is expected to lead to **real change**.

Evaluation Criteria

High Reward

<mark>High reward</mark> is defined as the potential to create a **significant and real change or impact** — to be transformative.

Applications must explain the anticipated change or impact that is likely to result and its significance.

Proposals must also outline the **major short-, medium- and long-term changes** that are expected, **the likelihood** of their achievement, **and who (or what) will be affected** by the changes.

Evaluation Criteria

Feasibility

Feasibility considers the plan and the ability to execute the activities. It considers elements such as the:

- problem or challenge being addressed;

- proposed approach, **including EDI in research design**;

- knowledge, expertise and capacity of the team;

- workplan and timeline;

- engagement and collaboration with First Nations, Inuit, Métis or other Indigenous nations, communities, societies or individuals when appropriate;

- suitability of the research environment (i.e., access to required infrastructure); and

- management plans

For more information on the criteria refer to the **evaluation matrices**

Evaluation Criteria

Feasibility

The **definition of Indigenous research**, as defined by SSHRC, is no longer limited to Indigenous Peoples, individuals or communities in the North American context.

This update is reflected in the evaluation matrices.

For more information on the criteria refer to the SSHRC Guidelines for the Merit Review of Indigenous Research

"*Research in any field or discipline that is conducted by, grounded in or engaged with **First Nations, Inuit, Métis or other Indigenous nations, communities, societies or individuals**, and their wisdom, cultures, experiences or knowledge systems, as expressed in their dynamic forms, past and present. Indigenous research can embrace the intellectual, physical, emotional and/or spiritual dimensions of knowledge in creative and interconnected relationships with people, places and the natural environment.*"

Source: SSHRC Definitions of Terms

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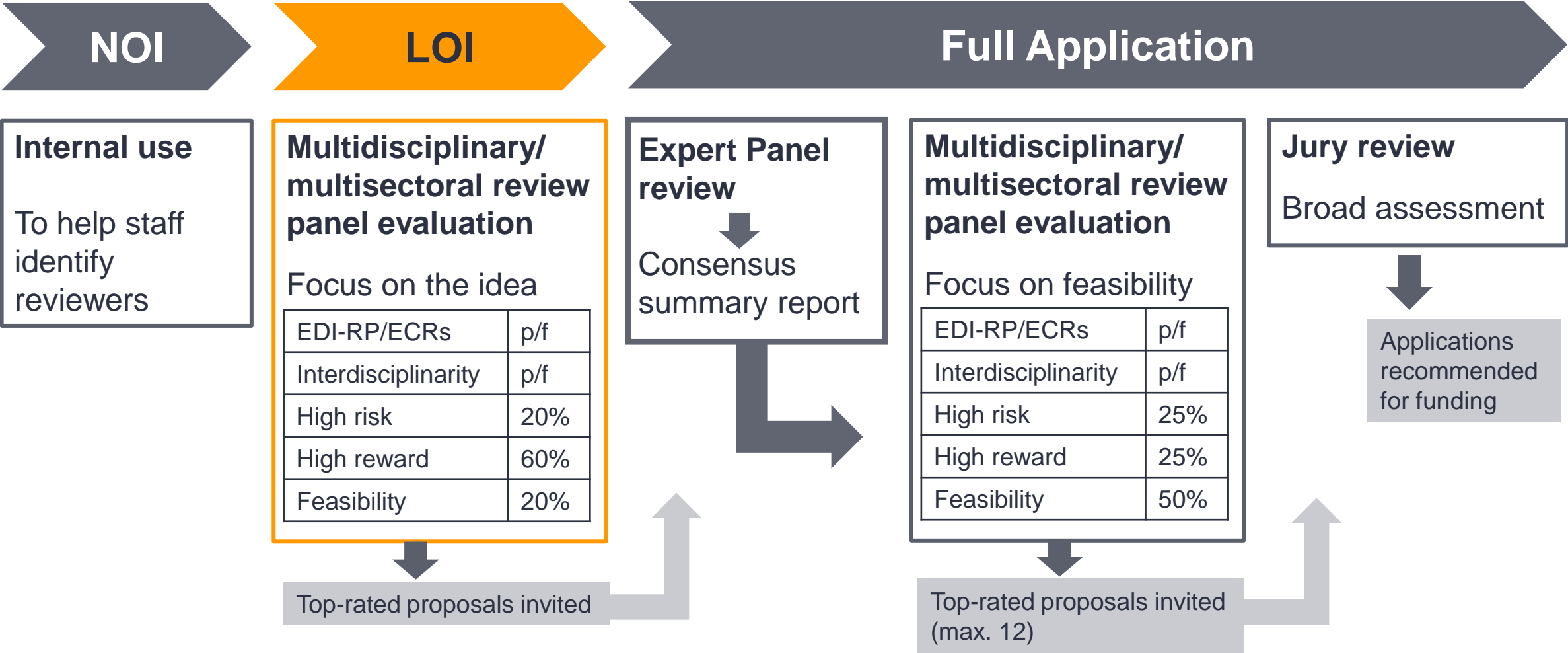
Review Process
2026 Transformation

CIHR IRSC

NSERC CRSNG

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Government of Canada   Gouvernement du Canada

Canada

Review Process Overview

NOI	LOI	Full Application

Internal use

To help staff identify reviewers

Multidisciplinary/ multisectoral review panel evaluation

Focus on the idea

EDI-RP/ECRs	p/f
Interdisciplinarity	p/f
High risk	20%
High reward	60%
Feasibility	20%

Top-rated proposals invited

Expert Panel review

Consensus summary report

Multidisciplinary/ multisectoral review panel evaluation

Focus on feasibility

EDI-RP/ECRs	p/f
Interdisciplinarity	p/f
High risk	25%
High reward	25%
Feasibility	50%

Top-rated proposals invited (max. 12)

Jury review

Broad assessment

Applications recommended for funding

Review Process

Evaluation matrices

High Risk, High Reward and Feasibility are evaluated using a seven-point scale

Exceptional	Excellent	**Very Good**	Good	**Fair**	Inferior	**Poor**

For more information on the criteria refer to the **evaluation matrices**

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

STRAC Policy - New for 2026
2026 Transformation

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New Frontiers in Research Fund
Fonds Nouvelles frontières en recherche

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.

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 investigators, 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.

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

New Frontiers in Research Fund
Fonds Nouvelles frontières en recherche

Information for RGOs
2026 Transformation

Information for RGOs

Research Grants Officer (RGO) Role

RGOs, in the **Convergence Portal**, can:

- **view** NOIs, LOIs, and full applications from NPIs at their institution (including those that are expired, in progress, and submitted)

- **return** submitted NOIs, LOIs, and full applications to the NPI

- **submit** NOIs, LOIs, and full applications to the agency

- **submit** their test applications with ZZZ-INTERNAL TESTING ENVIRONMENT as the Organization at the LOI stage

RGOs are responsible for submitting the NOIs, LOIs, and full applications to the agency.

Before submitting to the agency, **the RGO will be asked to confirm:**

- that the **participants** meet the eligibility requirements

- that the **proposed research project** meets the eligibility requirements

Information for RGOs

RGO Role

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

- is (or will be) affiliated with the institution or organization

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

- will email **NFRF-FNFR@chairs-chaires.gc.ca** of any changes during the tenure of the grant, including changes in the composition of the team, such as the addition of new co-PIs, co-applicants, or collaborators
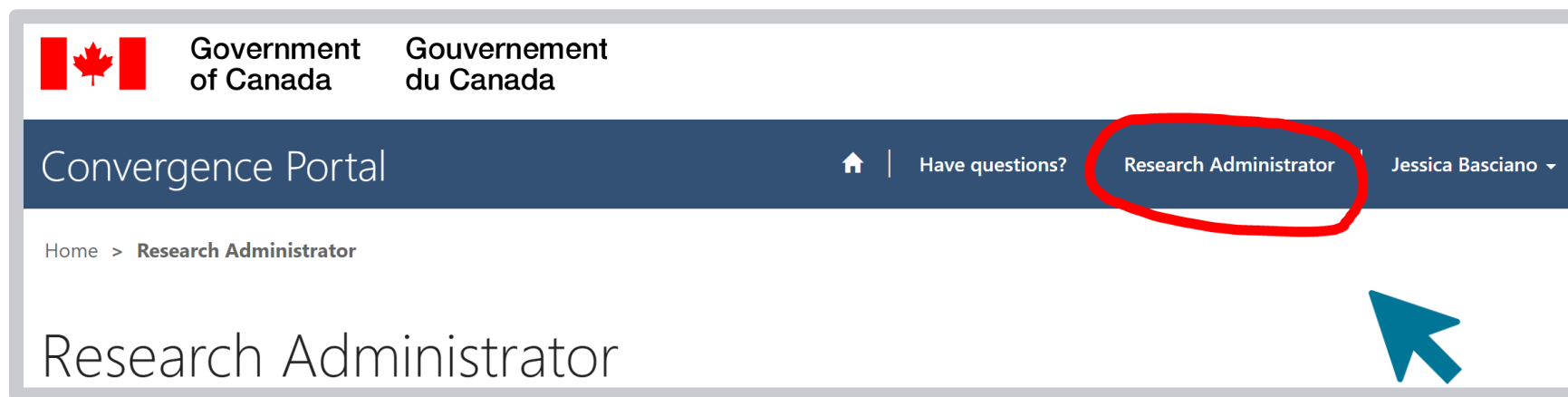
Information for RGOs

RGO role

RGOs can use the **Research Administrator** button to access their institution's applications.

If you are an RGO and you don't see the button, please contact **websupport@convergence.gc.ca**

New Frontiers in Research Fund
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Resources and Questions
2026 Transformation

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Resources and Questions

Resources

Program-related questions:

NFRF-FNFR@chairs-chaires.gc.ca

Convergence Portal help:

websupport@convergence.gc.ca

613-995-4273

STRAC Policy-related questions:

Researchsecurity-securiterecherche@sshrc-crsh.gc.ca

Program Links:

NFRF Website

EDI Guide

Competition Overview

NOI Guide

Reviewer Manual

Evaluation Matrices

Frequently Asked Questions

Resources and Questions

Questions?