



FUNDING FOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESEARCH SUPPORT

The Canada Foundation for Innovation's Leaders Opportunity Fund and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council 2009-10

Introduction

The Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) have partnered to jointly review applications that include a research infrastructure funding request. The collaboration is intended to lessen applicant and reviewer workload and reduce the number of applications required to secure operating and infrastructure support.

This year, applicants to the 2009-10 Major Collaborative Research Initiatives (MCRI) program are eligible for research infrastructure funding from CFI's Leaders Opportunity Fund (LOF),* through which universities with LOF allocations may submit requests for infrastructure funding for full-time faculty.

Eligibility

Applicants must be full-time faculty engaged in, or embarking on, a research program or project for which the proposed infrastructure is essential and will provide an enriched research training environment.

Since CFI requires institutional commitment in all its funding programs, the application must be submitted by the researcher's institution through the LOF electronic form, available on the CFI website at www.innovation.ca

Available funding

CFI will accept LOF/MCRI applications with research infrastructure costs of up to \$2 million, and will contribute up to 40 per cent of the eligible costs of the proposed research infrastructure. Eligible infrastructure includes the construction or acquisition of databases, digital libraries, virtual reality laboratories, virtual laboratories, and digital imaging systems.

Eligible and non-eligible costs

SSHRC will support the direct costs of research, while CFI will support research infrastructure-related expenses, including personnel costs associated with the creation of the infrastructure, goods and services required to bring the new infrastructure into operation, and any warranties or service contracts included in the purchase price of research infrastructure.

*This information concerns LOF Stream 3, which combines SSHRC research grants and CFI infrastructure grants into a joint application for review, and not LOF Stream 1, which is for research infrastructure alone.

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Examples of CFI-eligible costs include:

- professional, technical and managerial personnel, consultants, and contractors directly involved in the design, construction, engineering, manufacturing, installation, or renovation of the research infrastructure;
- the purchase, lease or “buy-back” of a database (i.e., its acquisition or the time-limited design and development of a database);
- communications infrastructure used for research activities (infrastructure required for collaborations identified in the proposal);
- research equipment and components;
- software licences;
- laboratory furniture;
- initial training for the main operator(s) of the research infrastructure; and
- construction or renovation of space essential for housing and using the infrastructure effectively.

Examples of CFI-ineligible costs include:

- research-related costs of using research infrastructure;
- construction or renovation of libraries, facility upgrades for accessing conventional library collections, and costs to maintain library collections;
- digitization or conversion to electronic form of existing, conventional collections (unless this is a required step in constructing the research infrastructure);
- infrastructure used for teaching;
- infrastructure used for dissemination activities, including conference travel;
- office supplies and office furniture;
- student stipends and researcher salaries; and
- operating costs related to the general maintenance and overhead of the infrastructure.

For more information on the administrative regulations governing the eligibility of proposed infrastructure, please consult the [Canada Foundation for Innovation Policy and Program Guide](#).

Application process

The application process involves two steps:

- 1) Applicants must select “Canada Foundation for Innovation Leaders Opportunity Fund” from the appropriate drop-down list on SSHRC’s MCRI (formal application stage) application form.
- 2) Universities must complete an abbreviated LOF application form on CFI’s website. CFI will forward this form to SSHRC, where it will be combined with the above into a joint application for review.

Since the LOF program is institutionally based, all interested parties must contact their university research services office before submitting a CFI application.

Deadline

The LOF form must be submitted at the MCRI formal application stage, the deadline for which is September 1, 2010.

Evaluation process and criteria

A SSHRC adjudication committee (in this case, the MCRI interdisciplinary adjudication committee) will assess the merit of both the research support and infrastructure components of the proposal. The review will be conducted according to SSHRC standard procedures. The committee will evaluate the infrastructure portion of the application according to CFI criteria.

CFI will provide clarification, when necessary, to reviewers and committee members on CFI policies and procedures. CFI's board of directors will make the final decision on the infrastructure component of the application based on the recommendation provided by the SSHRC adjudication committee.

LOF applications are assessed according to the following six criteria:

1. quality of the research or technology development;
2. quality of the candidate(s);
3. need for the infrastructure;
4. training of highly qualified personnel through research;
5. collaborations and partnerships; and
6. potential benefits to Canada.

Useful tips

Defining infrastructure: Research infrastructure in the social sciences and humanities may take a wide variety of forms, ranging from virtual infrastructure, such as databases, to physical infrastructure, such as laboratories.

It is important to describe, specifically and in detail, how the requested infrastructure is essential for carrying out the research program. For examples of previously funded CFI research infrastructure in the social sciences and humanities, see www.innovation.ca/en/projects-funded.

Innovation: CFI focuses its support on innovative and cutting-edge research that involves fresh perspectives, new methodologies, and creative approaches to problem-solving and knowledge creation. It supports projects that go beyond incremental approaches to the advancement of knowledge.

Maximizing the use of the infrastructure: CFI expects institutions to maintain de facto control and priority usage of the requested research infrastructure. The sharing of the infrastructure is encouraged, as long as the principal investigator and his/her team of researchers and students have priority usage and access.

Management planning and ongoing operational funding: Applicants must show that they have planned for the effective management of the infrastructure. They must also demonstrate firm commitment from their institution or other parties to fully support the ongoing operational costs of the infrastructure beyond the 30 per cent in infrastructure operating funds provided through the LOF.

Focusing on research, not equipment: All successful CFI applications have common elements: they focus on the exciting and innovative aspects of their research, how that research will transform conventional understanding or change the way research is conducted, and how it will make a significant contribution to Canadian society, either through knowledge creation, wealth creation, or a better understanding of ourselves and the world in which we live.

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Requesting the appropriate grant size: CFI seeks to support research that goes well beyond incremental advances in knowledge and understanding, and expects the maximum possible use of the infrastructure it supports. The LOF program is not a small equipment fund.

Consulting your research office: Research office staff should be involved in all stages of the application process. Such involvement is particularly important in securing institutional support, defining and costing eligible expenses, and negotiating the valuation of in-kind contributions.

Contacts

For more information about the LOF, please visit www.innovation.ca or contact the CFI liaison in your institution's research office. You can also reach CFI's LOF manager, Laurent Messier, at laurent.messier@innovation.ca or 613-996-3107.