New Frontiers in Research Fund Exploration (NFRF-E) 2025

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July 24, 2025

Today's agenda

NFRF-Exploration Competition

- Competition Overview & Timelines
- EDI considerations
- Building your team

Tips for Success: Expert Panel Discussion

Alissa Centivany (PI)

Arghya Paul (PI)

Peter Slovensky (Co-applicant)

Christopher Forgaard (RO)

Aim:

- NFRF-E aims to inspire high-risk, high-reward, and interdisciplinary research.

Value and Duration:

- The max budget is up to $125,000 per year (including 25% indirect costs) up to 2 years.

- **Indirect costs:** Western applicants must request 25% of the value of the direct costs of research to cover indirect costs.

Eligibility and Roles

At least two participants:

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

AND

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

OR

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

- researcher / professor → independent researcher ; or
- practitioner, policy-maker, educator, decision-maker, health-care administrator, Indigenous Elder, etc.

Participation limitations:

- At a time, **ONLY ONE** application of the NFRF Exploration stream as either an NPI, Co-PI, or Co-Applicant

Early career researcher:

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

Competition stages

Notice of Intent (NOI) (not adjudicated)

Used to compose the multidisciplinary review panel.

Full Application (adjudicated)

Reviewed by a Multidisciplinary review panel
- interdisciplinarity / fit-to-program (pass/fail)
- EDI in research practice (pass/fail)
- high risk (40%)
- high reward (40%)
- feasibility (20%)

Notice Of Intent (NOI):

- Completed profiles for research team members
- Application title- Locked
- Language of the application- Locked
- Indigenous research- Locked
- Keywords- Locker
- Up to five fields of research- Locked
- Summary of the proposal (maximum 2,500 characters)- Locked
- Participants/ Collaborators
- Suggested reviewers (minimum of three experts from each primary research field) and reviewer exclusions (if applicable)

All team members, including the NPI, co-PI and/or co-applicants, should inform the research administrator at their institution of their involvement in the application.

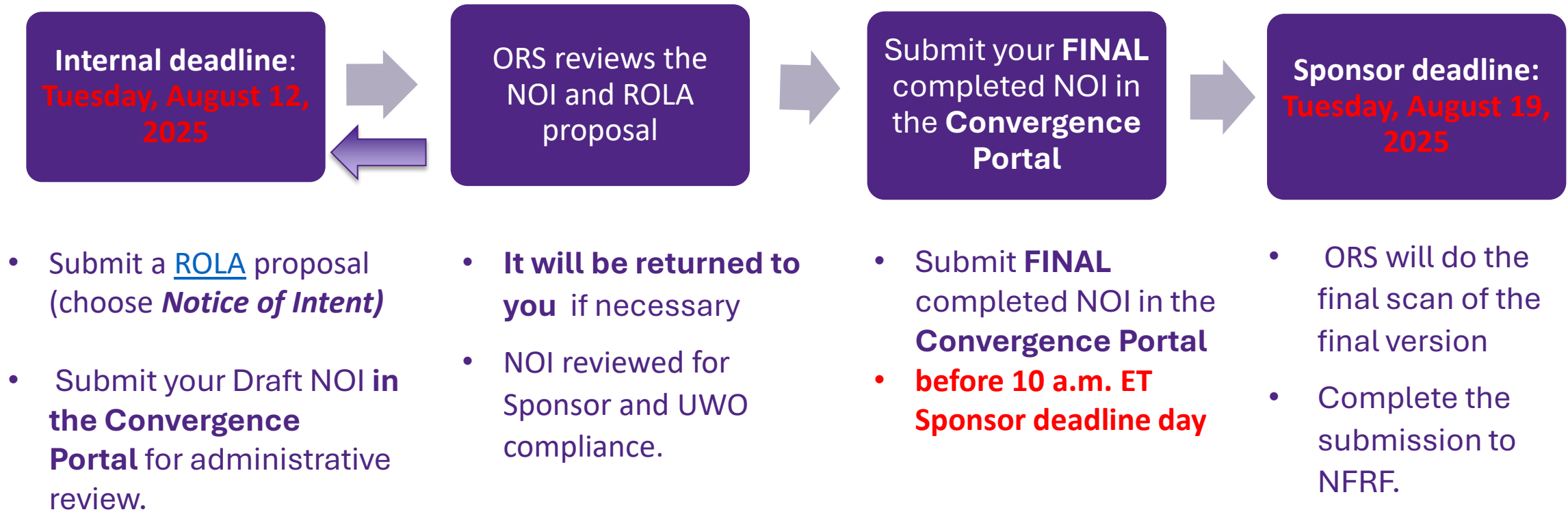# Full Application Requirements

- New participants (Co-PI, Co-applicants and Collaborators)
- Any changes to Suggested Reviewers, or Reviewer Exclusions
- Details of:
  - Budget,
  - EDI in research design,
  - Certifications, Licenses and permits, & **Sensitive Technology Research & Affiliations of Concern (STRAC) Requirements(New)**
  - EDI in research practice
- Supporting documents (uploaded as separate attachments)
  - Research proposal (max 4 pages)
  - Biographical information about the research team (max 2 pages)
  - Budget justification (max 1 page)
  - Literature references (max 5 page)

STRAC attestation form (New):

- If "yes": applicants and other named roles (co-principal investigator, co-applicants and collaborators) must each complete an attestation form.

- An application's aim to advance a STRA or not will **not** affect merit review.

- Post-Award: If funded, you and your research team(s) required to comply with the policy for the duration of the grant that aims to advance one or more STRAs.
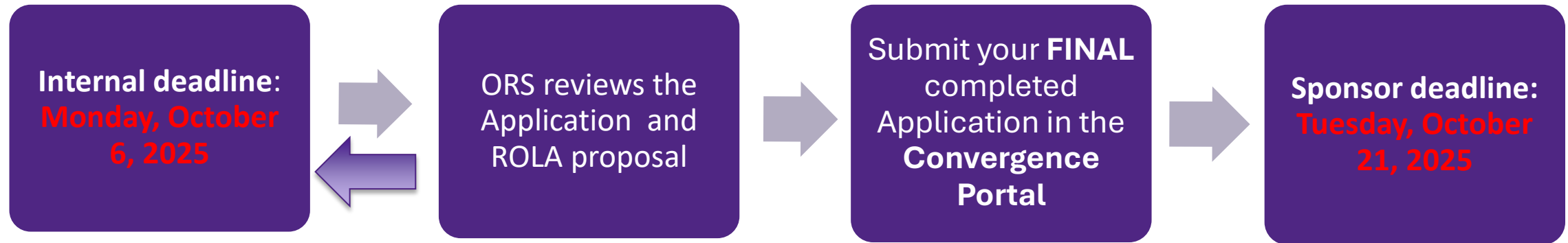 - Contact: researchsecurity@uwo.ca

Key Dates:
Notice of Intent (NOI) (required)

| **Internal deadline**: Tuesday, August 12, 2025 | ORS reviews the NOI and ROLA proposal | Submit your **FINAL** completed NOI in the **Convergence Portal** | **Sponsor deadline:** Tuesday, August 19, 2025 |

- Submit a ROLA proposal (choose *Notice of Intent)*

- Submit your Draft NOI **in the Convergence Portal** for administrative review.

- **It will be returned to you** if necessary

- NOI reviewed for Sponsor and UWO compliance.

- Submit **FINAL** completed NOI in the **Convergence Portal before 10 a.m. ET Sponsor deadline day**

- ORS will do the final scan of the final version

- Complete the submission to NFRF.

All external Co-PIs and Co-applicants must complete a Confirmation of Eligibility Form , which must be submitted to researchoffice@uwo.ca.

Key Dates:
Full Application

| Internal deadline: **Monday, October 6, 2025** | → | ORS reviews the Application and ROLA proposal | → | Submit your **FINAL** completed Application in the **Convergence Portal** | → | Sponsor deadline: **Tuesday, October 21, 2025** |

- Also, submit a ROLA proposal
- Submit your completed **Draft** application **in the Convergence Portal** for administrative review; 2 weeks ahead
- Content does not have to be the final version

- **It will be returned to you** for further editing
- Application reviewed for Sponsor and UWO compliance
- Detailed feedback provided

- Submit the **FINAL** completed Applicant in the **Convergence Portal** no later than 10 am on October 21, 2025
- Highly recommend **two business days** in advance

- ORS will do the final Scan
- If everything seems good to go
- Forward the final version to NFRF

External Co-PIs and Co-applicants added after the NOI must complete a Confirmation of Eligibility Form , which must be submitted to researchoffice@uwo.ca.

Western Research

Upcoming Webinars & Resources

Full application webinars:
- French: September 9, 2025; 10:00 a.m. (eastern)
- English: September 9, 2025 1:00 p.m. (eastern)

Resource:
- New Frontiers in Research Fund (NFRF) Western University
- **Confirmation of Eligibility Form Co-Principal Investigators/Co-applicants**
- Best Practices in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Research
- Merit Indicators for the Review Process
- Sex- and Gender-based Analysis (SGBA) section of the CIHR website (how to integrate sex and gender into research)
- Guidelines for the Merit Review of Indigenous Research
- Indigenous Research Statement of Principles
- Instructions for attachments

EDI Considerations in the NFRF-E
Western Research

Julie Prior Salman, PhD
EDID in Research Specialist

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Summer 2025

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Overview

NFRF-E EDI requirements related to EDI

1. **EDI sections in the application**

2. **Evaluation criteria**

3. **Guidance, tips, & tricks (examples)**

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1. Overview of EDI Sections

Three parts of the application are relevant to EDI:

➢ **EDI in research practice (its own section, weighted most heavily)**

➢ **Feasibility – within this are subcategories:**

    i) EDI in research design and

    ii) Indigenous research

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2. Evaluation Criteria

EID relates to 2 of the 6 criteria in NFRF-E's assessment:

- Interdisciplinarity
- Fit to Program
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Research Practice
- High Risk
- High Reward
- Feasibility*

    Includes: 1) EDI in **research design** and
    2) Indigenous research

2. Evaluation Criteria continued

Criterion 1: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Research Practice

Projects must pass the following elements:

1) Analysis of context (EDI challenges)
2) Concrete practice for each area/challenge
3) Implementation
4) Impact

See charts on SSHRC EDI page for examples: https://sshrc-crsh.canada.ca/funding-financement/nfrf-fnfr/edi-eng.aspx

✔ Pass	✘ Fail

Note: projects must pass **each** of the above elements to meet program expectations.

2. Evaluation Criteria continued

➢**Criteria 2 & 3:** Feasibility (EDI in **research design**, if applicable, and **Indigenous research** are 2 of 7 sections under feasibility)

	Exceptional	Very Good	Fair	Poor
Equity, diversity and inclusion in research design (if applicable)	EDI in research design considerations have been integrated into the methodological approach (if applicable). The impact on the methodological approach and/or design has been clearly described.	EDI in research design considerations have been integrated into the methodological approach (if applicable). The impact on the methodological approach and/or design has been described.	EDI in research design considerations have been integrated (if applicable). The impact on the methodological approach or design has not been described.	EDI in research design considerations apply to the project, although the applicant indicated that they do not. EDI in research design considerations have not been integrated into methodological approach or design.

ℹ The overall rating for the Feasibility criterion cannot be higher than the project's rating in the EDI in research design and/or Indigenous research element, if applicable. For example, if a reviewer considers most of a project's elements Very Good, but either its Indigenous research or EDI in research design Poor, the project's overall rating for Feasibility cannot be higher than Poor.

2. Evaluation Criteria

Criterion 2: Research Design

Include EDI considerations, where relevant, in:
- Research questions
- Methods
- Theoretical frameworks
- Literature reviews
- Analyses
- Collaborators and partners
- Interpretation and dissemination of findings

"The purpose of EDI in research design is to promote rigorous research that is sensitive to sex and gender, as well as many other identity factors, such as race, ethnicity, religion, age, and mental or physical disability"

https://sshrc-crsh.canada.ca/funding-financement/nfrf-fnfr/exploration/2025/competition-concours-eng.aspx

Equity | Diversity | Inclusion

Image source: https://canadianglycomics.ca/about/edi/

2. Evaluation Criteria continued

Criterion 3: Indigenous research

Key concepts for the merit review of **Indigenous research**:

➢Indigenous or traditional knowledge
➢Reciprocity
➢Community
➢Respect, relevance, and contributions

https://sshrc-crsh.canada.ca/en/funding/policies-regulations-and-guidelines/guidelines-merit-review-indigenous-research.aspx

3. Guidance, tips, and tricks for research practice

1) Analysis of context (EDI challenges):

-if research isn't about an EDID-related topic, researchers can identify a challenge in intersectional representation on the team

-Example: -attract underrepresented racial and ethnic minorities into the research

    -mention of the way the project disproportionately impacts people from one race, and the importance of representing this community in the research

-intersectionality: racial AND socioeconomic status leads to barriers to care for a medical condition being researched

3. Guidance, tips, and tricks for research practice

2) Concrete practice for each area/challenge:

-training opportunities are limited due to systemic barriers and bias, so the lab will provide training

-project commits to equitable practices in recruitment of trainees through meaningful outreach efforts (the population the study affects is underrepresented in graduate student population the lab recruits from)

3. Guidance, tips, and tricks for research practice

3) Implementation:
-plan: targeted recruitment from the Canadian population and offer training opportunities for participation
-plan to fill 3 positions in the lab by MSc and PhD students, one of whom will be from an underrepresented group
-will post opportunity on X with handles (mention specific handles that will reach the underrepresented groups)
-training of the team for unconscious bias; connection with Equity and Human Services office, etc.

3. Guidance, tips, and tricks for research practice

4) Impact:

-specify if the action plan will facilitate the inclusion of diverse perspectives and their lived experiences

-highlight the benefit of t
the research

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4. Recap of key EDI components in the application:

➢ **EDI in research practice (its own section, weighted most heavily)**

➢ **Feasibility – within this are subcategories:**

   i) EDI in research design and

   ii) Indigenous research

Building your NFRF-E Team

July 2025

Jann Paquette-Warren, M.Sc.
Director, Western Interdisciplinary
Research Initiatives
jpaquet3@uwo.ca

Projects must...

| Push boundaries in exciting new ways | Encourage outside the box thinking | Defy current paradigms | Bring disciplines together in different and unexpected ways | Tackle bold innovative and diverse perspectives |

Interdisciplinary

- At least 2 different disciplines at the **group level** of the Canada Research and Development Classification codes list - Canadian Research and Development Classification (CRDC) 2020 Version 1.0
  - field of research - 1663 fields - page 18 to 64

- PI must explain the **novelty of the discipline integration** to justify fit to program
  - go beyond traditional way of working together

RDF10 - Natural sciences

RDF20 – Engineering and Technology

RDF30 – Medical, health and life sciences

RDF40 – Agricultural and veterinary sciences

RDF50 – Social sciences

**RDF60 – Humanities and the arts**
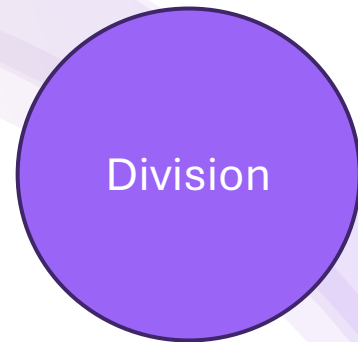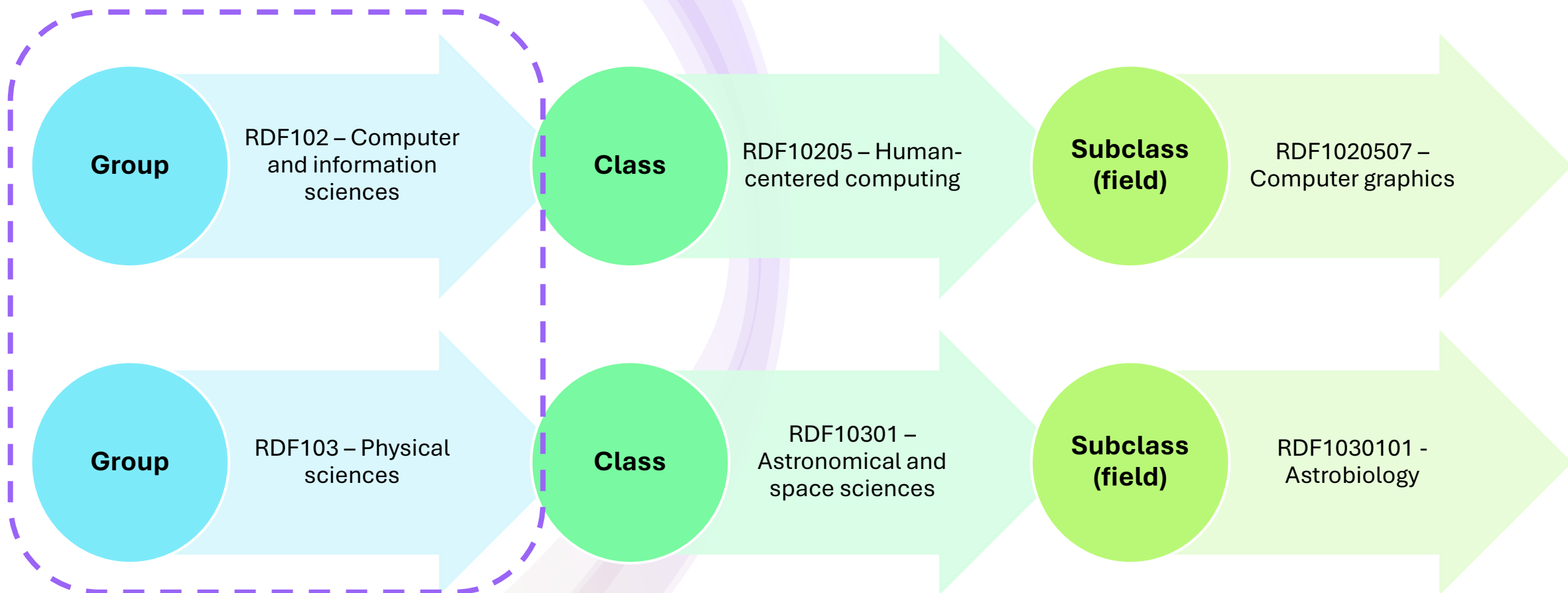
Multidisciplinary Teams

- 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

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
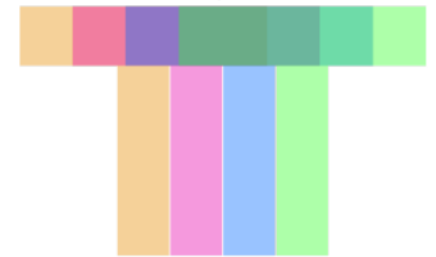
Members listen to and learn from others

Project Design

- must emphasize an interdisciplinary perspective and its value through the entire research process – conception to implementation to dissemination

- the result being applicable in many other sectors over time is not sufficient for this competition

- must be a clear demonstration of interdisciplinary impact within the project structure and in terms of post-project impact potential

High Risk, High Reward & Fit to Program

All about the novelty of the approach!

- **Who** is engaged to bring which expert lens & theoretical background

- **How** are frameworks/tools/methods/ techniques from one discipline applied or adapted to solve a problem traditionally explored in another discipline

- **What** unique solution is being explored to answer a research typically addressed within a single discipline or using a multidisciplinary approach

- **Why** is this project not eligible for typical funding agencies/programs
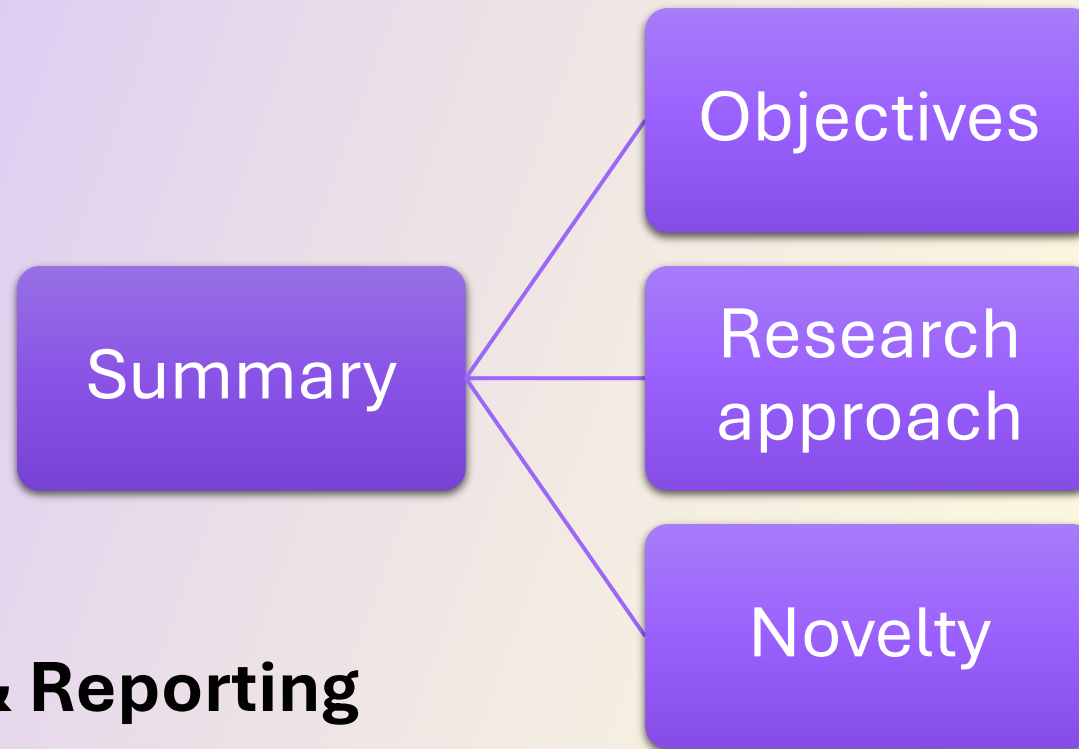
Tips for Success

Expert Panel

Alissa Centivany (PI)

Arghya Paul (PI)

Christopher Forggart (RO)

Peter Slovensky (Post-doc)

Tips for Success

Which elements of your proposal do you believe provided you with a competitive edge?

What unique aspects of this competition are critical to integrate throughout the proposal?

If you had one key tip for future applicants, what would it be?

Tips for Success

Q&A