CFI Leaders Opportunity Fund
Application Form Instructions

This information aims to assist institutions and their researchers to complete electronic applications to the Leaders Opportunity Fund (LOF). Further information on the LOF and other CFI funding mechanisms can also be found in the *CFI Policy and Program Guide* which contains information on the eligibility of infrastructure, institutions and partner contributions. The guide also explains the assessment criteria, the assessment process and other relevant CFI policies and procedures.

The LOF application process has three streams. The deadlines for each stream are as follows:

Stream 1 – Funding for research infrastructure alone: February 15, June 15, and October 15

Stream 2 – Funding for infrastructure associated with a *Canada Research Chair* (click to view the application deadlines)

Stream 3 – Funding for research infrastructure from the CFI and research support from one of the Federal Funding Agencies:

Agency Application	Deadlines	More information
CIHR - *Operating Grants*	September 15th and March 1st	CIHR's website *Operating Grants application guidelines*
SSHRC - *Standard Research Grants*	October 15th	SSHRC's website *Standard Research Grants guidelines*
NSERC - *Industrial Research Chairs*	Please contact your CFI Coordinator, Institutional Relations if you wish to apply through this mechanism.	NSERC's website *Industrial Research Chairs program*

When a deadline falls on a weekend or statutory holiday, the submission date will be extended to the following business day.

Application forms

Application forms for stream 1 and 3 are available to researchers and institutions on the CFI website at http://www.innovation.ca/cfionline/index.cfm. The application form for stream 2 is available on the CRC website. The CFI does not distribute paper copies of its application forms. Institutions must therefore use the web-based forms to complete and submit applications.

The online forms control the font size and the number of pages allowed. We ask that applicants use only the space provided in the forms and remain within the page limit for attachments (i.e. the Budget Justification).

The application form can not accept images.

Additional assistance to complete certain fields in the forms can be obtained by clicking on the "?" that appears next to that section.

First steps

A project leader must register on the CFI website to create his or her electronic profile, personal identification number (PIN) and password.

> If you have been involved in a previous CFI or Canada Research Chair application you are likely to have a PIN already. To determine if you are registered, please contact the CFI at *pin.nip@innovation.ca*. We ask that your name, institution and department be included in your correspondence. A CFI staff member will respond to your query by the next business day.

Using his or her PIN, the project leader can complete an online CV and application. Other candidates must also register to obtain a PIN and be able to complete a CV. Once all candidates have registered, the project leader can link them to the application by using the appropriate PINs.

When a researcher logs in to access the electronic forms section of the CFI website, he or she will be directed to the "Portfolio" page. This page displays links to the applicant's CV and to all applications for which there is not yet a funding decision. These forms can be printed directly from the "Portfolio" page.

Completing an electronic application form

Applicants should keep in mind that CFI requests are for research infrastructure and not for the research itself. The application forms have been structured to allow institutions to describe the infrastructure and to justify the need for the infrastructure on the basis of the innovative research that it will enable.

Tips for entering text in the application forms

The application forms contain many large text blocks with different page limits. The CFI recommends that these text blocks be written and saved offline, using a word processor, to ensure that work is not lost due to technical difficulties. It is important to remember that the PDF version of an application form (which can be obtained by saving and printing the information entered using the "Display/Print" function) defines the page limits. These limits will not necessarily match the character/page limits defined by a word processor.

The application form indicates the suggested number of characters for each text block. This number should only be used as a guide for the space available. For example, a space between words counts as a character, and carriage returns do not add to the character count but do take up space on the PDF form. It is therefore possible for the text to be under the character limit enforced by the web forms when in fact, the PDF page limit has been exceeded. In this case, extra text will be truncated at the page limit in the PDF display.

> **Note to users of Internet Explorer for Mac**: This software can cause line breaks (carriage returns) to appear in the text blocks of the electronic form. Until a solution has been found by Microsoft or Apple, we recommend that MAC users try a different Web browser.

Description of the infrastructure project and assessment against CFI criteria

This section provides:

- administrative information;
- an overview of the infrastructure project;
- a justification of how the proposal meets the criterion standard for each of the review factors;
- a justification of how the proposal fits with the institution's Strategic Research Plan.

Assessment criteria

There is no required format or substructure for these sections. It is the responsibility of the applicant to present the best case for funding the infrastructure by responding to each criterion, identifying strengths and addressing possible weaknesses, and by considering the broader objectives set out in the program description. In all sections, the institution must provide a justification of how the proposal meets the requirements as described by the criterion standard. Although each section has instructions which identify specific elements that must be addressed, the justification should not be limited only to these elements.

Reviewers will be asked to evaluate the degree to which the proposal meets each of the CFI's criteria. For each assessment criterion, a standard is provided. The information presented in the application will be assessed on whether the requirements for that standard are:

- not satisfied;
- partially satisfied;
- fully satisfied;
- fully satisfied, and significantly exceeded in one or more key aspects

Integration with the Strategic Research Plan

The Strategic Research Plan (SRP), prepared by each university is now integral to the LOF application process. Each university must describe how the requested infrastructure will aid in the attraction or retention of excellent researchers to advance the university's strategic research objectives. Reviewers will consult the SRP Summary when reviewing applications.

Suggested reviewers (for stream 1 only)

The reviewers suggested by the applicant should be able to evaluate the application in the language in which it is written. Reviewers may be based in Canada or abroad and should not be current or recent (within the last 6 years) collaborators, departmental colleagues, students or supervisors of the candidates, or in any way be in conflict of interest.

We ask that the reviewer's complete name, mailing and email addresses, telephone, fax number and areas of expertise be indicated in this section.

The CFI and its partners reserve the right to make their own selection of reviewers.

Financial Information

This section provides information on the:
- total cost to acquire or develop the infrastructure;
- justification for the items requested;
- funding from other partners;
- plans for the operation and maintenance of the infrastructure;
- plans for the management of the infrastructure;
- use of the infrastructure for research and other purposes.

Only eligible costs should be included in the total eligible costs section. If the infrastructure is to be used for purposes other than for research, the **costs must be prorated for the research use only**. Although we ask that applicants not

attach quotes to the application, all financial documentation must be retained by the institution.

Partner funding must be secured at the time of application, or a persuasive plan for securing funds within nine months of the CFI funding decision should be included in the proposal. Persuasive plans for securing funds include:

- an application to a provincial program for partner funding, or
- a commitment from partners (documentation not required with application).

An application to an agency that reviews and makes funding decisions independently of the CFI (other than provincial matching programs), is not considered to be a persuasive plan.

The source of partner funding is not a consideration in the review process. Nevertheless, the presence of a specific source of funding may demonstrate the interest of potential users of the infrastructure, beneficiaries of research results or, potential employers of the resulting highly qualified personnel.

All **in-kind contributions** must be eligible costs, and must be essential components of the infrastructure project. Contributions from the applicant institution must be entered on the form as cash.

Candidate CVs

A maximum of three candidate CVs can be included with an application. These must be completed electronically, using only the pages provided. The project leader should attach his/her CV (and those of the other two candidates, where applicable) electronically to the application using the PINs of the candidates. The CFI will also accept the Common CV, should a candidate prefer this option. For stream 3 - funding for research infrastructure from the CFI and research support, candidates are not required to complete a CFI or Common CV, however, they must be registered with the CFI and have a CFI PIN.

Submitting the application form on-line

Once all of the information is entered into the electronic application form, the project leader should indicate on the Portfolio page that the application is complete by selecting "Yes" for the "Completed? – Yes/No toggle". The application status will change from "In progress" to "Completed by researcher". **The status can be reversed by selecting "No"** with the "Completed? – Yes/No toggle"**.**

Using the institutional PIN and password, the institution's <u>authorized official</u>[1] may review the application. The authorized official must complete the institutional component, which consists of filling out the "Integration with the Strategic Research Plan" section and indicating whether the project is intended for the attraction or retention of each of the candidates. This must be completed before an application can be submitted. The final submission of a project is done by selecting the "submit to the CFI" toggle found on the institutional screen. The status on the project leader's Portfolio page will then change to "submitted by institution". **At this point, no further changes can be made to the application by the project leader or the institution.**

Submitting a paper copy of the application

In addition to the online submission, one complete paper copy of the application must be sent to the CFI for stream 1 and 3, or the Canada Research Chairs secretariat for stream 2 applications. The application should be printed on one side of standard size paper (8½ x 11), and the package should be held together with a clip rather than stapled or bound. We ask that institutions avoid using coloured inks or paper as photocopies will only be in black and white.

For stream 1 and 3 applications, the paper copy should be mailed (and postmarked) or dispatched by courier no later than the deadline date for which the application is being submitted to the following address:

Attn: Manager, Leaders Opportunity Fund
Canada Foundation for Innovation
230 Queen Street, Suite 450
Ottawa, ON, K1P 5E4

For stream 3 applications, we are piloting a system to permit the institution's authorized official to sign a single form which can be used to confirm the submission of multiple applications. The intent is to eventually eliminate the need to submit a paper copy of the application.

Using the institutional PIN and password, the institution's <u>authorized official</u> can fill out the "Online Submission Confirmation form" by completing the following steps:

- Enter the CFI project no. of the application(s) which are to be included in the form and then click on the "Validate" button.

- Click on the "Display / Print" button to download a copy of the form (each project no. that has been validated will be included in the form).

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[1] This can only be one of the named individuals on the signed Institutional Agreement with the CFI

- Once downloaded, the form can be printed by clicking on the "Print/Display" button located at the top of the screen.

The form must be filled out, printed on institutional letterhead and sent by mail to the CFI, postmarked by the application deadline date (along with a paper copy of the full application).