

2015 ONTARIO RESEARCH FUND – LARGE INFRASTRUCTURE FUND: PROGRAM GUIDELINES

OVERVIEW

The Ontario Research Fund - Research Infrastructure (ORF-RI) program ensures that Ontario's publicly funded research institutes continue to have competitive, state-of-the-art infrastructure to engage in world-leading research and technology development.

The Large Infrastructure Fund (LIF) component of the ORF-RI program assists institutions in capitalizing on their research strengths by investing in facilities that bring together researchers from a range of disciplines, technology experts and industry partners to generate new ideas, stimulate technology development and support the growth of strong regional economies.

The ORF will contribute a maximum of 40% towards the total eligible costs, and the research institution is responsible for obtaining at least 60% from the Canada Foundation for Innovation (through the Innovation Fund), any private funding partners, or its own resources. For further information, please review the CFI guidelines for the [2015 Innovation Fund Competition](#).

The ORF program is a competitive, non-entitlement program. The ORF will not automatically match the CFI awards to Ontario institutions. ORF funding decisions will be based on scientific excellence and strategic value to Ontario. This will help to ensure alignment with the Ontario Innovation Agenda, and ensure that the province is extracting value from research investments.

PURPOSE OF ROUND

While research and technology development proposals in all disciplines are eligible for funding, the Ministry particularly encourages collaborative projects across institutions and disciplines from the following targeted areas of strength highlighted in the [Ontario Innovation Agenda](#):

- Bio-economy and clean technologies
- Advanced health technologies
- Digital media and information & communications technologies

APPLICATION & ADJUDICATION PROCESS

The Ontario Research Fund – Large Infrastructure adjudication process consists of the following independent peer-review process:

- An Ontario Strategic Value Review panel will review Notices of Intent and will make recommendations on their alignment to Ontario strategic value priorities. Panel feedback will be sent to institutions prior to the submission deadline for Ontario Research Fund and Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) applications;
- CFI expert committees will complete a scientific review of full applications;
- Ontario Strategic Value Review panels will provide an in-depth review of the full proposals' strategic value to Ontario and make recommendations on the priority grouping of proposals (high priority, priority or non-priority);
- The Strategic Value Review panel recommendations will be provided to the CFI Special Multidisciplinary Assessment Committee;
- Following receipt of the results of the CFI adjudication process, the ORF Advisory Board will incorporate strategic value considerations into its recommendations on priorities to the Minister of Research and Innovation;
- The final funding decision rests with the Minister of Research and Innovation. The Minister may approve applications, approve subject to terms and conditions, or decline applications at his sole discretion.

DEADLINE DATES

The closing date for submitting a Notice of Intent is February 28, 2014.
The closing date for submitting a proposal is August 1, 2014.

FUNDING

The ORF will contribute a maximum of 40 percent toward the total eligible costs. The research institution is responsible for obtaining at least 60 percent from the CFI, any private funding partners, or its own resources.

Final determination of the level of provincial funding rests with the ORF. If the project cost decreases after the dates of the MRI award, then the ORF contribution will decrease accordingly.

Grants received from other Ontario government ministries or agencies cannot be used to match ORF funding.

NOTICE OF INTENT (NOI) REVIEW

Eligible institutions applying to the ORF-Large Infrastructure Fund (ORF-LIF) are invited to submit one NOI per project.

The ORF-LIF NOI form is available on the ORF-RI website. Institutions must ensure that the total value of the NOIs being submitted is no higher than twenty percent (20%) above its total CFI Envelope.

- The NOI includes a one paragraph (4000 characters) project overview that will be shared with institutes to help institutions and potential partners identify opportunities for meaningful collaboration.
- The Ministry will coordinate a strategic value review of the NOIs to assess the benefits to Ontario. Feedback on the NOIs will be provided to applicants prior to MRI's and the CFI's full application deadline.
- The NOI is non-binding. After the NOI deadline institutions may choose to submit alternate applications, however, these applicants will not benefit from a strategic value review prior to the application deadline and these applicants will not have their NOIs shared with other institutes.

The Ministry requests that an electronic copy of the CFI Notice of Intent be sent to the Ministry by May 1, 2014.

FULL APPLICATION REVIEW

EXPERT REVIEW (COORDINATED BY CFI)

- **Institutional track record and commitment:** The proposal builds on existing capacity and key investments in people and infrastructure. Through tangible commitments, the institution supports the area of the proposal in order to maintain or gain a competitive advantage internationally.
- **Research or technology development:** The proposed research or technology development activities enabled by the research infrastructure are timely, innovative and at the leading edge internationally. The activities have the potential to lead to breakthroughs and will enhance the international competitiveness of the institution and its researchers.
- **Team:** The principal users of the infrastructure are established or emerging leaders in the relevant research or technology development domains. The team has the necessary expertise, ability and relevant collaborations and partnerships in place to successfully conduct the research or technology development activities.
- **Infrastructure:** The infrastructure is necessary and appropriate to conduct the research or technology development activities. The use of the infrastructure will be maximized within and among institutions and sectors (private, public and non-profit).
- **Sustainability of the research infrastructure:** The proposal presents a compelling plan for sustainability with tangible and appropriate commitments. The

proposed infrastructure will be effectively managed, operated and maintained over its useful life.

- **Benefits to Canadians:** The research or technology development activities are likely to lead to significant tangible benefits for society, health, the economy and/or the environment. Where appropriate, effective pathways will be developed to transfer the results and outputs of the research or technology development to potential end-users in a timely manner.

ONTARIO STRATEGIC REVIEW (COORDINATED BY MRI)

The Ontario Strategic Review Panels will be asked to assess the proposals against each of the three strategic value criteria. Panels will be asked to evaluate the strategic impact based on size, complexity and nature of the project.

Panels will also be asked to group proposals into the following priority categories:

- High Priority Proposals – Proposals that are highly aligned with Ontario’s priorities and innovation goals.
- Priority Proposals – Proposals that are aligned with Ontario’s priorities and innovation goals.
- Non-Priority Proposals – Proposals that are not aligned with Ontario’s priorities and innovation goals.

STRATEGIC VALUE CRITERIA

Anticipated value to Ontarians as demonstrated by the applicant in the following two categories. Neither category is more important than the other.

While applicants must address both categories, they are encouraged to emphasize those which are most relevant to their project.

The examples of each type of value are illustrative, not exhaustive. Applicants are encouraged to document all benefits associated with their proposal.

- **Economic Benefits**
 - Improvements to Ontario’s productivity and competitiveness
 - Recruitment, retention and training of highly qualified personnel (HQP)
 - Creation of jobs
 - Sustainable use of natural resources
 - Promotion of trade
 - Improving efficiency in private and/or public sector
 - Regional economic development
 - Ontario’s global reputation as an innovation hub
 - Expanding access to valuable data assets
 - If applicable:

- Commercialization potential
 - Ability to produce spin-off products and/or firms
 - Likelihood of patent and licensing opportunities
 - Knowledge transfer to industry
- **Societal Benefits**
 - Improvements to health and wellbeing of Ontarians
 - Preservation of environmental quality
 - Reducing poverty
 - Engagement and mentorship with youth
 - Improving public policy
 - Effecting a profound shift in the understanding of a given discipline

In addition, applications must address the Research Translation steps that are being taken to maximize the likelihood of realizing these benefits. To that end, applicants are strongly encouraged to begin engagement with partners as early as possible.

- **Research Translation**
 - A clear and tangible strategy for achieving Research Impacts
 - Engagement of private sector and/or community partners to encourage the adoption of innovative technologies, practices, procedures, and/or policies
 - The extent to which the project will ensure the next-stage recipients or end-users of the research have been and will be engaged. Next-stage recipients and end-users may include but are not limited to:
 - Firms
 - Trade associations
 - Clinicians
 - Researchers in the scientific community
 - Non-profit organizations
 - Community groups
 - Government and agencies
 - Track record of collaboration with next-stage recipients and end-users
 - Strength and commitment of interested recipient partners, demonstrated through financial contributions and/or strong evidence of vested interest in the research

REGIONAL AND NATIONAL PROJECTS

The lead Ontario institution seeking provincial funding for a national project must submit an ORF application for the Ontario component of the project, explicitly demonstrating the project's benefits to Ontario especially if the project will be located outside of Ontario (how the strategic review criteria will be met - i.e.: what is the Return on Investment to Ontario). Institutions should ensure that out-of-province partners submit funding applications to their respective governments for their components of the regional/national project.

The ORF proposal should also identify the role, responsibilities and financial commitments of each of the Ontario institutions and demonstrate that the ORF funding requested is in line with the level of participation of the Ontario institution(s) in the national project.

ELIGIBILITY

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Ontario institutions that are eligible to apply to the CFI Innovation Fund and meet the requirements listed below are also eligible to apply to the Ontario Research Fund for Large Infrastructure Funds.

Funding is open, on a competitive basis, to:

- Ontario publicly assisted universities
- Ontario colleges of applied arts and technology
- Ontario hospital research institutes
- not-for-profit research institutes affiliated with an Ontario university or hospital, excluding those funded primarily by business or industry
- consortia of the above, with one institution as lead applicant, assuming responsibility and accountability for the consortium
- other Ontario not-for-profit research institutions at the discretion of the ORF Advisory Board

A Not-for-profit research institution seeking eligibility for ORF-RI funding must demonstrate that:

- It is not an agency of the federal government, a provincial government, a territorial government, or a for-profit organization
- It demonstrated its capacity to conduct research
- It does not receive ongoing funding from the province

Where an institution's eligibility to apply for ORF-RI funding may be in question, such institutions must request and receive confirmation of eligibility from the ORF Advisory Board.

The following organizations will not be considered eligible and cannot apply for, or receive, ORF funding:

- For-profit organizations and agencies of for-profit entities
- Federal departments, departmental corporations, parent Crown corporations, or wholly-owned subsidiaries of parent Crown corporations
- Provincial or territorial departments, agencies, or Crown corporations, as defined in the Government Agency Establishment and Accountability Directive (except for universities, colleges, other educational institutions, or hospitals)
- Non-profit corporations that have been established by any of the above

ELIGIBLE INFRASTRUCTURE COSTS

This fund is intended to support significant research infrastructure made up of a single item or a collection of items.

An eligible infrastructure project involves the acquisition or development of research infrastructure. In line with the [CFI guidelines](#), construction costs to build new space or to renovate existing space (including fitting out existing space) which is essential to house and use the infrastructure effectively, are eligible.

Final determination of an item's eligibility rests with the ORF, which may make eligibility subject to terms, conditions and limits as set out in the Grant Agreement.

The Ontario Research Fund – Research Infrastructure program stipulates that institutions that incur costs in advance of an Ontario approval do so at their own risk, in the event that provincial funding is not awarded.

RESEARCH COMPUTING INFRASTRUCTURE

For the purposes of this competition, MRI will adopt CFI's definition of "research computing infrastructure". The Ministry will accept CFI's approach to evaluating research computing infrastructure requests which will involve consultation with Compute Canada and regional consortia.

ELIGIBLE PARTNER CONTRIBUTIONS

Only contributions to the eligible costs of projects described above can be counted as partner contributions.

In-Kind Contributions

In-kind contributions are defined as non-monetary resources that external partners provide to eligible projects.

Eligible in-kind contributions include the value of:

- capital items that eligible external partners donate to the institution, such as equipment and facilities;
- certain non-capital eligible costs needed to bring the infrastructure into service (eg., professional services and training); and,
- title to real property to be transferred to the institution (unless ownership has been transferred to the institution at the time the application is submitted).

The ORF retains the right to determine eligibility of any in-kind contribution. ORF may make eligibility subject to terms, conditions and limits.

Assessing the Value of In-Kind Contributions

The ORF policy for assessing and documenting the value of in-kind contributions will be addressed in the Grant Agreement. As a general rule, the ORF will adopt [CFI's policy](#).

The ORF reserves the right to make the final determination of the eligibility and value of in-kind contributions, to disallow expenditures, and reduce the ORF award. To avoid a situation where in-kind contributions may later be deemed ineligible or incorrectly valued, institutions are advised to contact Ministry staff early in the process to confirm the eligibility and valuation of an in-kind contribution.

PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY (IP)

The ORF does not claim any ownership or rights to any IP resulting from ORF-RI funded projects. Such rights are to be determined by the lead institution in accordance with its current IP policy. In cases where a consortium of applicants exists, the policy, as dictated in the Inter-Institutional Agreement between the consortium members, will dictate the IP policy.

Applicants are expected to make mutually agreeable commercialization arrangements with their private sector partners, and to demonstrate how the economic benefits of the proposal extend beyond the private sector partners.

INFORMATION SHARING BETWEEN CFI AND ORF

Before submitting an application to ORF, institutions must complete and submit a "Release of Information" form. Please contact lesley.cunningham@ontario.ca to obtain this form. Institutions that have already submitted a form do not need to resubmit.

The release form ensures that institutions understand that:

- Applicants will be required to request that CFI release to the Ministry, on a confidential basis, all review material related to the project.
- The proposal review carried out by the CFI will be an important component of the ORF-LIF assessment;
- Ministry staff may attend meetings with expert committees regarding their review of projects;
- It is necessary to streamline and harmonize the ongoing administration and monitoring of successful projects with the CFI;
- The CFI will release to MRI, on a confidential basis, ongoing progress and financial information; and,
- Ministry staff may attend financial monitoring/audit visits, as well as site visits to review project progress and impact.

Sharing of information with the Ministry begins immediately.

ETHICAL, SAFETY AND INTEGRITY REQUIREMENTS

Institutions must undertake the responsibility to ensure any experimentation will be acceptable on ethical and safety grounds.

- Research involving human subjects must comply with the [Tri-Council Policy Statements: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans](#)
- In the case of laboratory animal experimentation, the institution must comply with the [guidelines and policies of the Canadian Council on Animal Care](#).
- Any research involving human pluripotent stem cells must adhere to the [Guidelines for Human Pluripotent Stem Cell Research](#).
- Institutions must ensure that any research involving databases containing personal information adheres to ethical and legal requirements relating to privacy, confidentiality and security of the database information.
- Any research involving biohazards must adhere to the standards outlined in the [Public Health Agency of Canada's Laboratory biosafety guidelines](#).
- Research involving radioactive materials must comply with [Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission regulations](#).

The Ministry expects program applicants and participating research institutions to maintain the highest standards of research integrity. Research institutions are to have policies and procedures in place that govern research integrity. Institutions must advise the Ministry of the outcome of any investigation pertinent to the Ministry that may be carried out by the institution.

AWARD AGREEMENTS

Approved applicants will enter into a Grant Agreement with the Ministry of Research and Innovation. The Grant Agreement stipulates terms and conditions governing the payment of the ORF grant, including:

- project budget;
- project management;
- communications strategies monitoring and reporting requirements, including annual progress reporting, audits and financial reports;
- milestone and performance measures;
- mode and schedule of payments; and,
- contract termination.

OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL OF ASSETS FUNDED BY THE ORF

Ownership and control of the assets acquired with the grant funds must remain with the institution for a period of five years after acquisition and installation in the case of equipment, or five years from the date of occupancy in the case of a building.

In the case of a project with a multi-institutional composition or consortium, the inter-institutional agreement should dictate the arrangements made with regard to the ownership, control and disposal of research equipment and other assets.

Research equipment and other assets must be located at an eligible research institution, unless it can be successfully shown that an alternate location provides the most effective placement of the equipment or other assets. Any change in location requires a notification to the ORF and may require the approval of the ORF.

YOUTH SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY OUTREACH

The Ministry recognizes the importance of engaging young people in science and technology in growing a culture of innovation. Where possible and appropriate, institutions are encouraged to open up facilities for youth outreach activities being undertaken by Ontario researchers through the Ministry's research and talent development programs.

COMMUNICATIONS

To ensure continuity, consistency and open communication between the applicant and the ORF-RI, the institution's project officer and the assigned ORF advisor will coordinate all project-related discussions.

SERVICE STANDARD

The Ministry of Research and Innovation is committed to making timely decisions on all Complete Applications once submitted.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions about the ORF-LIF please contact:

Lesley Cunningham
lesley.cunningham@ontario.ca, 416-314-0633

USE OF INFORMATION

The Ministry of Research and Innovation is subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. The information and documentation provided to the Ministry of Research and Innovation may be shared with members of the ORF Advisory Board, the Review Panels and others for the purposes of administering the ORF program.

This program may be subject to change.

Grant disbursements are subject to the Ministry of Research and Innovation having an appropriation approved by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario for the fiscal year in which the disbursement is to be made.