



John R. Evans Leaders Fund

Guidelines for completing a research infrastructure proposal

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SECTION 1 – Introduction

These guidelines are intended for researchers and institutional research services personnel wishing to prepare and submit a proposal to the Canada Foundation for Innovation’s John R. Evans Leaders Fund (JELF).

NB: *Applicant institutions submitting a JELF – partnerships proposal (joint submission with any of our [funding program partners](#)) should consult the [JELF – partnerships guidelines](#).*

For further information on this fund, consult the [JELF program description](#) on the CFI’s website. Researchers and institutional research services personnel will use the CFI Awards Management System (CAMS) to prepare and share proposals for this fund. Links to the technical instructions for using CAMS to create JELF proposals, and other useful resources, are listed below.

Helpful links

Getting started with CAMS: [An overview document for researchers](#)

Getting started with CAMS: [An overview document for institutional research services personnel](#)

Deadlines

There are three submission deadlines per year for the JELF. The timelines are outlined below. If the deadline falls on a weekend or holiday, it will be extended to the following business day.

Submission date	Anticipated decision date
February 15	June
June 15	November
October 15	March

SECTION 2 – Guidelines for attachments

Electronic requirements

The CFI does not distribute paper copies of its forms. Proposals for the JELF must be completed and submitted to the CFI through CAMS. The electronic version submitted through CAMS is the official copy.

Conformance with instructions for proposal preparation

It is important that all proposals conform to the instructions provided on the electronic proposal form as well as those in this guide. Prior to electronic submission, it is strongly recommended that researchers and institutional research services personnel review the forms to ensure that proposals comply with these proposal preparation guidelines.

Proposal pagination instructions

CAMS will automatically paginate proposals submitted to the CFI. Attachments *must not* be individually paginated prior to upload to the electronic system.

Page formatting

Since many reviewers will be assessing proposals electronically, applicants should only use a standard, single-column on an 8.5" x 11" page layout for attachments. Avoid using a two-column or landscape format since it may cause difficulties when reading the document electronically.

The proposal must be clear and legible. The proposal must be written using **a 12-point, black-coloured font, single line spacing (six lines per inch) and with no condensed type or spacing**. Small font sizes make it difficult for reviewers to read the proposal. The use of a small font not in compliance with the above detailed requirements will result in the CFI returning the proposal for further revision.

Additionally, attachments must adhere to the following guidelines:

- **Header:** Indicate the applicant institution on the top left of each page and the project number on the top right of each page.
- **Footer:** Do not include any information in the bottom right side of the page as this area will be used for automatic page numbering.
- **Page margin:** Insert a margin of no less than 2.5 centimetres (1 inch) around the page. The header and footer may be within the margin.
- **Document format:** Only PDF files may be uploaded. Documents in other formats should be converted to PDF prior to upload and should not be encrypted or password-protected.

SECTION 3 – Proposal structure

The proposal consists of three separate modules:

1. **Project module:** Information about the proposed project and how it meets the fund's objectives;
2. **Finance module:** Information pertaining to the budgetary details of the proposal; and
3. **Suggested reviewers module:** Recommendation of potential reviewers of the proposal.

The onus is on the applicant to provide sufficient information to enable reviewers to evaluate the proposal in accordance with each merit review criterion, as outlined further below (refer to the *Assessment criteria* section of this document).

The online forms will dictate the maximum number of characters that can be included in each section and/or the page limits for uploaded files.

Project module

The project module consists of the following sections:

- Project information
- Project summary
- Candidates
- Assessment criteria (attachment)
- Financial resources for operation and maintenance
- Past CFI investments (to be completed by the institution)

Project information

The Project information page captures basic information about the project such as the title, applicant institution and keywords.

Plain language summary (1,500 characters)

Provide a short summary in plain language of the proposed project: what is being researched, how it is being done and why it is important. Focus on the expected impacts and benefits to Canada, beyond academic accomplishments. This summary will not be used in the review process. Should the project be funded, it may be used in the CFI's communication products and website.

Project summary (maximum two pages)

Provide a general description of the research or technology development activities to be undertaken and a general overview of the infrastructure being requested. The summary should address the extent to which the proposal meets the fund's established criteria:

-
- The proposed research and technology development program;
 - The expertise and ability of the candidates to undertake the proposed research or technology development program;
 - The requested infrastructure and how it will enable the proposed research or technology development program;
 - The expected benefits to Canadians;
 - The operating and maintenance needs of the infrastructure; and
 - The institutional support in this area of research or technology development and for this particular project.

Candidates

Up to three candidates may be listed on the proposal when there is a demonstrated need to share infrastructure. When more than one candidate is listed, the CFI requires that the justification for the need for the infrastructure be articulated for each candidate.

The research infrastructure must be centered on the research needs of one to three researchers but the sharing of the infrastructure is encouraged provided that the candidate(s) has (have) sufficient access to carry out the proposed research program. Candidates must have a CAMS account and must agree to participate in the project before the proposal can be submitted to the CFI. The curricula vitae of the candidates will be appended to the proposal.

Assessment criteria (maximum 17 pages)

For this section of the online form, upload a PDF document that fully describes how the proposal addresses the review criteria for this fund. Ensure that the document follows the guidelines on format, spacing and font as detailed in this document. Additionally, applicants should address each criterion in the order in which they appear below.

Each assessment criterion will be evaluated against a standard. Reviewers will be asked to rate the degree to which the proposal meets each standard.

The attachment allows institutions maximum flexibility to address each criterion, including the use of figures or diagrams where appropriate. The exact distribution of pages among sections is at the applicant's discretion, up to a total of 17 pages.

In order to maximize the impact of the JELF as a key strategic tool to build and enhance research capacity, JELF guidelines are broadened to include the acquisition, the upgrading or the replacement of aging workhorses. Note that the research must be innovative and leading-edge even if the instrumentation requested is basic.

Note: Compute Canada Condition

The CFI expects all institutions to consult with Compute Canada when planning to request advanced research computing infrastructure. For such cases, institutions are invited to visit Compute Canada's website for information on the established process to facilitate

collaboration with institutions. The CFI, therefore, expects that new or additional research computing resources funded through this competition, and costing more than \$100,000, will normally be housed, managed and operated by Compute Canada.

Research or technology development

Each of the following must be addressed:

1. Describe the proposed research or technology development program and its innovative aspect.
2. Explain why it is important to pursue the proposed research or technology program at this time.
3. Explain how the proposed research or technology development program complement or differ from comparable programs being conducted nationally and/or internationally.

Criterion standard:

The proposed research or technology development is of high quality and originality, and meets international standards. It will create knowledge or develop technology leading to innovation.

Criterion standard:

Compared to researchers at the same stage in their career, the candidate(s) demonstrate(s) excellence and leadership.

The candidate(s) has/have the necessary expertise and relevant collaborations in place to successfully conduct the research or technology development program proposed.

Researchers

Each of the following must be addressed:

1. Describe the expertise and ability of the candidate(s) to lead the proposed research or technology development program.
2. Describe the technical expertise of the candidate(s) that will allow them to make the best use of the requested infrastructure.
3. Describe the existing collaborations and partnerships essential to the success of the research or technology development program.

Need for the infrastructure and budget justification

Each of the following must be addressed:

- I. Describe each item and justify its need to conduct the proposed research or technology development program.
- II. Explain how the infrastructure will be fully utilized by the candidate(s) and other users (if applicable).
- III. Identify similar infrastructure available within the institution, the region and the country.
- IV. Describe the value added of an additional award in cases where a candidate has previously received a CFI award.
- V. For construction or renovation, provide a description of the space including its location, size and nature. Use the item number, quantity, cost and location found in the *Cost of individual items* table. Provide a cost breakdown for any grouping of items.

Criterion standard:

The infrastructure is necessary and appropriate to conduct the research or technology development program.

In cases where the infrastructure will not be fully used by the candidate(s), the institution has developed plans to maximize its utilization within and/or outside the institution.

Criterion standard:

The infrastructure requested will create or enrich an environment promoting the attraction of high-quality trainees.

This environment will help impart new high-level skills to highly qualified personnel and adequately prepare them for research and other careers.

Training of highly qualified personnel (HQP)

Each of the following must be addressed:

1. Describe how the infrastructure will enhance the current training environment for HQP in this area.
2. Describe how the infrastructure will better prepare HQP for research and other careers.

Benefits to Canadians

Each of the following must be addressed:

1. Beyond the creation of new knowledge and the training of highly qualified personnel, describe the expected benefits to Canadians and why they are significant.
2. Identify potential end users of the research or technology development results and describe the plans for knowledge mobilization and/or technology transfer.

Criterion standard:

The research or technology development program has the potential to lead to tangible benefits for society, health, the economy and/or the environment.

There are measures in place to transfer the research results and outputs of the technology development to potential end users in a timely manner.

Criterion standard:

The institution has made, and will continue to make tangible and significant commitments in support of this area of strategic priority leading to the attraction and/or retention of key personnel.

The proposed infrastructure will be effectively operated and maintained for its useful life.

Institutional commitment and sustainability

In completing this section, applicants are asked to refer to the tables in the section entitled *Financial resources for operation and maintenance* which will be automatically appended to the end of the project module attachment for ease of reference for the Institutional commitment and sustainability criterion.

Each of the following must be addressed:

1. Describe how the proposed project is of importance to the institution and the tangible contributions the institution has made or will make in support of this established area of strategic priority.
2. Describe the operating and maintenance needs of the infrastructure over its useful life.
3. Outline sources of support for operation and maintenance costs and explain the contingency plans should any of this support become unavailable.
4. Describe how the requested infrastructure will help attract and/or retain excellent researchers who will advance the institution's capacity in this area.

Financial resources for operations and maintenance

This page of the project module captures the annual costs and sources of committed support to ensure the effective operation and maintenance of the infrastructure for its useful life. It includes details of the first five years after implementation. Applicant institutions are asked to refer to these tables in the Institutional commitment and sustainability section.

Past CFI investments

This portion of the project module is to be completed by institutional research services personnel. The data is captured for statistical purposes only and is not part of the review process.

Finance module

The finance module consists of the following sections:

- Cost of individual items
- Contributions from eligible partners
- Infrastructure utilization table
- Floor plans (if applicable)

For each section of the finance module, the applicant should ensure that all requested information has been entered into the relevant fields.

Cost of individual items

When completing the *Cost of individual items* section, the CFI recommends that applicant institutions bundle items into functional groupings (e.g. list small items together). The budget justification should, however, detail and provide justification for each item within a group. Section 4.5 of the [CFI Policy and program guide](#) outlines the eligible costs for infrastructure projects.

Contributions from eligible partners

Institutions are encouraged to bundle all expected in-kind contributions from each vendor into a single line in the *Contributions from eligible partners* table. If partner contributions are expected but have not yet been confirmed, outline the plans for securing these funds.

Infrastructure utilization

This section of the finance module captures the use of the requested infrastructure for CFI-eligible and non-CFI-eligible purposes and any applicable prorating of costs.

Floor plans (if applicable)

JELF projects may involve renovations in existing buildings only when the space is essential to house and use the eligible infrastructure. While the CFI recognizes that some projects may involve complex renovation components, institutions are expected to have completed planning and development work for such projects at the proposal stage. Applicants must include floor plans of the proposed area(s), showing the location of the infrastructure and the scale of the plans (when renovation involves multiple rooms).

Note: Floor plans must be provided in an attachment that is clearly legible. The floor plans will be a separate attachment and should not exceed 20 MB.

Suggested reviewers

Applicants are asked to suggest at least six reviewers who they believe are especially well qualified to review the proposal. **Suggested reviewers must not be in conflict of interest.**

A conflict of interest may be deemed to exist or perceived as such when external reviewers:

- Are a relative or close friend, or have a personal relationship with the candidates;
- Are in a position to gain or lose financially/materially from the funding of the proposal;
- Have had long-standing scientific or personal differences with the candidates;
- Are currently affiliated with the candidates' institutions, organizations or companies including research hospitals and research institutes;
- Are closely professionally affiliated with the candidates, as a result of having in the last six years:
 - Frequent and regular interactions with the candidates in the course of their duties at their department, institution, organization or company;
 - Been a supervisor or a trainee of the candidates;
 - Collaborated, published or shared funding with the candidates, or have plans to do so in the immediate future; or,
 - Been employed by the applicant institution; and/or
- Feel for any reason unable to provide an impartial review of the proposal.

Note: The CFI does not exclusively recruit from the list of suggested reviewers provided.

SECTION 4 – Submission process

Proposal submission

JELF proposals must be submitted to the CFI through CAMS. Note that the CFI does not require a hardcopy of the proposal. Rather, a list of all proposals being submitted to the CFI for a given submission deadline must be provided. The CFI encourages institutions to use the template provided for submission of proposals (refer to Appendix 1). The letter is provided [online](#) in MS Word format. Should you require this document in another format, please contact the JELF administrative assistant at the CFI.

This letter must be signed by an authorized signatory at the institution, as per the Institutional agreement with the CFI, and sent to the CFI by email not later than the submission deadline. Please note that a hard copy is no longer required.

Collaboration with provinces

To coordinate the review processes and avoid duplication of review efforts, the CFI will provide review material to relevant provincial and territorial funding authorities. Disclosure of review material will be made only in accordance with agreements between the CFI and provincial or territorial authorities, as permissible pursuant to paragraph 8(2)(f) of the Privacy Act.

Appendix 1

Template: JELF proposal submission letter to the CFI

Laurent Messier
Manager, JELF
Canada Foundation for Innovation
450 - 230 Queen Street
Ottawa ON K1P 5E4

Re: Confirmation and institutional approval of proposals to the Canada Foundation for Innovation's (CFI) John R. Evans Leaders Fund

Dear Mr. Messier,

I am pleased to approve the submission of the proposals outlined in the attached document to the John R. Evans Leaders Fund.

In signing this letter, I confirm that the institution:

- Agrees to and accepts the conditions governing CFI funding, as outlined in the *CFI Policy and programs guide* and the Institutional agreement;
- Accepts its commitment to ensure appropriate resources are provided for the operation and maintenance of the proposed CFI-funded research infrastructure over its useful life (i.e. the period of time over which the infrastructure is expected to provide benefits and be usable for its intended purpose, factoring in normal repairs and maintenance); and,
- Has submitted proposal(s) that align with the institution's strategic research plan.

Sincerely,

President (or authorized signatory)

Signature

Institution

Proposals submitted by <<enter institution's name here>>

Project #	Project leader (last name, first name)	Project title	Total project costs (\$)	Amount requested from the CFI (\$)