

CFI Update

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

March 2019

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Much to celebrate

The Fundamental Science Review Panel, commissioned by Minister of Science Kirsty Duncan, offered two recommendations that concerned the Canada Foundation for Innovation. The first, and most significant, was to ensure that the CFI would be funded on an ongoing basis. The second was increased funding to the Major Science Initiatives' envelope targeted to a group of seven national facilities.

I will concentrate here on the question of ongoing funding and ask you to recall with me the aftermath of the Panel's report. The entire academic community joined together in supporting it. I cannot recall a time when there was a more sincere, genuine and universally enthusiastic outpouring of approval from our community for a set of recommendations. The Minister of Science, Ministers in Cabinet and Members of Parliament listened to your words and heeded the Panel's recommendations in Budget 2018.

This was of great significance for researchers, universities, colleges, hospitals and provinces who were, by a simple phrase, granted leave to plan their work and to dare to imagine the future of research in Canada. It was a great gift! Founded 21 years ago, the CFI was established to stop the brain drain and to provide the labs and equipment required to allow researchers to pursue their dreams in Canada. In 2018, we were given a future for researchers and our students who will be able to plan their careers here. We were given not just the means to retain scholars, but to attract them to join us in projects located right across the country.

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For this, I thank Dr. David Naylor and his co-panelists, the researchers across the country who stood together in support, the Government of Canada and especially Minister Kirsty Duncan whose leadership and passionate belief in the benefits of the excellent work you are doing, were key. It was a bold act to establish the CFI. It was equally courageous to set it on a trajectory of unlimited success.

The translation of visions into deeds may well take time, as we all know. It was no small feat to enable the CFI to continue to make multi-year commitments within a 12-month fiscal framework. We all understand that it takes several years to build buildings and labs and order sophisticated equipment to unique specifications. We all know about annual budgets and funding, that, even if scheduled to be repeated annually, is normally spent within the same yearly time frame. Thanks to the fine work by colleagues at Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada and the patient understanding of the Department of Finance and the Treasury Board, matters were resolved and the CFI received its new contribution agreement in January. The CFI Board and the Minister subsequently approved spending.

While this was occurring, CFI staff crisscrossed the country and you submitted over 70 statements outlining your suggestions and advice on the next Innovation Fund competitions and your ideas for the future. I thank you once again and ask you to join me in expressing sincere gratitude to the fine staff of the CFI who braved the elements to listen and to learn from you.

~ Roseann O'Reilly Runte

UPDATE ON THE PAN-CANADIAN CONVERSATION

On November 6, 2018, the CFI launched a pan-Canadian consultation with the public release of a discussion paper – *Conversation on the future of research and research infrastructure in Canada: role of the Canada Foundation for Innovation*. This paper was meant to stimulate discussions with the Canadian research community and key stakeholders on the future of research and research infrastructure in Canada, and the role of CFI in supporting institutions for sustaining and enhancing their research capacity.

In addition to inviting the community to submit written responses (72 submissions were received), CFI staff undertook a series of 16 town hall meetings across the country, as well as two webinars (one in English and one in French), during the months of January and February 2019, to broaden our reach and get input from as many stakeholders as possible. This direct engagement with the community resulted in a broad range of genuine and honest input on issues of interest to the CFI. Through these conversations, we met with more than 500 highly

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engaged participants from coast to coast. The 2019 pan-Canadian conversation highlighted your ongoing, deep commitment and continued interest in ensuring our funding architecture remains relevant and responsive to the research community. CFI staff continue to collate and process the feedback received and will be able to provide a summary of findings and proposed actions in June 2019.

2020 INNOVATION FUND

The 2019 Contribution Agreement provides the CFI with the ability to award funds through Innovation Fund competitions held every 24 to 30 months. With the 2020 Innovation Fund draft call for proposals expected in the coming days, we are launching the first Innovation Fund competition under our new funding model.

The CFI will invest up to \$400 million in capital funding and \$120 million for associated operating costs through the Infrastructure Operating Fund (IOF) for this competition. Through this funding, the CFI will support initiatives that allow institutions and their researchers to build on established capabilities, to accelerate current research and technology development or to enhance emerging strategic priority areas. Projects are expected to be aligned with the institutional strategic research plans and guided by the institutions' policies or plans on equity, diversity and inclusion. Institutions are also encouraged to submit projects that are of appropriate maturity and offer the best potential for transformative impact.

Although the broad parameters for the 2020 Innovation Fund call for proposals are very similar to the 2017 call, we have introduced improvements in response to the valuable feedback that we heard in 2017 as well as during our recent pan-Canadian conversation about the future of research infrastructure in Canada. These improvements will be outlined when the draft call is launched. We plan to set the deadline for proposals from eligible institutions for January 2020, with funding recommendations presented to our Board of Directors in November 2020.

JOHN R. EVANS LEADERS FUND

Any unused or uncommitted funds from the 2017–20 John R. Evans Leaders Fund (JELF) allocation will lapse at the end of March 2020, including those associated with unsuccessful CFI projects. The usage period for the 2017–20 JELF allocation will end with the decisions made at the CFI Board of Directors' meeting in March 2020. This means that the last possible intake is the October 2019 round, including the October 21 deadline for Canada Research Chair nominations. We will continue to monitor the rates of use of institutional envelopes as we finalize the 2020–23 allocations.

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We will allow institutions that have already exhausted their 2017–20 allocation to start drawing from their 2020–23 allocation in June, to enable them to address their needs in attracting and retaining the very best of today's and tomorrow's researchers. The new JELF allocation will enable the CFI to make investments at a rate of approximately \$91 million per year (\$70 million plus \$21 million from our Infrastructure Operating Fund) over a three-year period (2020–21 to 2022–23).

Moreover, in order to offset the pressure and the high demand on JELF institutional allocations due to the creation of 285 additional chairs (announced in Federal budget 2018), the CFI will allocate an additional \$175,000 per chair created. These additional allocations can be accessed as soon as the April 24 deadline for CRC nominations. As such, an additional \$50 million will be injected into the institutional JELF allocation for the 2020-23 funding cycle, which will bring the total JELF allocation to \$260 million (plus \$78 million of infrastructure operating funds). This represents a 30% increase from the overall annual allocation during the 2017-18 to 2019-20 periods. We believe that this extra investment will boost the capacity of institutions to conduct world class research and allow us to respond to several suggestions made to increase support to the JELF funding program as recently expressed in the 2019 pan-Canadian conversation.

You can expect to receive confirmation of your institution's 2020-23 allocation in early June 2019 in order to allow you to properly plan your infrastructure needs.

2019 COLLEGE-INDUSTRY INNOVATION FUND

Stream 1: Webinars

In order to help colleges improve the quality of their CIIF proposals, we are organizing a series of webinars in April 2019 for applicants to the 2019 Stream 1 competition. The sessions are also open to potential applicants to future competitions. The webinar will focus on completing the proposal and the most common pitfalls applicants should avoid. Recordings of the webinars will be posted on our website shortly thereafter.

Please use the links below to register for one of the sessions by April 5:

- English session: April 10, 2019 at 1:30 p.m. EDT ([CIIF English webinar](#))
- French session: April 11, 2019 at 1:30 p.m. EDT ([CIIF French webinar](#))

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Please note that the CIIF – Stream 1 proposals are due by May 15, 2019. If you have any questions about this competition, please contact your CFI Senior Programs Officer.

Stream 2: Research infrastructure associated with a College and Community Innovation Program–Build Innovation Enhancement Grant, competition 17

We will continue our collaboration with the tri-council's Build Innovation Enhancement (IE) Grants component of the College and Community Innovation (CCI) Program (competition 17). We will accept research infrastructure proposals associated with a five-year CCI–Build IE grant application submitted to NSERC. This joint initiative allows colleges to apply for a comprehensive funding package supporting both research costs (through a CCI–IE grant) and research infrastructure (through CFI's College-Industry Innovation Fund – Stream 2). NSERC will receive the CCI–Build IE Letters of Intent (LOIs) which are due by May 23, 2019. Following a review of the LOIs by the CCI committee in summer 2019, those containing a CFI request and which are invited to proceed to a full proposal will need to submit a proposal to the CFI by October 24, 2019 along with the CCI–Build IE proposal submitted to NSERC.

MAJOR SCIENCE INITIATIVES FUND

We developed processes to review the 16 MSI-funded facilities at the midterm of their funding cycle. The review guidelines are based on comments from the MSI-targeted consultation, and those we received following the 2017–22 competition, as well as on an analysis of the 2012–17 performance reports. These guidelines were shared with the MSI facilities and institutions in November 2018. Midterm review proposals are due June 15, 2019 and will go to the CFI Board for approval in November 2019.

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REVISED COMPETITION TIMELINE

**Summary of CFI funding opportunities
2019 to 2026**



% Calls for proposals for future Innovation Fund competitions are to be confirmed

The College-Industry Innovation Fund - Stream 2 competition, in partnership with NSERC, is confirmed annually

* The John R. Evans Leaders Fund accepts proposals in February, June and October each year.

[^] Decisions for John R. Evans Leaders Fund are made at each of the quarterly CFI Board meetings.

Legend Call for proposals Notice of intent Proposal deadline Decisions by CFI Board Midterm review