

CFI Update

A periodic update from the vice presidents of the **Canada Foundation for Innovation**

September 2020

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2020 Innovation Fund competition

The Multidisciplinary Assessment Committee (MAC) meetings — the second stage of the 2020 Innovation Fund competition merit-review process — took place from September 9 to 11, 2020. These meetings were held by videoconference. Thirteen committees met to make funding recommendations for the projects that best meet the competition objectives.

In the third stage of the process, a Special Multidisciplinary Assessment Committee (S-MAC) will meet on October 22, 2020 to select from the proposals recommended for funding by the MACs. The total cost of the projects selected by the S-MAC must fall within the available competition budget of \$400 million.

The competition timeline remains unchanged and will conclude at the CFI Board of Directors meeting in November 2020. Following that meeting, we will notify institutions of the Board’s decisions.

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College-Industry Innovation Fund competitions

Stream 1

In response to the current COVID-19 pandemic, colleges across Canada implemented mitigation measures such as campus closures, transitioning to online teaching and working from home. The CFI anticipated that the colleges' ability to submit proposals to the College-Industry Innovation Fund (CIIF) Stream 1 competition by the original deadline of May 15, 2020, might be limited. After consulting with colleges that had submitted notices of intent, we modified the timelines for this competition (see Table 1). The proposals received by the new submission deadline of September 15, 2020 will be reviewed by Expert Committees in the coming months.

Table 1: CIIF Stream 1 revised deadlines due to the impact of COVID-19

DATE	ACTIVITIES
SEPTEMBER 15, 2020	Deadline for the submission of proposals
OCTOBER TO DECEMBER	Expert Committee meetings
LATE JANUARY 2021	Multidisciplinary Assessment Committee meeting
MARCH 2021	CFI Board decisions

Stream 2

Due to the impact of COVID-19, NSERC also decided to modify the timelines of its 18th College and Community Innovation – Innovation Enhancement grant competition, which is a joint initiative with our CIIF Stream 2 competition (see Table 2). NSERC and the CFI will host a set of webinars in Fall 2020 to provide an overview of the process for colleges that have been invited to submit full proposals to this competition.

Table 2. CIIF Stream 2 revised deadlines due to the impact of COVID-19

DATE	ACTIVITIES
AUGUST 2020	Invitation to submit an application sent by NSERC to colleges
NOVEMBER 13, 2020	Deadline for the submission of proposals to both NSERC and the CFI
MARCH 2021	NSERC funding decisions
MARCH 2021	CFI Board decisions

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Exceptional Opportunities Fund – COVID-19 competition for universities and research hospitals

The review process for the Exceptional Opportunities Fund – COVID-19 competition for universities and research hospitals is currently in progress. A special Board meeting to approve the funding recommendations is scheduled for October 28, 2020. We expect that decisions for most proposals will be ready then.

Exceptional Opportunities Fund – COVID-19 competition for colleges, polytechnics and Cégeps

The Exceptional Opportunities Fund – COVID-19 competition for colleges, polytechnics and Cégeps, which launched July 15, 2020, closed on September 15, 2020. We are currently assessing the proposals and will strive to have funding recommendations ready for the special Board meeting of October 28, 2020.

Call for reviewers in support of CFI's merit-review process

The success of the merit-review process at the core of CFI's investments in the Canadian research ecosystem depends on the willingness of highly qualified reviewers to share their time, passion and expertise. Reviewers provide advice to CFI on the merits of nearly 700 proposals per year as well as constructive comments to applicants.

The CFI strives to increase the diversity of its pool of reviewers to ensure that its merit-review process benefits from input from a wide variety of different perspectives. You can help us by asking the researchers of your institution to volunteer to review proposals in their area of expertise. Those who are interested should contact reviewers@innovation.ca. Thank you!

Annual reporting requirements and institutional payments update

In light of the pandemic, we granted a three-month extension to the financial and project progress reporting deadlines. We use the financial reports to assist in the management and oversight of projects and the data collected through the project progress reports to develop our annual Report on results, one of the key accountability tools we use to demonstrate the outcomes of CFI-funded research infrastructure. As such, we may withhold payments for projects with outstanding reports. We will send reminders this fall to CFI account administrators and CFI liaisons advising them of any outstanding reports.

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New digital signatures for award agreements

We will be moving to digital signatures (using DocuSign) for award agreements this fall. Stay tuned for more details.

Recent and upcoming public announcements

We posted the results of the June 2019, November 2019 and March 2020 Board decisions for the John R. Evans Leaders Fund (JELF) competitions on our website on [August 18, 2020](#). This means the embargo on public communications is lifted, and your institutions are encouraged to publicly promote these outcomes. As of now, the only CFI funding still under embargo is the July 2020 JELF-Canada Research Chairs decisions. These decisions will be made public jointly with the fall CRC announcement (date to be determined).

Introducing the “Safeguarding your research” portal — a new resource to protect your research data

The Government of Canada recently [launched a new portal](#) that provides Canadian researchers with information on protecting their research data and intellectual property, and the tools to help them do so. In coordination with federal government partners, university organizations, and Canada’s three federal granting agencies — the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) — the CFI invites researchers and institutions to visit the portal. In it are tools to help researchers self-evaluate and, when necessary, take actions to mitigate any security, safety, economic or geopolitical risks associated with their research, their research partnerships and their international travel. Visit the [Safeguarding your research](#) portal.

Navigator now coast to coast ... to coast!

The [Research Facilities Navigator](#), CFI’s online directory that connects innovators with highly skilled researchers in publicly funded labs across Canada, celebrates its first research facility listing in the North. Aurora College’s [Arts, Crafts and Technology Micro-Manufacturing Center](#) (ACTMC) in Inuvik, NWT, combines traditional arts and crafts with modern manufacturing technologies to create a unique innovation opportunity in the Beaufort Delta Region of Canada’s Western Arctic. From your Navigator family of close to 750 facilities coast to coast to coast, welcome aboard ACTMC!

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Subscribing to our email lists is a great way to get the latest news from the Canada Foundation for Innovation, from funding announcements, to new competitions, to event invitations, to success stories from our funded facilities. If you are not already receiving our regular emails, please take a moment to [opt in to our mailing list](#), and choose your preferred language and content so we can send you communications that best serve your needs.