

CANADA FOUNDATION FOR INNOVATION

# Biosciences Research Infrastructure Fund

Competition for biocontainment  
and large-animal facilities

Guidelines for Expert Committees

November 2021

**INNOVATION**

Canada Foundation  
for Innovation

Fondation canadienne  
pour l'innovation

*Enhancing Canada's research capacity  
for pandemic readiness*



## Table of contents

### Part 1 – What you need to know about this competition ..... 3

Purpose of the Biosciences Research Infrastructure Fund.....	3
Objectives of this competition.....	3
Competition budget .....	4
Operating and maintenance costs .....	4
Review process .....	4
Expert Committees .....	5
Strategic Review Committee.....	5
Funding decisions .....	5
Assessment criteria and standards.....	5
Rating scale.....	6
Security considerations .....	6
Principles of merit review.....	7
Integrity.....	7
Confidentiality .....	7
Avoiding bias.....	7
Official languages.....	7

### Part 2 – How to conduct your review ..... 8

Tools to conduct your review.....	8
Expert Committee roles and responsibilities.....	8
Chairs.....	8
Members.....	8
CFI staff .....	9
Observers.....	9
Meeting with applicants .....	9
Meeting logistics.....	9

## About the Canada Foundation for Innovation

The Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) makes financial contributions to Canada's universities, colleges, research hospitals and non-profit research organizations to increase their capability to carry out high-quality research.

The CFI invests in infrastructure that researchers need to think big, innovate and push the boundaries of knowledge. It helps institutions to attract and retain the world's top talent, to train the next generation of researchers and to support world-class research that strengthens the economy and improves the quality of life for all Canadians.

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Steps in the Expert Committee review .....	10
Before the meeting .....	10
At the meeting.....	10
After the meeting .....	11
<b>Part 3 – Criterion standards and instructions provided to applicants .....</b>	<b>12</b>
Research excellence.....	12
Research teams .....	12
Enhancement of the capacity to respond to emerging human health threats .....	12
Collaborations and partnerships .....	13
Sustainability.....	13
Anticipated benefits.....	14
<b>Appendix 1 – Template meeting agenda....</b>	<b>15</b>



## Who should use these guidelines?

These guidelines are for members of Expert Committees assessing proposals for the Canada Foundation for Innovation's Biosciences Research Infrastructure Fund competition for biocontainment and large-animal facilities.

We thank you for your time and invaluable contribution to the Biosciences Research Infrastructure Fund!

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# Part 1 – What you need to know about this competition

## Purpose of the Biosciences Research Infrastructure Fund

To advance the Government of Canada's biomanufacturing and life sciences priorities, Budget 2021 announced \$500 million for the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) to support the infrastructure needs of postsecondary institutions and research hospitals in these areas. Canada's leading postsecondary institutions and their affiliated research hospitals anchor much of the bio-innovation ecosystem. Important foundational components are centred in these institutions, including laboratories, research and talent.

Canada's scientists need high-performance tools and innovative research spaces and laboratories to bring their ideas from discovery through development and commercialization. In many cases, their work requires specialized equipment in appropriate biocontainment facilities to ensure that infectious disease research is conducted safely. Supporting surveillance, diagnostics, and pre-clinical and clinical trials with flexible research infrastructure capacity is critical to Canada's biomanufacturing and life sciences ecosystem.

The 2021 Biosciences Research Infrastructure Fund competition will respond to these critical needs by investing in containment level 3 (CL3) and containment level 4 (CL4) facilities (as defined in the [Canadian Biosafety Handbook](#)) in research hospitals and postsecondary institutions and associated large-animal facilities capable of working with infectious materials. Research infrastructure funded through this competition will strengthen the capacity of academia to work with industry and government to advance promising discoveries and promote training and talent development.

The CFI will only fund proposals that:

- Meet a high standard of scientific excellence
- Best respond to government priorities to address pandemic readiness and emerging health threats
- Hold the greatest potential to develop commercially viable vaccines and therapies.

CFI investments will ensure that funded CL3 and CL4 facilities are collaborative, durable, flexible, multi-institutional and capable of serving researchers in all relevant disciplines in support of [Canada's Biomanufacturing and Life Sciences Strategy](#).

## Objectives of this competition

The objectives of the competition for biocontainment and large-animal facilities are to:

- Address immediate infrastructure needs in postsecondary institutions' and affiliated research hospitals' capacity to support pandemic preparedness and respond to emerging health threats, consistent with Canada's Biomanufacturing and Life Sciences Strategy
- Support the development of strong linkages among researchers working in a variety of settings, including government laboratories, and users of research results in all sectors
- Create an environment to attract and train highly qualified personnel linked to the needs of the biomanufacturing and life sciences sector.



## The CFI's commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion

The CFI is committed to the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion. In all our activities, we recognize that a breadth of perspectives, skills and experiences contributes to excellence in research.

**Equity:** We aim to ensure all CFI-eligible institutions have the opportunity to access and benefit from our programs and CFI-funded infrastructure through our well-established, fair and impartial practices.

**Diversity:** We value attributes that allow institutions and their researchers — from any background and from anywhere — to succeed. This includes individual attributes such as gender, language, culture and career stage; institutional attributes

such as size, type and location; and attributes that encompass the full spectrum of research, from basic to applied and across all disciplines.

**Inclusion:** We encourage a culture of collaboration, partnership, contributions and engagement among diverse groups of people, institutions and areas of research to maximize the potential of Canada's research ecosystem.

We believe that nurturing an equitable, diverse and inclusive culture is the responsibility of every member of the research ecosystem, including funders, institutions, researchers, experts and reviewers.

## Competition budget

The CFI will invest up to \$115 million in research infrastructure funding and will fund up to 60 percent of a project's eligible infrastructure costs. Institutions must obtain the remaining 40 percent from other funding partners, typically from provincial governments and other public, private and non-profit organizations. In addition, the CFI will provide up to \$34.5 million for associated operating costs through the Infrastructure Operating Fund.

## Operating and maintenance costs

The CFI will contribute to the operating and maintenance (O&M) costs of funded projects through the Infrastructure Operating Fund. Institutions will automatically receive an allocation equivalent to 30 percent of the CFI contribution for funded projects.

## Review process

Through our structured merit-review process, we ensure that proposals are reviewed in a fair, competitive, transparent and in-depth manner. This process relies on independent reviewers from across Canada and around the world to ensure the best projects receive funding. The reviewers' time and effort are invaluable to help the CFI's Board of Directors make funding decisions.

For the Biosciences Research Infrastructure Fund, we use a two-stage merit-review process: review of proposals by Expert Committees followed by a subsequent review of proposals by a Strategic Review Committee (Figure 1). These guidelines are for reviewers taking part in the first stage of this process — the Expert Committee stage. We provide separate guidelines to reviewers taking part in other stages of the process.

**Figure 1: The Biosciences Research Infrastructure Fund merit-review process**



## Expert Committees

In the first stage of review, Expert Committees review and assess small groups of similar proposals. Expert Committees assess the proposals' strengths and weaknesses in relation to the assessment criteria (see "[What are the assessment criteria?](#)"). Proposals that do not meet the competition's standards of excellence will be rejected by the Expert Committee and will not move to the next stage.

Expert Committees usually consist of a Chair and two to six members, depending on the number and complexity of proposals it will review.

## Strategic Review Committee

In the second stage of review, the Strategic Review Committee (SRC) reviews proposals that Expert Committees have identified as meeting or exceeding this competition's threshold of scientific and technical excellence.

The SRC ensures that research infrastructure investments are well-aligned with and directly support the objectives and priorities of the [Biomanufacturing and Life Sciences Strategy](#), relative to other competing requests.

The SRC recommends projects and funding amounts to the CFI Board of Directors.

## Funding decisions

The CFI Board of Directors will make funding decisions at its meeting in March 2022. After this meeting, we will notify institutions of the decisions and send them the Expert Committee and SRC reports, including the names and affiliations of committee members.

## Assessment criteria and standards

Expert Committees evaluate proposals based on six assessment criteria that expand on the competition objectives. Each criterion is assessed against a standard that must be met for a proposal to be considered for funding. In the call for proposals, we instructed applicants to clearly present how their project meets each assessment criterion and to provide enough information for you to evaluate the project's merits. (See "[Part 3 – Criterion standards and instructions provided to applicants](#)")



## What are the assessment criteria?

Expert Committees evaluate proposals based on six assessment criteria:

**Research excellence** — The research activities enabled by the biocontainment facility and/or associated animal facility are internationally competitive and aligned with Canada's priorities. The facility has a demonstrated track record of excellence in research.

**Research teams** — The diverse teams of researchers using the facility have the breadth of expertise to conduct the proposed research activities.

**Enhancement of the capacity to respond to emerging human health threats** — The requested infrastructure is needed to enhance Canada's capacity to respond to pandemics and emerging human health threats. It is appropriate for the proposed research activities.

**Collaborations and partnerships** — The requested infrastructure will support enhanced

academic collaboration with industry, not-for-profit organizations and public-sector partners.

**Sustainability** — The facility will be optimally used, operated and sustained over its useful life. It adopts best practices in the management of its operations and risk mitigation including research security, cybersecurity and data management.

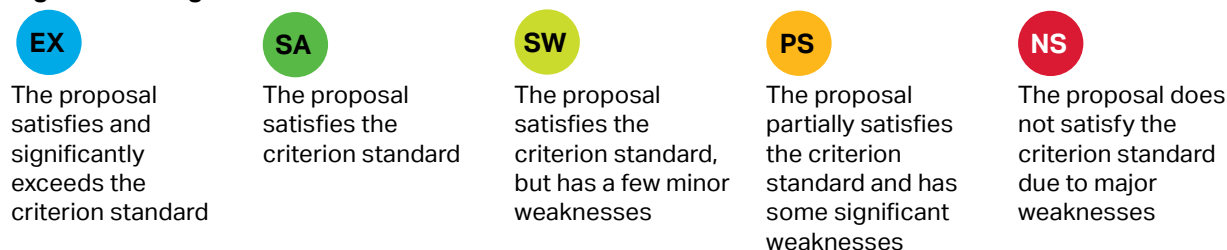
**Anticipated benefits** — The team and its partners have a well-defined plan to transfer the results of the research and technology development. Furthermore, the facility will attract and train highly qualified personnel linked to the needs of the biomanufacturing and life sciences sector.

See "[Part 3 – Criterion standards and instructions provided to applicants](#)" for details of how applicants were instructed to address each criterion in their proposal.

## Rating scale

We use a five-point rating scale with statements about the degree to which a proposal meets an assessment criterion (Figure 2). We encourage you to use the full range of ratings, as appropriate, to assess proposals. You must also support these ratings by identifying the proposal's strengths and weaknesses based on the assessment criteria.

**Figure 2: Rating scale**



## Security considerations

We instructed applicants to provide plans or policies describing their approach to:

- Research security
- Cybersecurity
- Data management.

We ask that you comment on the consistency and appropriateness of the plans or policies to ensure that the institution is undertaking a due diligence review of potential security risks for funded projects and putting in place timely measures to appropriately mitigate those risks. We instructed applicants to consult

the tools and guidance provided through the Government of Canada's [Safeguarding Your Research](#) portal, [National Security Guidelines for Research Partnerships](#) and [Safeguarding Science](#) workshops.

## Principles of merit review

Our merit-review process is governed by the underlying principles of integrity and confidentiality. This is to ensure that we continue to have the trust and confidence of the research community, the government and the public. All Expert Committee members must follow our [Conflict of interest and confidentiality agreement](#).

### Integrity

We expect reviewers to maintain the highest standards of ethics and integrity. This means that personal interests must never influence, or be seen to influence, the outcome. You are appointed as an individual, not as an advocate or representative of your discipline(s) or organization. If you have a conflict of interest you should declare it to the CFI. We will determine if the conflict of interest is manageable or if we must withdraw your invitation to be a reviewer.

### Confidentiality

Our review process is confidential. When you agree to review for the CFI, you are bound by our confidentiality agreement. This means that everything we send you is confidential and must be treated as such at all times. You must not discuss or share the proposals with anyone. If you do not think that you have the expertise to provide a useful review without discussing it with a colleague, you should decline the invitation.

### Avoiding bias

Merit review is subjective by nature. Bias can be unconscious and show up in several ways. It could be based on:

- A school of thought or ideas about fundamental versus applied or translational research, areas of research, sub-disciplines or approaches (including emerging ones)
- The size or reputation of a participating institution
- The age, language, identity factors or gender of the applicant.

We strongly encourage you to complete the [Bias in Peer Review training module](#) developed by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. This short, online module promotes understanding of bias, how it can affect merit review and ways to mitigate bias.

### Official languages

The CFI offers its services in both of Canada's official languages — French and English. Committees must ensure that all proposals in either official language receive a full and detailed review. If you have been assigned a proposal in a language that you cannot understand, contact us immediately and we will reassign the proposal to another reviewer. We normally conduct committee meetings in English.



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## Part 2 – How to conduct your review

### Tools to conduct your review

Use the [CFI Awards Management System \(CAMS\)](#) to access the documents and information you need to conduct your review. We will create a CAMS account for you once you have accepted to participate in the review process. If you already have a CAMS account, you can use it to access the review materials for this competition.

CAMS is divided into dashboards for different types of users. The “Reviewer” dashboard is where you will access the review materials and conduct your preliminary assessments. To access the review materials, click on the committee name. This will bring you to the “Review and documentation” page, where you will find:

- Reference materials (a quick reference guide to the assessment criteria and standards, these guidelines, etc.)
- Meeting information (date, time and agenda)
- Proposals
- Preliminary assessment form (under the “Your review” tab).

Consult [Getting started with CAMS: A guide for reviewers \(PDF\)](#) for more information on using CAMS.

### Expert Committee roles and responsibilities

#### Chairs

The Chair is responsible for leading the Expert Committee meeting, ensuring that it runs effectively and that the committee:

- Considers the views of all members
- Reviews all proposals fairly, consistently and according to the guidelines in this document
- Discusses each proposal in sufficient detail
- Achieves a consensus rating for each assessment criterion
- Sufficiently substantiates the ratings so CFI staff can prepare the draft committee report.

The Chair is also responsible for ensuring that the Expert Committee report for each proposal accurately reflects the discussion at the meeting.

#### Members

Expert Committee members have specific expertise in various aspects of the proposals their committee will review. Members review all of the proposals or will be assigned a subset of them, depending on how many proposals the committee will assess. For larger committees or in instances where there are many proposals to be discussed, we may assign a lead reviewer to each proposal. The lead reviewer initiates the discussion about that proposal at the Expert Committee meeting.

At times, we may ask a committee member to consider a single aspect of a proposal, such as a particular infrastructure item requested.

Members submit their preliminary assessments of these proposals to the CFI before the Expert Committee meets. Members must read all the proposals to fully participate in the meeting. After discussing each proposal, members work to reach a consensus rating for each assessment criterion and the recommended amount of funding to be awarded to each proposal.

## CFI staff

At least one CFI staff member attends the Expert Committee meeting to assist the Chair, take notes and clarify CFI policies and processes. CFI staff draft an Expert Committee report for each proposal.

## Observers

Sometimes, additional CFI staff observe committee meetings. Also, to coordinate the review processes and avoid duplication of efforts, we may invite representatives of the relevant provincial or territorial authorities or other funding partners to observe Expert Committee meetings.

## Meeting with applicants

For large proposals or ones we deem particularly complex, we may invite applicants for a virtual face-to-face meeting with the Expert Committee. We limit the number of individuals to five for each project. Typically, this group includes the team leader(s), team member(s) and senior representatives of the participating institutions. These projects may involve a significant investment from the CFI; however, the financial aspect is not the sole factor determining the need for a meeting with the applicants. We will inform the Expert Committee well in advance if we have determined that there is a need to meet with the applicants.

## Meeting logistics

Expert Committee meetings will take place in January and February 2022. Table 1 summarizes the key activities for this competition.

Expert Committees will meet by videoconference. We will provide instructions for connecting to the videoconferencing platform in advance of the meetings. (See [Appendix 1](#) for a sample agenda)

**Table 1: Summary of key activities for Expert Committees**

Timing	Activities
<b>Before the meeting</b>	<p>Committee members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Attend a briefing session</li><li>• Activate their account and log in to the <a href="#">CFI Awards Management System (CAMS)</a></li><li>• Access the review materials on the "Reviewer" dashboard</li><li>• Complete the recommended <a href="#">Bias in Peer Review training module</a> (See "<a href="#">Avoiding bias</a>")</li><li>• Evaluate the proposal(s) against the assessment criteria</li><li>• Provide a preliminary assessment to the CFI at least three days before the meeting.</li></ul>
<b>At the meeting</b>	<p>The Chair guides the committee in reviewing each proposal in turn.</p> <p>The committee discusses the strengths and weaknesses for each assessment criterion to reach consensus on a rating. This discussion informs the Expert Committee report.</p>
<b>After the meeting</b>	<p>CFI staff draft the Expert Committee report for each proposal.</p> <p>The Chair reviews and approves the reports.</p>

# Steps in the Expert Committee review

## Before the meeting

### Attend a briefing session

We will schedule a quick briefing session with you to go over the review material and discuss the review process. We may meet with you individually or with all members at once, depending on members' availability.

### Access the review materials

After you agree to be a reviewer, and soon after the proposal deadline, you will receive an email to activate your account on the [CFI Awards Management System \(CAMS\)](#). If you already have an account, you will receive an email to notify you when the review materials are available in CAMS. Consult [Getting started with CAMS: A guide for reviewers \(PDF\)](#) for more information on using CAMS.

### Conduct your preliminary assessment

The materials provided must be the sole information source upon which you base your review. Applicants must demonstrate in the proposal how the project satisfies each assessment criterion and justify the need for the requested funding.

You will rate the degree to which the proposal meets each assessment criterion based on the criterion standards (see "[Part 3 – Criterion standards and instructions provided to applicants](#)") and using the rating scale for Expert Committees (see "[Figure 2: Rating scale](#)"). Support these ratings by identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal based on the assessment criteria. If you have identified any weaknesses in the proposal, take these into account in your rating.

In CAMS, select your rating for each assessment criterion from the drop-down menu and input the strengths and weaknesses in the relevant comments section. If a virtual face-to-face meeting with the applicants is required, include in your comments any questions that you wish to have answered.

Your preliminary assessment under the "Enhancement to the capacity to respond to emerging human health threats" section of the report should consider the appropriateness of the budget and cost estimates. Identify any expenses that you feel are not adequately justified for the planned activities.

Please complete your preliminary assessments at least three days before the Expert Committee meets. Preliminary assessments will not be provided to applicants. They will only be used to help us identify areas for discussion at the meeting and to inform Expert Committee reports.

## At the meeting

### Discuss proposals

The committee discusses each proposal in turn for approximately 60 to 90 minutes. For each proposal that has been assigned to you for review, be prepared to present a very brief overview and its strengths and weaknesses based on the assessment criteria.

Each criterion is discussed in turn. The discussion proceeds as follows:

- The lead reviewer, if there was one assigned to the proposal, initiates the discussion by sharing their preliminary assessment, including their rating and a brief rationale that highlights the proposal's strengths and weaknesses based on the assessment criterion.
- Next, other reviewers assigned to the proposal will share their assessments. If a lead reviewer has not been assigned, the Chair will ask members to provide their assessments in turn, including any additional information or differing viewpoints.
- The Chair opens the discussion to the rest of the committee.

## **Meet with applicants**

Meetings with applicants, if required, take the form of question-and-answer sessions. Before any virtual face-to-face meeting with applicants, Expert Committee members discuss their preliminary assessment of that proposal, identify key issues that may need further clarity and prepare questions to ask the applicants. After meeting with the applicants, the Expert Committee meeting resumes.

## **Reach consensus**

A general discussion follows, focusing on the criteria where there are significant discrepancies among the assessments of the assigned members. Ultimately, the committee must reach a consensus on the criteria ratings — the degree to which the proposal satisfies each criterion standard — as well as the strengths and weaknesses for each assessment criterion. The comments must substantiate the consensus assessment ratings.

The committee can assign one of five ratings for each criterion. The rating assigned should accurately reflect the proposal's strengths and weaknesses identified during the discussion.

Expert Committees also recommend proposals to the SRC that meet the standard of excellence for the competition and recommend the amount of funding that each one should be awarded. Proposals not recommended for funding by the Expert Committees will not be considered by the SRC.

## **After the meeting**

### **Review committee reports**

Expert Committee members are not required to draft Expert Committee reports. CFI staff draft a report for each proposal that summarizes the committee's consensus ratings and comments.

The report will list the committee members' names and affiliation, but no comments will be attributed to a single member. The Chair will review the reports and confirm that they accurately reflect the committee's consensus.

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## Part 3 – Criterion standards and instructions provided to applicants

### Research excellence

**Criterion standard:** The research activities to be enabled by the biocontainment facility and/or associated animal facility are internationally competitive and aligned with Canada's priorities. The facility has a demonstrated track record of excellence in research.

#### Proposal instructions:

- Describe the breadth of research activities enabled by the biocontainment facility and/or associated animal facility over the past five years. Include both qualitative and quantitative data on the number and types of infectious diseases studied, vaccines and therapies developed, and animal models of disease developed and characterized. Highlight your most significant research accomplishments.
- Describe the proposed research or technology development programs that will be enabled by the requested infrastructure. Explain the methodologies to be used and discuss the feasibility by identifying key challenges and how these will be overcome.
- Demonstrate the innovative aspects of the proposed programs by positioning them within the present state of knowledge in the field, both in Canada and internationally. Where appropriate, include references

### Research teams

**Criterion standard:** The diverse teams of researchers using the facility have the breadth of expertise to conduct the proposed research activities.

#### Proposal instructions:

- Describe the breadth and diversity of the major users of the biocontainment facility and/or associated animal facility. When describing the diversity of major users, consider the disciplines of research, career stages, sectors, type and size of organizations, and geographic distribution that are represented.
- Describe the teams' relevant experience and expertise to conduct the proposed research activities. Highlight their scientific and technical contributions to the area of the proposed activities.
- Describe the contributions from relevant partners, as applicable, to the proposed activities.

### Enhancement of the capacity to respond to emerging human health threats

**Criterion standard:** The requested infrastructure is needed to enhance Canada's capacity to respond to pandemics and emerging human health threats. It is appropriate for the proposed research activities.

#### Proposal instructions:

- In the specific context of the current proposal, describe:
  - The existing research capacity of the institution and its partners to respond to pandemics and other emerging human health threats
  - The areas in which you specialize
  - How that fits within the broader context of other academic, government or private-sector laboratories.

- List any certifications or biosafety standards, such as CL3, good manufacturing practices or ISO, that are currently maintained. Identify any potential impacts of upcoming changes to the [Canadian Biosafety Standard](#).
- Describe each requested item and justify why it is needed to conduct the proposed research activities and how it will enhance the capacity to respond to pandemics and emerging human health threats. Reference the item number, quantity, cost and location entered in the “Cost of individual items” table. Provide a cost breakdown and description of included items in any grouping of items. For construction or renovation, describe the space including its location, size and nature.
- Considering the existing research infrastructure capacity at your institution and at your partners’ institution(s), explain how the requested infrastructure is the best option to obtain the resources needed to conduct the proposed research activities.
- Provide the detailed cost breakdown, timeline and floor plans for construction or renovation in a separate document as part of the finance module.

## Collaborations and partnerships

**Criterion standard:** The requested infrastructure will support enhanced academic collaboration with industry, not-for-profit organizations and public-sector partners.

### Proposal instructions:

- Describe the existing collaborations and partnerships with other laboratories or facilities, research groups, government departments and agencies, businesses and users in all sectors.
- Describe the facility’s plans to enhance existing collaborations and partnerships, and support the development of new ones, including networking with other similar facilities.
- Explain how these collaborations and partnerships are important to realizing the objectives and desired outcomes of this proposal.

## Sustainability

**Criterion standard:** The facility will be optimally used, operated and sustained over its useful life. It adopts best practices in the management of its operations and risk mitigation including research security, cybersecurity and data management.

### Proposal instructions:

- Describe the current management structure and personnel. Present a management plan that describes how the infrastructure will be optimally used (e.g., user access and level of use), operated and maintained over its useful life. Demonstrate that the management team has the necessary training and core competencies to ensure the facility’s safe operations.
- Provide plans or policies describing the facility’s approach to research security, cybersecurity and data management (as attachments, which are not included in the page limit). The data management plan must ensure reasonable safeguards are deployed to comply with applicable laws and regulations, the [Tri-Agency Research Data Management Policy](#) and privacy and security requirements.
- Identify the biocontainment facility and/or associated animal facility’s key risks and describe the strategies to mitigate these risks.
- Describe the expertise and specialized support (e.g., biosafety professionals, technical staff) available and planned.
- Describe the process to grant access to the facility and describe any differences between academic, public and private users.

- Identify any barriers to access the facility for underrepresented groups and what steps will be taken to ensure equitable access. Describe how the facility provides an inclusive environment for all users.
- Outline the operating and maintenance costs and revenue sources over the useful life of the infrastructure. Refer to the “Financial resources for operation and maintenance” tables. Describe the plan for maintaining the current sources of funding, securing and diversifying sources of funding, and contingency plans for potential funding shortfalls. If applicable, describe the user fee structure and how anticipated revenues have been calculated.
- For larger and more complex projects, describe the proposed governance of the requested infrastructure, including the composition of its decision-making bodies.

## Anticipated benefits

**Criterion standard:** The team and its partners have a well-defined plan to transfer the results of the research and technology development. Furthermore, the facility will attract and train highly qualified personnel linked to the needs of the biomanufacturing and life sciences sector.

### Proposal instructions:

- Detail the plans to transfer the results of the research or technology development program(s), including how the institution will protect any intellectual property for the benefit of Canadians.
- Describe the teams' experience in knowledge mobilization and/or technology transfer.
- Describe the potential health, economic and social benefits to Canadians.
- Describe how the requested infrastructure will create an environment that nurtures training and talent development in areas of high demand in the biomanufacturing and life sciences sector. Provide the number and type of highly qualified personnel (e.g., graduate students, postdoctoral fellows) who have been trained over the past four years and the number anticipated over the next four years. Describe the high-level skills acquired by the highly qualified personnel and their relevance to careers in research and other fields.

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# Appendix 1 – Template meeting agenda

**11 a.m. Chair leads introduction of committee members**

**11:05 a.m. CFI staff provide an overview of the Expert Committee review process**

**11:20 a.m. Discussion of a proposal that does not require a meeting with the applicant institution(s)**

**Lead reviewer presents an overview of the proposal (1–2 minutes)**

- **Project number:** 12345
- **Project leader:** [first name, last name]
- **Applicant institution:** Institution X
- **Project title:** A sample project
- **Total project cost:** \$3,456,789
- **CFI request:** \$1,234,567

**Presentation of the preliminary assessments (5–10 minutes per reviewer)**

- Beginning with the lead reviewer, each reviewer assigned to the proposal presents their preliminary assessment of the proposal, including its strengths and weaknesses based on the assessment criteria

**Discussion among committee members to reach consensus (30–45 minutes)**

**12:20 p.m. 15-minute break**

**12:35 p.m. Discussion of a proposal that requires a meeting with the applicant institution(s)**

**Lead reviewer presents an overview of the proposal (1–2 minutes)**

- **Project number:** 12346
- **Project leader:** [first name, last name]
- **Applicant institution:** Institution Y
- **Project title:** Another sample project
- **Total project cost:** \$3,456,789
- **CFI request:** \$1,234,567

**Brief presentation of the preliminary assessments (5 minutes per reviewer)**

- Beginning with the lead reviewer, each reviewer assigned to the proposal presents their preliminary assessment of the proposal, including its strengths and weaknesses based on the assessment criteria

**Expert Committee prepares questions for applicant institution(s) (15-30 minutes)**

**Representatives of the applicant institution(s) join the meeting to present their proposal (10 minutes)**

**This is followed by questions from the Expert Committee (50 minutes), after which the meeting with the applicant institution ends**

**Expert Committee meeting resumes for discussion and to reach a consensus (30–45 minutes)**

**3:05 p.m. Wrap-up and process discussion**

- Expert Committee reviews the overall outcome of their review to confirm that each proposal received a fair assessment and that the ratings reflect that assessment
- Committee members provide feedback to CFI staff on any aspects of the competition and review process

**3:30 p.m. Meeting adjournment**