



Division of the Vice-President,
Research and Innovation

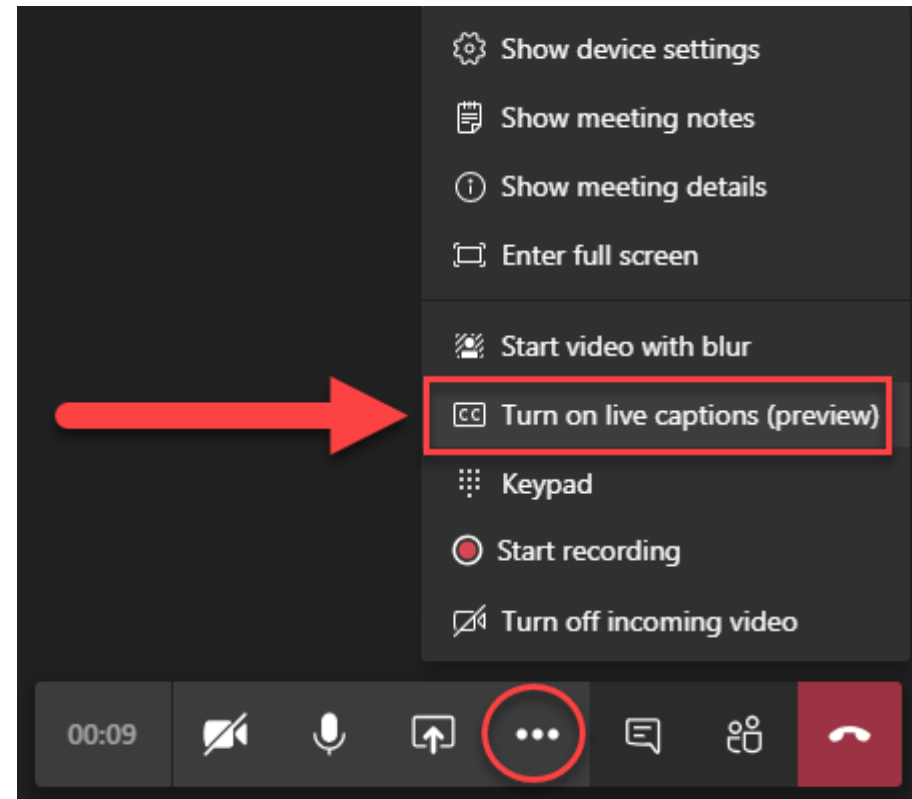
CFI INNOVATION FUND 2023 INFORMATION SESSION

January 11, 2022



HOUSEKEEPING AND ACCESSIBLE PARTICIPATION

- Please mute your audio and turn off your video
- We will be recording today's session
- We will have time for questions at the end of each section. Please type your questions into the chat box.
- To turn on captioning, go to your meeting controls and select "More options" ...
- Slides and recording will be shared following the session



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years, it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island, and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

SESSION AGENDA

- Program overview and success rates (slides 6-7)
- Notice of Intent requirements (slides 8-11)
- Proposal development and EDI considerations (slides 12-25)
- Finance module and budget (slides 26-34)
- Insights from Professor Jennifer Gommerman, CFI-IF 2020 awardee (slides 35-40)
- Competition stages and supports (slides 41-45)

TODAY'S PRESENTERS

- Judith Chadwick, Assistant Vice-President, Research Services
- Kevin Hamilton, Director, Research Services
- Andrea Gill, Research Equity and Diversity Strategist
- Andrea Day, Editorial and Proposal Development Officer
- Professor Jennifer Gommerman, Department of Immunology, Temerty Faculty of Medicine,
and Co-Lead of the successful CFI-IF 2020 application for “*Toronto NeuroImmunology/Imaging Consortium (TONIIC)*” (\$14M CFI award towards a total project budget of \$35M)

U OF T IF 2023 INSTITUTIONAL PROCESS

- CFI approved an institutional envelope of \$179M for U of T applications, which we formulaically allocated as follows:
 - \$86,052,000 for projects led by or involving U of T campuses' researchers
 - \$92,948,000 for projects led by or involving hospital researchers
- U of T has approved 33 proposals to go forward to the Nol and full application stages, fully expending the envelope.
- Collectively the TAHSN hospitals intend to expend their envelope on ~29 proposals



CAMPUS SUCCESS

Over time, U of T applications have achieved mixed levels of success in the IF competitions:

- ❑ 2008 – 49% success rate (\$58M) vs. 34% nationally
- ❑ 2012 – 66% success rate (\$21M) vs. 36% nationally
- ❑ 2015 – 20% success rate (\$11M) vs. 33% nationally
- ❑ 2017 – 45% success rate (\$54M) vs. 35% nationally
- ❑ 2020 – 27% success rate (\$24M) vs. 36% nationally



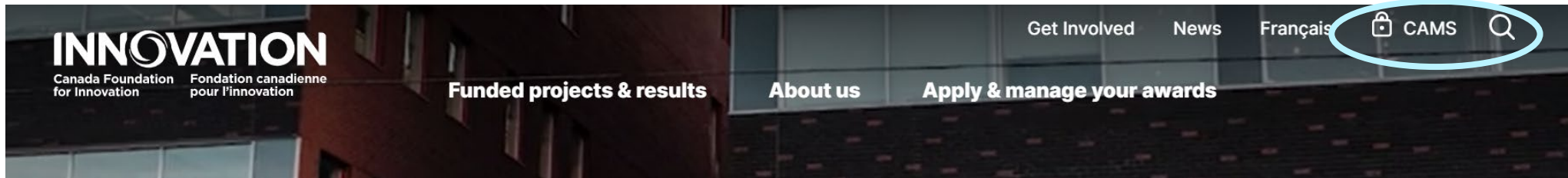
The University continues to learn from previous competitions, and to encourage innovation and improve proposal quality. The internal proposal development processes and timelines are geared towards helping all proposals to be positioned for success.

CFI NOI REQUIREMENTS

- To be able to submit a proposal to this competition, a notice of intent (NoI) must be submitted to CFI for each proposal.
- The NoI must be created by the project lead at the administering institution
- The NoI is not assessed by CFI. It is used to:
 - Create a placeholder for the full application
 - Identify what expertise CFI will need & inform the recruitment of committee members
 - Ensure that the requested infrastructure is eligible.

Creating and completing the NoI

- To create the NoI the PL logs onto the CFI CAMS:



- Click on the 'researcher dashboard' and follow the directions.

CFI NOI REQUIREMENTS

Filling the form: Pointers on specific sections in the Nol:

Project description

This will be published by CFI on their website so it should be well written for a lay reader and should not disclose confidential information.

Team

CAMS will send an email to everyone you list inviting them to participate. You will not be able to submit if one person does not respond - you should monitor and chase.

Collaborating institutions

For this purpose, this section should only include those institutions that are providing some of their institutional 'envelope' towards the project. Similar to the 'team' an invitation will be sent to the institution, and you will not be able to submit if they do not accept.

Suggested reviewers

Avoid conflicts of interest. CFI prefers international reviewers.

ONTARIO (ORF-RI) NOI REQUIREMENTS



- Ontario has yet to publish its Call for Proposals - expected this month
- We also anticipate a deferral from the original July 4 deadline for the ORF-RI full application, to align with CFI's 2-week deferral
- ORF-RI has not traditionally included an NOI requirement

QUESTIONS

Questions on the program overview or the Notice of Intent requirements?

Please type your questions into the chat box.



OBJECTIVES AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

1. Enable **internationally competitive research or technology development** through the **equitable participation** of expert team members
 - Research or Technology Development
 - Team Expertise
 - Team Composition (*NEW CRITERION*)
2. **Enhance and optimize the capacity** of institutions and research communities to conduct the proposed research or technology development program(s) over the useful life of the infrastructure
 - Infrastructure
 - Sustainability
3. Lead to social, health, environmental and/or economic **benefits for Canadians**
 - Benefits

CFI IF REVIEW PROCESS

Expert Committees

- Ratings based on assessment criteria
- Meet “threshold of excellence” to move forward

Multi-disciplinary Assessment Committees (MAC)

- Ratings based on objectives; access to Expert Committee reports
- Remove proposals with weaknesses in Team Composition; provides funding recommendations for each proposal

Special Multi-disciplinary Assessment Committee (S-MAC)

- Reviews MAC reports and recommendations for funding
- Makes recommendations to the CFI Board of Directors

RATING SCALE

EX: satisfies and significantly exceeds the criterion standard

SA: satisfies the criterion standard

SW: satisfies the criterion standard but has minor weaknesses

PS: partially satisfies the criterion standard and has some significant weaknesses

NS: does not satisfy the criterion standard due to major weaknesses

PROJECT MODULE

Project description (maximum 3 pages)

- General description of the key activities and the infrastructure
- The only section provided to the S-MAC for its deliberations
- Address all three competition objectives

Assessment criteria

- Maximum page length is based on total CFI request
 - ≤ \$2M: 25 pages
 - > \$2M and <\$10M: 30 pages
 - ≥ \$10M: 35 pages
- Provide relevant and concrete details
- Demonstrate that this is a well-integrated and highly innovative project
- Ensure that the writing is legible to a multidisciplinary audience

RESEARCH OR TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT

Criterion: Program is innovative, feasible, and internationally competitive

- Clearly refer to the requested infrastructure in this section
- Describe the current state of the field (with references)
- Describe specific and detailed methods, activities, timelines
- Explicitly state what makes this program innovative and globally competitive
- Lack of details on methodology (most common weakness)
- Plans did not appear feasible/did not address potential research challenges
- Research program is not innovative
- Research program is not integrated/lacks focus
- Lack of overall details on research program

NOTE:

This was the lowest-scoring criterion among U of T applicants in 2020. Fewer than half of proposals earned a rating of EX or SA.

Common weaknesses:

TEAM EXPERTISE

Criterion: Team has breadth of expertise and experience necessary to conduct the proposed program

- Explain why team members are optimal users of the requested items
- Consider including a matrix/graphic or a paragraph for each team member (linking expertise to research activities)
- Describe collaborations (must add real strength and value)

Common weaknesses:

- Missing expertise or critical mass of experts (most common weakness)
- Missing details on roles of team members
- Missing details on collaboration
- Team lacked synergy/cohesion
- CVs were not up to date

TEAM COMPOSITION – *NEW CRITERION*

Criterion: Principles of EDI have been considered in team composition, including leadership; commitment to an inclusive environment

- Describe systemic barriers that exist in the team context
- Describe specific actions and steps to address these barriers
 - At least one concrete practice: how equity and diversity were intentionally considered in team composition
 - At least one concrete practice: support ongoing inclusion of under-represented groups in the team
- **Do not** include demographic/personal information about team members
- Specificity is important; avoid general, high-level statements
- The MAC will identify proposals with weaknesses in this criterion

TEAM COMPOSITION – SYSTEMIC BARRIERS

- Policies or practices result in some individuals from under-represented groups receiving unequal access to or being excluded from participation
- They can have unintentional effects or even seem “invisible” at first glance
- Examples of barriers:
 - Unconscious biases in recruitment/hiring
 - Biases in peer review, publishing, and citations
 - Narrow definitions of excellence
 - A lack of mentors or role models
 - Physical or sensory barriers

SYSTEMIC BARRIERS IN ACTION

“Candidates apply online, submitting a cover letter, a research statement, and a list of refereed publications, as well as arranging for three reference letters. In addition, our faculty leads identify 6 to 8 exceptional candidates well in advance of the application deadline and encourage them to apply and give a talk at our institution.

“Designated faculty members contact letter writers and senior faculty members at the applicants’ institutions to learn further information. The Selection Committee uses this information to reduce the applicant pool (usually 150 applicants) to a ‘long shortlist’ of about 40 applicants. Committee members then read the entire file of each applicant on this list, along with any information obtained in the previous step, and rank the applicants on the basis of excellence.”

- Creates space for biases and inequities
- Narrow definitions of “excellence”
- Will likely disadvantage some applicants

TEAM COMPOSITION – CONCRETE PRACTICES

- How you are overcoming systemic barriers/have addressed equity and diversity in the team's composition
 - How inclusive definitions of excellence were used in assembling the team
 - How the team considered both traditional and non-traditional outputs in team member expertise and experience
 - Outreach to or engagement with prospective team members, including from under-represented groups
 - How equity and diversity have been addressed in the team's governance or decision-making structure
 - Team members' demonstrated experience or competency in EDI
 - Mentorship and career development opportunities for junior team members

TEAM COMPOSITION – CONCRETE PRACTICES, CONT.

- How you will support inclusion and address systemic barriers
 - Equitable recruitment processes for HQP and staff
 - Equitable access to training and development opportunities for HQP
 - Equitable access to mentoring for HQP (and equitable mentorship duties for team members)
 - Proactively modelling inclusive behaviour and leadership
 - EDI workshops, readings, and/or online training
 - Flexibility and accommodation in scheduling
 - Accessible and inclusive meetings or events

INFRASTRUCTURE

Criterion: Requested infrastructure is necessary and appropriate, and enhances capacity

- Refer to relevant research or technology development activities
- Explain appropriateness of the items, how they will make the team competitive
- Discuss availability of similar infrastructure

Common weaknesses:

- Infrastructure was not well justified/wrong equipment requested (most common weakness)
- Missing infrastructure development/implementation plan
- Missing details on similar or existing infrastructure
- Not enough equipment requested to carry out research program
- Potential technical/equipment challenges were overlooked

SUSTAINABILITY

Criterion: Infrastructure will be optimally be used and maintained over useful life

- Demonstrate that the infrastructure will be fully used
- Describe the plans and budget for operation and maintenance, upgrades, data management, security, user fees, etc.
- Describe the planned locations and any existing research/technical staff

Common weaknesses:

- Infrastructure access or data management plan missing (most common weakness)
- Weak governance/management structure
- Missing contingency planning
- Missing plan for equipment lifetime (beyond five-year warranty)
- Costs or revenues were not detailed
- Estimated O & M costs were too low

BENEFITS

Criterion: A well-defined plan to transfer the results; will lead to social, health, environmental, health or economic benefits for Canadians

- Describe the pathways for knowledge transfer, including end-users and timelines
- Be concrete and realistic in describing benefits (avoid overstatements)
- Refer to commercialization language in the VPRI Tips Sheet
- Describe benefits that will arise from HQP training

Common weaknesses:

- Weak plan for technology transfer/clinical transfer/knowledge mobilization (most common weakness)
- Missing details regarding benefits
- Impact was overstated
- HQP training plans were not well detailed

QUESTIONS

Questions on the Assessment Criteria and proposal development?

Please type your questions into the chat box.



FINANCE MODULE

Standard CFI funding model:

Total cost = 40% CFI (cash) + 40% ORF (cash) + 20% other (cash and/or inkind)

Myths about the 20%

- CFI does not dictate that it has to be in-kind through vendor deep discounts
- Divisional cash contributions are eligible (e.g., if renovations are planned already, and will house the equipment, they may be eligible as part of the 20% matching)
- Partner/third party cash contributions are eligible
- Tri-agency funds, and other provincial government funding, are not eligible as match

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

Consult the CFI Policy and Program Guide re eligibility

- See section 4.6 (pages 13–18) <https://www.innovation.ca/apply-manage-awards/resources-apply-manage-award>

Official quotes not necessary at this time, however,

- It is important to create a realistic budget, to ensure you will have the **cash** you need
- CFI request cannot be changed after application is submitted
- Costs should be based on a reliable source (e.g., verbal quotes, previous recent purchase, etc.)

Include full cost of item

- Ensure that the item cost includes any vendor deep discount (over educational discount), 3.41% tax, shipping, brokerage fees, etc.
- Ensure all of your expenses are stated in Canadian dollars

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

Equipment or components that physically connect or work together should be grouped into a “system”

- Provide detail of sub elements/components in the Infrastructure section description
- Include long-term warranties and service contracts as appropriate

Number of items

- Enter the number of major equipment items in the line item (e.g., 3 microscopes)
- Do not enter the number of component parts that comprise a system or major equipment item

If you're not sure - ASK!

If you're not sure of the eligibility of an item, how to account for the full cost of an item, or what InKind contribution is eligible, ask your Divisional Administrator or RSO for advice, and ask early!

SAMPLE BUDGET LINE CALCULATION



List Price	105,000
Educational Discount @ 4.76%	5,000
Net Educational Price	100,000
CFI Discount (In-Kind) @ 20%	20,000
Net Cash Price	80,000
Add shipping/brokerage	2,000
Add taxes @ 3.41%	2,728
Cash total	84,728

A
B
 $C=A-B$
D
 $E=3.41\%*C$
 $F=C+D+E$

Cash	84,728
In Kind	20,000
Total Eligible Cost (= Fair Market value)	104,728

F
B
 $G=F+B$
=total item amount included on CFI form

Total Eligible Cost (FMV)	104,728
CFI @ 40%	41,892
ORF @ 40%	41,892
Institutional cash	954
In kind 20%	20,000

40%
40%
} 20%

CONSTRUCTION / RENOVATION

Include details of the renovation

- Plans and budgeting for construction/renovation should already be well advanced. Continue to meet with your divisional/departments space and planning representatives to ensure you have the information required by the CFI Application.
- Describe the space and type of work it will host
- Include direct costs, soft costs and contingency costs
- Timeline for start, expected completion and occupancy dates
- You must provide a floor plan and space layout of each room for which funds are requested

Specify the full cost of renovating the space

- If the renovation is part of a larger undertaking, you will need to briefly describe the full project
- Maintain a separate record for the project space(s) expenses from the outset

CONSULTATION ON ARC



Digital Research
Alliance of Canada

Alliance de recherche
numérique du Canada

- The Digital Research Alliance of Canada (the Alliance) has the responsibility to harmonize and improve access to digital tools and services for Canadian researchers.
- Its remit includes responsibility for advanced research computing resources previously handled by Compute Canada.
- CFI has invested significantly in computing infrastructure and expects projects to consult with the Alliance on the optimal deployment of new computing resources, where the total cost of these resources is at least \$100K.
- Alliance contact: CFI_Awards@engagedri.ca

INFRASTRUCTURE OPERATING FUND (IOF)

- Each CFI award automatically receives an additional Infrastructure Operating Fund (IOF) award. This is valued at 30% of the CFI contribution.
 - If the total project cost is \$2.5M,
 - CFI's share will be \$1M (40%), and
 - the IOF will be \$300k (30% of \$1M)
- IOF funds are for operational and maintenance (O&M) costs to keep the CFI-funded infrastructure in “research-ready mode” (e.g., repairs, service contracts, equipment manager)
- IOF is not intended, nor does CFI expect it to cover the full cost of O&M
- Take account of this in the Sustainability section of the application

SUBMITTING TO CFI

Applications are only submitted online using CFI CAMS.

For both the Nol and full application, once the form is complete you should:

- Click the 'validate' button, and make any corrections/additions it recommends
- Check you have included any attachments, including additional requirements (eg renovation plans)
- And then confirm!



- When you submit, it does not go to CFI - rather it registers in RSO as being ready to submit to CFI, and we would complete the submission.

QUESTIONS

Questions on the Finance Module or budget development?

Please type your questions into the chat box.



INSIGHTS FROM A SUCCESSFUL PROJECT LEAD

Professor Jennifer Gommerman

Department of Immunology, Temerty Faculty of Medicine, U of T

Project Co-lead on 2020 IF application: *An Integrated Platform for the Analysis of Brain Inflammation*

CFI Award: \$13,961,537

Total Project Cost: \$34,917,545



CFI TIMELINES (TONIIC)

Oct 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none">received notice of competition and started planning concepts of application (ie. research goals/themes and equipment needs)
Oct & Nov 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none">reached out to colleagues across the city to assemble a pan-Toronto application
Nov 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none">NOI to UofT submitted
Nov 2018 – Feb 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none">created a budget and put together the pre-proposalassembled commitments from TAHSN sites for envelope contributioninitial meetings with co-applicants to discuss proposal and who would be co-investigators
Mar 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none">submitted pre-proposal to UofT
Jun 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none">selected to move forward by UofT

CFI TIMELINES (TONIIC)

Summer and Fall 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> created many drafts of proposal, met with SRI co-leads, to hone and sharpen research goal and themes. many iterations and discussions. this is key! confirmed envelope contributions from stakeholders as well as co-applicants and investigators prior to NOI to CFI (many meetings, some changes to the team were required – stay flexible)
Aug 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> official NOI to CFI
Fall 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> continued to hone the proposal; co-applicants with expertise in MRI were asked to review content and add /edit as needed final budget and renovation planning / costing done
Dec 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> all-hands team meeting in-person to discuss the final proposal and get comments / improvements
Dec 16 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> draft of full proposal to UofT (1 month ahead of CFI deadline)

ORF TIMELINES AND DECISIONS

Jan 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">worked on ORF application
Jan 20 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">draft ORF to UofT for feedback *this was substantially different to our CFI application and was tailored to Provincial Government priorities*
Feb 14 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">full ORF to UofT (2 weeks ahead of ORF deadline)
Nov 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">decisions for CFI released (confidentially)public announcement March 2021
Sep 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none">ORF decision released (confidentially)

TIPS

- while it might seem tedious, and redundant, the pre-proposal, pre-approval, and draft stages at UofT were essentially versions of documents needed by the CFI /ORF
 - allowed us to not have to rush to meet the deadlines later in the year
 - extremely helpful (for feedback and our sanity!) 😊
- **diversity!** make sure project is diverse in terms of expertise, career cycle, and themes. We purposefully crafted our team for gender parity.
- **think BIG!**

QUESTIONS

Questions on Professor Gommerman's experience?

Please type your questions into the chat box.



U OF T INNOVATION FUND TIMELINES

Notice of Intent	
Internal final NoI due on CAMS	February 18, 2022
NoI due at CFI	February 23, 2022
Full Proposal & Internal Review	
Internal deadline for draft full proposals	April 4, 2022
Draft proposal sent to reviewers	April 5, 2022
Review by RSO Editorial & Program Development	April 2022
Review by U of T Internal Reviewers	April 2022
Divisional Review	April 2022
Reviewer comments deadline for return	April 25, 2022
Feedback to applicants on draft full proposal	May 9, 2022
Full Proposal	
Internal deadline for final full proposal	May 24, 2022
Full proposal due to CFI	June 15, 2022
Internal deadline for draft ORF proposal	Jun 3, 2022
Feedback to applicants on draft ORF proposal	Jun 17, 2022
Internal deadline for final full ORF proposal	June 24, 2022
Full proposals due to ORF	July 4, 2022

INNOVATION FUND: POST-SUBMISSION MILESTONES

Expected key dates and milestones once the CFI & ORF applications are submitted:

- March 2023 CFI Board decisions announced
- Summer 2023 Ontario decisions announced
- December 2023 Deadline to finalize the CFI award
- Spring 2024 Finalization of the Ontario award
- October 2024 Any construction or renovation work must have begun (“shovel in the ground”)



VPRI RESOURCES

- [VPRI CFI Innovation Fund funding opportunity page](#)
- [U of T Research Services CFI IF 2023 Tips Sheet](#)
- [CFI IF 2023 Budget Template](#)
- [Addressing EDI Considerations in Your Funding Application \(teams and training\)](#)
- [EDI in Research & Innovation resources page](#)

THE VPRI SUPPORT TEAM

Helena Medeiros

- Policy and budget guidelines (Helena.medeiros@utoronto.ca)

Kevin Hamilton

- Process, timelines, eligibility (kevin.hamilton@utoronto.ca)

Andrea Day and Emma Doran

- Editorial feedback (for final proposals to CFI and ORF)

Andrea Gill

- EDI (amk.gill@utoronto.ca)

Colin Swift

- Technology development (colin.swift@utoronto.ca)

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QUESTIONS?

Don't hesitate to be in touch with the VPRI CFI-IF support team at any point leading up to June 15!

