

# CFI Update

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

## August 2018

### Update on the 2018 federal budget, and looking ahead to the fall

#### A few major milestones

There have been a number of key announcement and milestones for the Canadian research community and for the CFI over the past 18 months. First, the Fundamental Science Review report submitted to Minister Duncan on April 10, 2017, outlined a number of key policy and funding recommendations on the support for research infrastructure. In particular, the report recommended that the federal government provide the CFI with a “stable annual budget” (Rec. 6.8), and that it provide funding to enable the CFI to enhance its support for a subset of “truly national-scale” research facilities currently funded under the Major Science Initiatives Fund (Rec 6.10) — from 40 percent to 60 percent. In addition, the report recommended the government develop a national digital research infrastructure (DRI) strategy (Rec 6.9), as well as advisory mechanisms to improve coordination and oversight for the life cycle of federally supported Major Research Facilities (Rec 4.7).

In September 2017, Dr. Mona Nemer became Canada’s new Chief Science Advisor, and in October, the Minister of Science announced the creation of the Canada Research Coordinating Committee, a key recommendation of the Fundamental Science Review.

Finally, in February this year, the federal budget provided significant reinvestments in fundamental research and research infrastructure — including funding to implement a Digital Research Infrastructure Strategy — totaling more than \$3 billion. The 2018 Budget announced “ongoing, stable funding to the Canada Foundation for Innovation,” including \$763 million over five years starting in 2018-19, with “permanent funding at an ongoing level of \$462 million per year by 2023-24.” As part of the allocation over the next five years, \$160 million will be directed for “increased support to Canada’s nationally important research facilities through the Major Science Initiatives Fund.”

This announcement, which delivered on three key CFI-related recommendations in the Fundamental Science Review report, would not have been possible without the unwavering and unified support and trust you have shown the CFI over the years. For that, we thank you.

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## Looking ahead

As we have mentioned in previous updates, we continue to work closely with senior officials at Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, and are making progress toward finalizing an agreement for our Budget 2018 allocations by fall.

In the meantime, we are involved in a number of consultation exercises.

We recently conducted a consultation on the Major Science Initiatives Fund to determine how to improve and enhance it over the short- and long-term, keeping in mind the expectations of the \$160 million allocated to the fund in Budget 2018 and building on recommendations in the Fundamental Science Review report.

We will also be actively engaged in the CRCC consultations currently underway and will carefully consider all relevant key messages and suggestions arising from them.

And finally, our upcoming pan-Canadian consultation, planned for the fall, will be largely inspired by our [2015 exercise](#). We will first publish a discussion paper, followed by several town halls, meetings and discussions with key CFI stakeholders. We hope to share a final summary report with the community by early 2019.

Focusing on **three major trends** we have identified through our continual interactions with the research community, the discussion paper will provide the basis for our consultation process.

We believe these trends will drive research and scholarly work over the next decade and beyond:

The first trend is **convergence**, where a specific and compelling problem is identified that requires the deep integration of disciplines, knowledge, theories, methods, data and communities. Convergence goes beyond interdisciplinarity by bringing many fields of research together, eliminating silos and creating systematic cohesion and thinking. Convergence can also be understood in an institutional context as universities and colleges build core facilities to better manage and maximize the shared use of their infrastructure, combine their strategic research priorities and research facilities to take on specific challenges and develop partnerships around the world.

The second trend is a **growing interest in international collaboration and engagement**. Across Canada, we see Canadian researchers and their institutions increasingly collaborating with the best in the world and engaging in global research enterprises. This is bringing Canadian research expertise and strengths to the global stage and is attracting international researchers and research organizations to Canadian institutions.

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Finally, the pool of talent within Canada's research community is broadening to include a **greater diversity of individuals** with varied ages, backgrounds, ethnicities and genders. By ensuring that all qualified Canadians have opportunities to build research careers, succeed in generating new knowledge and contribute to quality of life, we ensure Canadian research meets high standards of excellence and has meaningful impact.

We trust we can count on your support over the coming few months, as we will be seeking your advice and insights on our discussion paper. In the meantime, feel free to share with us any ideas and thoughts for improvements or new directions for the CFI. We are particularly interested in your thoughts on:

- 1) Interdisciplinary and convergence research<sup>1</sup>;
- 2) International cooperation and collaboration to ensure "Canada's best are working with the best in the world";
- 3) Equity, diversity and inclusion from a research infrastructure perspective;
- 4) Core facilities and regional platforms;
- 5) The critical role of smaller universities, colleges and cégeps in Canada's research and development enterprise; and
- 6) Any other topics of importance and relevance to the CFI.

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<sup>1</sup> The National Science Foundation defines convergence research as research driven by a specific and compelling problem or opportunity, whether it arises from deep scientific questions or pressing societal needs that requires deep integration across disciplines, and where their knowledge, theories, methods, data, research communities and languages become increasingly intermingled or integrated.