CFI Update

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

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2017 Innovation Fund competition: almost there!

We are heading into the home stretch of our tenth national research infrastructure competition, with an overall budget of $552 million. Our Board of Directors will make funding decisions on June 20, investing up to $425 million in capital funding and $127 million for associated operating costs through the Infrastructure Operating Fund (IOF). We will inform institutions of the Board decisions soon after the Board meeting, and will provide the reports of the Expert and Multidisciplinary Assessment Committees by the end of June.

Canada's Fundamental Science Review: the Naylor report

Our Board of Directors welcomed the recommendations made by Canada's Fundamental Science Review Panel in its report released April 10. The report highlights the strengths of Canada's research system and points to areas where federal support for research can be improved. The panel offers a series of recommendations that focus on increasing federal investments in research and better coordination among the federal granting agencies and the CFI. It also recommends improved support for early-career researchers, international collaborations, major research facilities and equity and diversity in research, as well as investments that will further enhance research infrastructure and its operational funding.

The report recognized research infrastructure as the fourth pillar of university research in Canada, along with the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. It also recommends that the Government of Canada regularize support for research infrastructure and its operations and maintenance with an allocation of $535 million per year.

This includes $300 million per year for capital expenditures in research infrastructure and $235 million per year to operate and maintain it. The balance between capital and operational support will help sustain Canada's research capabilities across the full spectrum of institutions and disciplines. This level is consistent with the average annual disbursements of the CFI over the past decade.

College-Industry Innovation Fund update

Stream 1

The fifth competition under Stream 1 of the College-Industry Innovation Fund was launched in December 2016. We received 27 proposals from 24 institutions — the largest number of proposals since the inaugural competition in 2012. As usual, the review of the proposals comprises two stages: a review by an Expert Committee followed by a review by a Multidisciplinary Assessment Committee (MAC). The Expert Committee meetings will take place from late June to mid-July, and the MAC meeting will take place at the end of September 2017. Funding decisions will be made at the November 2017 meeting of our Board of Directors.

Stream 2

On May 26, NSERC received the Letters of Intent for the 15th competition of their College and Community Innovation Program – Build Innovation Enhancement Grants. Colleges interested in applying for CFI infrastructure were instructed to include a summary of their request in their Letter of Intent. Access to the online application form for Stream 2 of the CFI's College-Industry Innovation Fund will be available by the time the invitations to proceed to a full application are communicated by NSERC (i.e. August). The revised Call for Proposals and guidelines to complete a proposal will be made available on our website (Innovation.ca) by the end of June. As in Stream 1, institutions were allowed to submit up to two proposals in different areas of priority. Funding decisions will be made at the March 2018 meeting of our Board of Directors.

Working group on multi-institutional proposals

Following the highly engaging discussion on internal institutional processes for the Innovation Fund at the CARA 2017 annual conference, the topic of managing the development and submission of multi-institutional proposals was raised. Given the challenges of dealing with proposals that involve multiple institutions and researchers, whether under the Innovation Fund or Challenge 1 of the Cyberinfrastructure Initiative, a number of ideas and suggestions were proposed for how to maximize efficient exchange of information on participation, collaboration and submission requirements. As a result, the CFI will be convening a working group over the coming weeks to examine potential improvements to CAMS and to institutional processes.

We wish to thank the 83 institutions who provided a description of their internal decision-making processes for the selection of their Innovation Fund proposals. After presenting highlights during our CFI update session at the national conference, we will be sharing a summary report of good institutional practices on internal processes for the Innovation Fund later this summer.

Cyberinfrastructure Initiative – Challenge 1 competition

The second competition of the Cyberinfrastructure Initiative – Challenge 1, which was launched in March, saw 38 Notices of Intent submitted from 20 eligible institutions. The size of the current competition is very similar to that of the first competition, which had 37 Notices of Intent submitted.

Notices of Intent will be subject to merit review by a Multidisciplinary Assessment Committee (MAC). The MAC will meet in Toronto on June 22, 2017 to review all Notices of Intent and identify those that best fit the objectives of the Cyberinfrastructure Initiative. Applicant institutions for the Notices of Intent selected by the MAC will be invited on or around June 22 to submit a full proposal. The deadline to receive proposals is October 13, 2017.

A digital research infrastructure strategy for Canada

In November 2015, we published **our vision for a Digital Research Infrastructure (DRI) ecosystem for Canada.** This was informed by an in-depth consultation over the previous two years with a range of key stakeholders across the country and abroad. With major investments under our Cyberinfrastructure Initiative, both in **research data infrastructure projects** and in **advanced research computing infrastructure,** an additional $75 million allocated for future investments in cyberinfrastructure in the 2015 Federal Budget, and with the ongoing work of the **Leadership Council on Digital Research Infrastructure**, including the upcoming Leadership Council's Summit on June 27th in Toronto, significant efforts are underway that will help shape the future of Canada's DRI ecosystem.

Building on Compute Canada's existing strategic plan, these current efforts represent a perfect starting point for the development of a pan-Canadian roadmap that will identify the emerging and future needs of the research community and serve as a basis for the continued development of Canada's advanced computing research platform. This roadmap should also capitalize on the unique strengths of each of the four regional organizations: ACEnet, Calcul Québec, Compute Ontario and WestGrid. The development of a roadmap will be critical in helping inform future plans for the $75 million allocation under our Cyberinfrastructure Initiative. We encourage key stakeholders and leaders to work together, and with the Leadership Council, in setting the vision and crafting Canada's digital research infrastructure roadmap.

Our first catalyst study

We are pleased to introduce a new way to examine the impacts of CFI funding. A "catalyst study" aims to assess the overall impact CFI investments have had in a particular research area at an institution. For this first study, we looked at Acadia University's Centre for Analytical Research on the Environment (CARE), which undertakes research and provides analytical services aimed at the quantification of contaminants to advance understanding of processes that support healthy ecosystems.

The CFI funded five environmental research projects at Acadia through our John R. Evans Leaders Fund between 2002 and 2010. By bringing the infrastructure from each of those projects together under one roof to form CARE, this small university has had a big impact in environmental studies. The Centre has attracted researchers to form a multidisciplinary group of scientists, which has helped the institution secure collaborations nationally and internationally and solidify its reputation as a hub with expertise in environmental research and training.

The approach for examining the impacts was developed by scaling back the platform outcome measurement study approach. Rather than having the platform, or in this case, the institution holding the awards, prepare a self-report, the Evaluation and Outcome Assessment (EOA) team gathered all existing documentation, undertook interviews with key personnel, secured other relevant data (publication data etc.) and prepared a report. The report was then verified and validated by the institution and associated researchers. The **Catalyst Study: Acadia Centre for Analytical Research on the Environment (CARE)** is now available on our website.

CFI's 20th anniversary celebration winds down

Over the past 10 months we have marked our 20th anniversary with a campaign that focused on telling stories of the real people who are benefiting from research enabled by CFI funding. Under the theme, *Research builds our communities*, we relied on institutions across the country to help make the campaign a success. We want to thank everyone at your institutions, in particular your communications teams, with whom we worked closely to develop our features, and all those who supported our campaign by sharing research stories through our hashtag, #CFI20yrs. Our efforts would not have been successful without your contributions!

We have three final podcasts launching in our "origin" series in the coming weeks. Listen to **Episode five: A new research strategy for Canada,** which features commentary from former CFI presidents David Strangway and Eliot Phillipson, along with leading Canadian researchers. It looks at the early days of the CFI, and how the newly established organization

started outfitting Canadian universities with the state-of-the-art research infrastructure they so sorely needed. Our two final origin podcasts will look at the future of the CFI: an English panel discussion with our President and CEO, Gilles Patry, and our Board Chair, Kevin Smith, and a French panel featuring Gilles Patry and Suzanne Fortier, Principal at McGill. Subscribe to our **English** and **French** podcasts.

Upcoming funding announcements

Given the end of the academic year, it is unlikely that there will be any further national funding announcements by the Government of Canada until the House sits again in the fall. Once announcement dates are determined, we will be in touch with all institutions that received notification of support from our John R. Evans Leaders Fund after our March Board meeting, as well as those who will receive funding notifications after our June Board meeting. As usual, please do not make any public announcements about CFI funding until it is announced by the Government of Canada. We appreciate your cooperation.

CFI Research Facilities Navigator update

Thank you to all who responded to our annual process for updating your institution's profiles in the Navigator. While we aim to target certain labs during our updates, please note that you can request changes at any time.

In addition, if you would like your institution to be part of a comprehensive list of industry liaison contacts, please submit contact information, including email, telephone number and address, to **industry-industrie@innovation.ca**.