

# CFI Update

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

## June 2020

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### **Exceptional Opportunities Fund – COVID-19 competition**

The Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) is pleased to launch the [Exceptional Opportunities Fund – COVID-19 competition](#).

In this competition, the CFI aims to support urgent infrastructure needs for ongoing research related to COVID-19. The EOF – COVID-19 competition will be open for proposals from all disciplines. Projects submitted through this competition should include a compelling case on how the infrastructure component is an indispensable element of a current research project related to COVID-19.

The CFI will invest up to \$25 million for this competition. As an exception to our usual competitions, the CFI will cover up to 100 percent of the eligible costs of each project.

The deadline for submitting proposals is July 6, 2020 at 23:59 EDT.

Please send any questions you may have to [EOF-COVID19@innovation.ca](mailto:EOF-COVID19@innovation.ca).

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## **The latest on the 2020 Innovation Fund**

The review process for the 2020 Innovation Fund competition continues to proceed according to original timelines. As outlined in the CFI Update on March 26, 2020, we changed the format of Expert Committee meetings to videoconference and eliminated in-person meetings with team leaders and representatives from institutions.

In light of the uncertainty of pandemic-related restrictions on travel and large gatherings, the format of the Multidisciplinary Assessment Committee (MAC) meetings — the second stage of the merit-review process — will also change from in-person to videoconference.

This revised format will require changes to the MAC process. The key change will be a streamlined process in which only proposals whose ratings are above a threshold of excellence at the Expert Committee stage will proceed to the MAC stage. As always, the CFI is committed to ensuring the merit-review process remains rigorous and fair.

## **Evaluation of the College-Industry Innovation Fund**

The CFI has engaged Goss Gilroy Inc., an independent consulting company, to undertake an evaluation of the College-Industry Innovation Fund. The evaluation will focus on the design and ongoing relevance of the Fund, including any gaps or barriers.

As part of the evaluation Goss Gilroy Inc. will be contacting college liaisons and other stakeholders to seek their input. They will also be administering a survey of colleges to obtain feedback on the Fund. With this in mind, we ask that you alert your researchers that they may receive a request from Goss Gilroy Inc. to complete the voluntary survey in the coming weeks and to encourage them to participate in this important exercise.

Please note that this evaluation is separate from other data collection activities of late and is not related to the ongoing CIIF 2020 competition.

## **Update on the Infrastructure Operating Fund**

### ***Changes to the way IOF is paid***

We are changing the way we pay the Infrastructure Operating Fund (IOF) to institutions. This change will help us achieve more predictable disbursements that better align with the annual funding we receive from the Government of Canada.

### ***How IOF payments will be calculated***

In April of each year, we will make IOF payments to institutions based on the date that the IOF was made available (that is, the date the award for the associated infrastructure was finalized).

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In April 2021, we will make a payment to institutions for any unused portion of their IOF allocation that was made available before April 1, 2016. You will receive a letter by March 2021 if such a payment will be made to your institution, including the payment amount and supporting calculations.

From now until April 2024, we are transitioning towards paying IOF to institutions two years after the associated infrastructure award is finalized. Institutions are still encouraged to distribute their IOF allocation based on actual operating and maintenance needs. They are not required to allocate the exact amount to the project that generated it. This offers institutions flexibility to support projects with different needs and scope, while ensuring accountability.

The transition is planned as follows:

Payment Date	Will pay IOF associated to infrastructure with award finalization date before
April 2021	April 1, 2016
April 2022	April 1, 2018
April 2023	April 1, 2020
April 2024	April 1, 2022
April 2025	April 1, 2023

## ***IOF annual report***

We have not changed the reporting requirements for the IOF. The IOF annual report continues to be due annually June 15 (three-month automatic extension this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic). It is important to note that we do not require you to spend the entire IOF amount in the fiscal year it is paid to you. We do however expect that you will use the IOF amounts paid to you in the years to come. We will monitor each institution's IOF expenditures (as reported in the IOF annual report) compared to the IOF payments we have made and will follow up with institutions individually if we have concerns.

The IOF annual report will also allow you to request additional IOF payments, if your April installment is insufficient to cover your IOF needs for the year.

## ***Questions***

We will update the IOF page of our website shortly and will add Frequently Asked Questions to specifically address the changes to how IOF is paid. Please contact the CFI Senior Programs Officer assigned to your institution if you have feedback, questions or concerns.

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## **CFI launches *Research in a time of pandemic* video campaign (#GoResearch)**

Recently, we launched a social media campaign we are calling *Research in a time of pandemic* (#GoResearch). Working with CFI-funded institutions, we are producing video vignettes from researchers to raise awareness about the breadth of research expertise in CFI-funded labs across the country that is helping during the pandemic.

Initial response has been very enthusiastic and positive. We have posted the first few videos on our [YouTube channel](#) and are promoting them through [Twitter](#) using #GoResearch.

We invite all research institutions to be a part of this initiative and encourage researchers working in CFI-funded labs or with CFI-funded equipment who wish to share their stories to contact the CFI at [creativeservices@innovation.ca](mailto:creativeservices@innovation.ca) to learn more about how to participate.

## **Public funding announcements**

All Government of Canada communications, including social media, continue to focus almost exclusively on content related to COVID-19 information updates, resources and support for Canadians. This means that all outstanding CFI funding decisions (November 2019 MSI, March 2020 JELF) remain under embargo. We are currently in discussions with our government colleagues to determine the strategy for national announcements moving forward, and will keep you informed of details as we have them. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please contact our Events Coordinator, [Cynthia Beaudin](#).

## **Research Facilities Navigator updates**

### ***Navigator celebrates listing its 700th facility***

The [Research Facilities Navigator](#), CFI's directory of publicly funded labs across Canada open to collaboration, recently celebrated listing its 700th facility. We want to thank all of the institutions and researchers who have listed their facilities, helping build the Navigator into a key resource for connecting business, government and academia to drive Canadian innovation.

### ***Criteria for listing facilities on the Navigator***

Growing interest in the Navigator has prompted us to publish [more detailed eligibility criteria](#) for listing research facilities. Please contact our team at [navigator@innovation.ca](mailto:navigator@innovation.ca) to determine if a research facility is eligible to join the Navigator, or to create or update a new profile.