John R. Evans Leaders Fund

Guidelines for completing a proposal – Partnerships

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INTRODUCTION

These guidelines are intended for researchers and institutional research services personnel tasked with preparing and submitting a proposal to the John R. Evans Leaders Fund (JELF) jointly with any of our partners – Canada Research Chairs (CRC), Canada Excellence Research Chairs (CERC), Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). These partnerships help reduce the burden on both applicants and reviewers. Please refer to the dedicated sections of these guidelines for partner-specific information (submission deadlines, eligibility, etc.) and consult the respective partnering organizations' website for additional information.

The CFI encourages researchers to consult with their research office early in the process and to refer to internal institutional practices for submitting JELF proposals early on in the process. For further information on this fund, consult the JELF program description on the CFI's website, Innovation.ca.

NB: Applicant institutions submitting an unaffiliated JELF proposal should consult the JELF guidelines for completing a proposal.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

At a time of intense international competition, the JELF is a critical strategic investment tool designed to help institutions attract and retain the very best of today's and tomorrow's researchers. The fund's name pays tribute to the outstanding contributions of John R. Evans, the first Chair of the CFI's Board of Directors.

The JELF enables a select number of an institution's excellent researchers to undertake innovative research by providing them with the foundational research infrastructure required to be or to become leaders in their field. In turn, this enables institutions to remain internationally competitive in areas of research and technology development that are aligned with their strategic priorities.

Partnership proposals are evaluated based on the following assessment criteria:

- Infrastructure
- Benefits to Canadians (except if included in the partnering organization application)

The criteria to be addressed depend on the partnering organization and the amount requested from the CFI.

Submission deadlines

The submission deadlines for this program vary according to the partnering organizations.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible institutions

Canadian universities recognized as eligible by the CFI can apply to the JELF if they have a minimum annual average of $200,000 over the last three years in research funding received from the three federal research funding agencies (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada) over the last three years. Research hospitals and research institutes wanting to apply may do so through the eligible university with which they are affiliated. Universities whose JELF funding allocation would be calculated as less than $800,000 have access to the Small Institution Fund instead.

The CFI encourages institutions to foster and develop multi-institutional projects. These collaborations may be integrated into all facets of the proposed activities; for example, for the conduct of the research or technology development program, the optimal use and sustainability of the infrastructure, and knowledge or technology transfer that will generate socioeconomic benefits.

Eligible researchers

The researchers listed in the proposal must be:

- Recognized leaders or have demonstrated the potential for excellence in the proposed research fields;
- Engaged in or embarking upon research or technology development activities that are innovative, feasible and meet international standards; and,
- Current faculty members with full-time academic appointments or candidates that the university is in the process of recruiting to full-time academic positions.

Researchers who have previously been supported by the CFI are eligible for additional funding.

Eligible infrastructure projects

An eligible project involves the acquisition or development of research infrastructure to increase research capacity, allowing the pursuit of innovative research. This includes the acquisition of workhorses (high usage equipment that routinely and dependably perform over a long period of time), and the upgrading or replacement of aging infrastructure.

Construction costs to build new spaces or to renovate existing space (including fitting out existing space) which is essential to house and use the infrastructure effectively, are eligible.

To be eligible for funding, in-kind contributions from external partners and cash expenditures by the institution must have taken place in the six months prior to the deadline on which the proposal is submitted. Expenditures are considered incurred when goods are received, services have been rendered or work has been performed.

Universities can submit proposals requesting up to $800,000 from the CFI, with a maximum total eligible cost of $2 million. The CFI will allow the submission of proposals requesting less than or equal to

$75,000 from the CFI from the social sciences, humanities and arts, and those universities that have access to the Small Institution Fund.

For more information on CFI eligibility guidelines, please refer to the *Policy and program guide*.

Advanced research computing infrastructure

Institutions may submit proposals including advanced research computing infrastructure and related resources to carry out a research or technology development project. As a matter of policy, the CFI is convinced that investments in advanced research computing infrastructure are maximized through the sharing of resources. The CFI therefore expects that research computing resources costing more than $100,000 will normally be housed, managed and operated by Compute Canada. Although this is the CFI's preferred approach, it is not intended to be an iron-clad rule. The CFI recognizes that there are instances where, for compelling reasons, research computing infrastructure is best housed, managed and operated by institutions.

The CFI expects all institutions to consult with Compute Canada when planning to request advanced research computing infrastructure. For such cases, please visit Compute Canada's website for information on the established process to facilitate collaboration with institutions. If, however, an institution chooses not to consult with Compute Canada, the CFI will conclude that the institution is planning to assume full responsibility for the operating and maintenance costs of the proposed infrastructure, including the research computing component.

Advanced research computing infrastructure normally includes systems or resources such as:

- Capacity or throughput computing
- Capability computing supporting tightly coupled, fine-grained applications
- Shared memory systems
- Systems supporting very large memory requirements
- High-performance storage
- Long-term storage
- Cloud computing
- Computing using specialized accelerators, including GP-CPU and others
- High-performance visualization systems
- Systems suitable for computational steering and interactive use.

In each case, advanced research computing infrastructure encompasses both the software and environment needed for a given discipline to effectively utilize these types of infrastructure such as high levels of data security and integrity.

GUIDELINES FOR PROPOSAL PREPARATION

Researchers and institutional research services personnel will use the [CFI Awards Management System (CAMS)](#) to prepare, share and submit the infrastructure component of JELF partnership proposals. Please ensure to select "John R. Evans Leaders Fund – Funding for research infrastructure with an application for research support funding from another program" when creating a new proposal in CAMS.

It is important that all submissions conform to the guidelines provided on the electronic proposal forms as well as those in this guide. It is strongly recommended that researchers and institutional research services personnel review the completed forms before submitting them electronically to ensure that proposals comply with these guidelines.

Guidelines for attachments

CAMS will automatically paginate proposals when they are submitted. Documents *should not* be individually paginated prior to being uploaded to the electronic system.

Page formatting

Since reviewers will assess proposals electronically, the applicant should only use a standard, single-column on an 8.5" x 11" page layout for documents. Avoid using a two-column or landscape format since it may reduce legibility.

The proposal must be clear and easily readable. Legibility is of paramount importance and should take precedence in the selection of an appropriate font for use in the proposal. The applicant is strongly encouraged to use a 12-point, black-coloured font and use single line spacing (six lines per inch) with no condensed type or spacing.

Additionally, the CFI expects documents to conform to the following guidelines:

- Header: indicate the applicant institution on the top left and the project number on the top right of each page.
- Footer: do not include any information in the footer as this area will be used for automatic page numbering.
- Page margin: insert a margin of no less than 1 inch around the page. The header may be within the margin.
- File format and size: only PDF files may be uploaded. Documents in other formats should be converted to PDF prior to being uploaded and should not be encrypted or password protected. The file size must not exceed 20 megabytes.

Adherence to the page formatting guidelines noted above is necessary to ensure that reviewers receive legible proposals and that no applicant will have an unfair advantage by using smaller type, line spacing or margins to provide more text in the proposal. Failure to adhere to these guidelines may result in the CFI returning a proposal for revision.

PROPOSAL STRUCTURE

Sufficient information should be provided to enable reviewers to evaluate the proposal in accordance with the assessment criteria established by the CFI (please refer to the Assessment criteria section of the guidelines).

The proposal consists of two separate CAMS modules:

Project module: information about the proposed project and how it meets the criteria of the funding program.

Finance module: information pertaining to the budgetary details of the proposal.

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

Project module

The project module consists of the following sections:

- Project information
- Plain language summary
- Researchers
- Assessment criteria
- Financial resources for operation and maintenance
- Attraction and retention of leading researchers (to be completed by the institution)
- Past/current CFI investments (to be completed by the institution)

Project information

This section 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 impact 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 communications products and website.

Researchers

Researchers included in the proposal must have a CAMS account and agree to participate in the project before the proposal can be submitted to the CFI. The researchers' curricula vitae will be appended to the proposal by the partnering organization.

Assessment criteria

Upload a PDF document that contains key information on how the proposal meets the assessment criteria for this program. Ensure that the document follows the guidelines for attachments. Additionally, the applicant should address each criterion in the order in which they appear below.

Each assessment criterion will be evaluated against a standard. Each criterion includes aspects that must be addressed in the proposal. Failure to do so will weaken the proposal. Expert reviewers and/or expert review committees will be asked to rate the degree to which the proposal meets each standard.

The number of criteria to address and the page limits for this PDF document depend on the amount requested from the CFI in the proposal. The attachment allows institutions maximum flexibility to address each criterion, including the use of figures or diagrams where appropriate. The exact distribution of pages for each criterion is at the applicant's discretion.

JELF-CRC/CERC and JELF-SSHRC

Total CFI request ($)	Assessment criteria to address	Maximum number of pages
≤ $75,000	Infrastructure	4
> $75,000 to $800,000	Infrastructure and Benefits to Canadians	6

JELF-NSERC

Total CFI request ($)	Assessment criterion to address	Maximum number of pages
Up to $800,000	Infrastructure	4

Assessment Criteria

Infrastructure

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

- Describe each item and justify its need to conduct the proposed activities. 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.
- Explain why existing infrastructure within the institution and the region cannot be used to conduct the proposed activities.

Note: For construction or renovation, a detailed cost breakdown, timeline and floor plans must be provided in a separate document as part of the Finance module.

Benefits to Canadians

The research or technology development results will be transferred through appropriate pathways to potential end users and are likely to generate social, health, environmental and/or economic benefits to Canadians, including better training and improved skills for highly qualified personnel [1].

- Briefly describe potential socio-economic benefits, including better training and improved skills for highly qualified personnel.
- Delineate the knowledge mobilization plan and/or technology transfer pathways, including partnerships with end users.

[1] Highly qualified personnel include technicians, research associates, undergraduate students, graduate students and post-doctoral fellows.

Financial resources for operation and maintenance

This section of the Project module captures the annual costs and sources of committed support to ensure the effective operation and maintenance (O&M) of the infrastructure for the first five years after implementation.

In cases where the useful life[2] of some of the infrastructure items requested are longer or shorter than five years, the Assessment criteria section of the proposal should provide complementary information regarding the operating and maintenance needs for these items over their useful life. Do not include costs related to research and/or technology development.

The CFI will contribute to the operation and maintenance costs of funded projects through its Infrastructure Operating Fund (IOF). The IOF generated will be equivalent to 30 percent of the CFI contribution to the capital cost of projects funded under the JELF. If funding sources include the CFI Infrastructure Operating Fund (IOF), list these in the "institutional contribution" category. The institution has the flexibility to distribute its IOF allocation based on actual operating and maintenance needs as opposed to allocating the exact amount to the project that generated it, in accordance with its internal plan for the provision and administration of operating and maintenance support.

[2] The useful life of the research infrastructure is considered to be the period of time over which the infrastructure is expected to provide benefits and be usable for its intended purpose as per the proposal, factoring in normal repairs and maintenance.

Attraction and retention of leading researchers

This section is to be completed by the institution by selecting whether the infrastructure requested will be used to attract a new researcher to the institution or to retain an existing faculty member. The information is used for statistical purposes only.

> Attraction: ≤ 24 months since researcher's full-time academic appointment

> Retention: > 24 months since researcher's full-time academic appointment

Past/current CFI investments

This section is to be completed by the institution to indicate whether the infrastructure will support research activities in which the CFI has or has not previously invested. This information is used for statistical purposes only.

Finance module

The finance module consists of the following sections:

- Cost of individual items
- Construction or renovation plans (if applicable)
- Contributions from eligible partners
- Infrastructure utilization

- Overview of infrastructure project funding (generated automatically)

The tables in the Overview of infrastructure project funding section in CAMS will be automatically populated with information taken from other sections of the Finance module. Note that the amount requested from the CFI is calculated based on the difference between the total contributions from eligible partners and the total eligible costs.

Cost of individual items

When completing the Cost of individual items section, the CFI recommends that the applicant bundle items into functional groupings. However, details and justification for each item within a group should be provided when addressing the infrastructure criterion in the Assessment criteria document. The CFI's *Policy and program guide* outlines the eligible costs for infrastructure projects.

List only the eligible infrastructure acquisition and development costs. List the full cost of each item. Retain documentation (price lists, quotes, etc.) so that they can be provided to the CFI upon request.

Please note:

- If the infrastructure will be used for purposes other than research or technology development, list only pro-rated research or technology development costs.
- The total eligible costs must include taxes (net of credits received), shipping and installation. However, taxes must not be calculated on the in-kind portion.
- When preparing budget estimates, the applicant must follow their existing institutional policies and procedures. Costs included in this budget must be close estimates of fair market value. Refer to the *Policy and program guide* for information on how in-kind contributions must be assessed.

Construction or renovation plans

All proposals that include construction or renovation must provide the following information:

- A detailed cost breakdown of the overall cost of the construction or renovation project, categorized by cost component (i.e. direct, soft and contingency costs).
- A timeline identifying key dates for the various stages of the proposed construction or renovation.
- Floor plans of the proposed area(s), showing the location of the infrastructure and the scale of the plans for projects involving multiple rooms. The floor plans must be legible when printed in black and white on standard letter size paper (8.5" x 11").

Note: the cost breakdown, timeline and floor plans should be uploaded as a separate PDF document. These pages do not count towards the page limit for the Assessment criteria section of the proposal.

Contributions from eligible partners

List all contributions from eligible partners. Do not include the amount requested from the CFI. Provide the partner name and type, as well as a breakdown of contributions (cash and in-kind) for each eligible partner. The applicant is encouraged to bundle all expected in-kind contributions from vendors into a single line. 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-eligible purposes and any applicable pro-rating of costs.

REVIEW AND DECISION MAKING

Review process

The expert review process is administered by the partnering organization. Proposals should provide sufficient information to enable reviewers to evaluate the proposal in accordance with CFI's assessment criteria.

The CFI will first undertake an administrative review of the proposals to ensure that they are eligible and complete. CFI staff will follow up with institutional research services personnel if applicable.

Funding decisions

All funding decisions for the infrastructure component of a partnership proposal are made by the CFI Board of Directors at one of their triannual meetings and are contingent upon a positive decision from the partnering organization for the research component of the proposal. Following the meeting, the applicant institutions will receive the review materials for their proposals.

SUBMISSION PROCESS

JELF proposals must be submitted by the institution to the CFI through CAMS. For multi-institutional proposals, the institutions must communicate to the JELF Manager (Olivier Gagnon, Olivier.Gagnon@innovation.ca) the dollar value of its share of the proposal, by the submission deadline.

JELF – CRC/CERC PARTNERSHIP

Assessment criteria to address

Total CFI request ($)	Assessment criteria to address	Maximum number of pages
≤ $75,000	Infrastructure	4
> $75,000 to $800,000	Infrastructure and Benefits to Canadians	6

Submission deadlines and process

The CFI partners with the Tri-agency Institutional Programs Secretariat's (TIPS) Canada Research Chairs (CRC) Program and Canada Excellence Research Chairs (CERC) Program. CRC nominations are due in October and in April, except for foreign nominations which may be submitted at any time. Phase 2 CERC nominations can only be submitted by invitation. Requests for CFI infrastructure support should be made by institutions at the time of the first nomination or renewal of the chair. Even if there may be circumstances warranting a new infrastructure request between the first nomination and renewal of a current chairholder, the CFI and the TIPS expect that institutions would normally await the renewal of the chair before applying for infrastructure support.

Institutions wanting to apply to the JELF for infrastructure support associated with a CRC or CERC must submit separate proposals to the TIPS and to the CFI. The CFI will forward the JELF proposal to the TIPS where it will be combined with the CRC/CERC form to create a joint proposal for review. Details regarding the CRC component of the submission can be found on the CRC website; details regarding the CERC component of the submission can be found on the CERC website.

Review process

The TIPS administers the review process for joint CRC/CERC proposals in accordance with their review process. Should the infrastructure component of the joint proposal receive divergent reviews, have a proposed research plan that spans diverse disciplines or is otherwise highly complex, in order to make a funding recommendation, the CFI may:

- seek the input of additional expert reviewers; and/or,
- seek the input of the JELF Advisory Committee.

Funding decisions

The final funding decision for the research support component of the proposal will be made by the TIPS. The final funding decision for the infrastructure component of the proposal will be made by the CFI Board of Directors at one of their triannual meetings and is contingent upon a successful nomination. Institutions are informed by email of decisions related to the infrastructure component as well as conditions associated with an award. The reviewers' comments are made available to the institutions by the TIPS. In cases where the CFI sought additional expert input, the CFI will provide those additional comments to the institution.

JELF – NSERC PARTNERSHIP

Assessment criterion to address

Total CFI request ($)	Assessment criterion to address	Maximum number of pages
Up to $800,000	Infrastructure	4

Submission deadlines and process

The CFI partners with NSERC's Industrial Research Chair (IRC) program. There is no submission deadline for IRC applications. Requests for CFI infrastructure support should be made by institutions at the time of the IRC application.

Institutions wanting to apply to the JELF for infrastructure support associated with an NSERC IRC must submit separate proposals to NSERC and to the CFI. The CFI will forward the JELF proposal to NSERC where it will be combined with the IRC application to create a joint proposal for review. Details regarding the NSERC component of the submission can be found on the NSERC website.

Review process

NSERC administers the review process for joint proposals in accordance with their review process, which may include a site visit. The infrastructure component of the proposal will be evaluated in accordance to CFI criteria. During the assessment process, the CFI will provide clarifications on its policies and procedures.

Funding decisions

The final funding decision for the research support component of the proposal will be made by NSERC. The final funding decision for the infrastructure component of the proposal will be made by the CFI Board of Directors at one of their triannual meetings and is contingent upon a positive NSERC decision. Institutions are informed by email of decisions related to the infrastructure component as well as conditions associated with an award. The reviewers' comments are made available to the institution by NSERC.

JELF – SSHRC PARTNERSHIP

Assessment criteria to address

Total CFI request ($)	Assessment criteria to address	Maximum number of pages
≤ $75,000	Infrastructure	4
> $75,000 to $800,000	Infrastructure and Benefits to Canadians	6

Submission deadlines and process

The CFI partners with SSHRC's Insight Grants (IG) and Partnership Grants (PG) programs. Applications for Insight Grants are due every **October 15** and for Partnership Grants – Stage 1 every **February 15**. Requests for CFI infrastructure support should be made by institutions at the time of the SSHRC application. Only applicants invited to submit an application to the PG – Stage 2 competition may apply jointly for research infrastructure funding from the CFI.

Institutions wanting to apply to the JELF for infrastructure support associated with an IG or PG must submit separate proposals to SSHRC and to the CFI. The CFI will forward the JELF proposal to SSHRC where it will be combined with the IG or PG application form to create a joint proposal for review. Details regarding the SSHRC component of the submission can be found on the SSHRC website.

Review process

SSHRC administers the review process for joint proposals in accordance with their review process. The infrastructure component of the proposal will be evaluated in accordance to CFI criteria. During the assessment process, the CFI will provide clarifications on its policies and procedures.

Funding decisions

The final funding decision for the research support component of the proposal will be made by SSHRC. The final funding decision for the infrastructure component of the proposal will be made by the CFI Board of Directors at one of their triannual meetings and is contingent upon a positive SSHRC decision. Institutions are informed by email of decisions related to the infrastructure component as well as conditions associated with an award. The reviewers' comments are made available to the institutions by SSHRC.