

Connaught Innovation Award

GUIDELINES

"The primary purpose of the Fund is the promotion of research and the application of the professional expertise and resources of the University to matters of public interest in all research fields.... Connaught funds shall be used to support outstanding research by individuals or groups of scholars in the University. Grants are intended to encourage research of exceptional caliber or the development of new areas of research by scholars of outstanding achievement. Awards will be made in accordance with the most exacting standards of peer review."

-Excerpt from the Connaught Fund Terms of Reference

Invention Disclosure Deadline: Thursday September 1, 2022

Notice of Intent Deadline: Thursday September 15, 2022

Full Application Deadline: Thursday October 20, 2022

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Connaught Innovation Award is to accelerate the development of promising technologies and to promote the commercialization and/or knowledge transfer of innovations arising from the University of Toronto. The award provides one-time seed funding to support technology validation, product development, and market connection for projects at TRL 4 and above as defined by [Science and Economic Development Canada \(SEDC\)](#): ***"Level 4 – Component and/or validation in a laboratory environment: Basic technological components are integrated to establish that they will work together. Activities include integration of "ad hoc" hardware in the laboratory."***

Projects with a lower TRL may be considered if they include evidence of market need from industry, investors, community partners, or other organizations, and identify potential follow-up funding to advance the TRL. Successful projects will have strong socio-economic and/or commercial potential, and will strive to have a positive impact on society.

The total funding available for this year's program is \$1,000,000. Applicants can request up to \$100,000 per project. Applicants requesting more than \$50,000 will require strong evidence of industry interest, leveraged funding opportunities, or investment.

ELIGIBILITY

- All campus based professorial staff eligible to hold research funding at the University of Toronto.
- The proposed project must be based on an existing invention disclosure filed to IPO by **September 1, 2022**. More information on invention disclosures and the U of T Invention Policy can be found [here](#).
- Invention disclosures filed with an affiliated hospital are ineligible.
- Inventions previously supported by the Connaught Innovation Award are ineligible.

ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURES

Eligible expenses include:

- Salaries and benefits for students, postdocs and technicians.
- Professional business development services, including market research, competitive market intelligence, business plans, legal and regulatory review. Collectively these costs are capped at \$5,000.
- Technical and scientific services related to prototype development and testing, analysis, synthesis, machine shop, bench scale fabrication and demonstration, hardware or software design, feasibility study and technology assessment, or scale-up and preclinical evaluation services.
- Patent, Copyright or Trademarks, including services of technical experts, application or prosecution fees. Collectively these costs are capped at \$10,000.
- Travel, conference and marketing expenses related to commercializing the intellectual property. Collectively these costs are capped at \$2,500.
- Research equipment laboratory animals and laboratory/facility fees.
- Laboratory consumables including chemicals, reagents, and lab kits.

INELIGIBLE EXPENDITURES

Ineligible expenses include, but are not limited to:

- Funding for overlapping objectives and deliverables that are supported by other funding programs.
- Costs not directly associated with project deliverables, milestones and commercialization goals.
- Costs related to proposal development (including staff costs).
- Capital Costs (e.g. equipment over \$10,000, land, buildings, vehicles, etc.).

APPLICATIONS AND DEADLINES

1. Invention Disclosure Deadline: Thursday September 1, 2022

Eligible projects must be based on inventions disclosed to the University prior to the deadline. More information on invention disclosures and form can be found [here](#).

2. Notice of Intent (NOI) Deadline: Thursday September 15, 2022 by 11:59pm

The NOI to be submitted electronically to the Connaught Secretariat at connaught.secretariat@utoronto.ca.

3. Full Application Deadline: Thursday October 20, 2022

Full applications **must be submitted electronically** via “My Research Applications” ([MRA](#)) by **11:59pm on Thursday October 20, 2022**.

Applicants are encouraged to login to MRA in advance of the submission deadline to ensure login credentials are correct. Once the MRA has been submitted, it is recommended that you notify both your Chair/Director and Vice-Dean/Principal Research that your application is pending approval.

4. Award decisions are expected by January 2023.

SELECTION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

All proposals will be evaluated by a multi-disciplinary review panel convened by the Vice-President Research and Innovation. Each application will be considered on the following criteria:

1. Project Description (Scientific and Technical Merit)

- Description of proposed research
- Clarity and focus of research objectives
- Novelty, technical complexity, technical risk and feasibility

2. Market Potential & Socio-Economic Benefit

- Market assessment highlighting unmet market or socio-economic need
- Competitive landscape; market size or identification of unmet need for the innovation or its application
- Competitive advantage over current products or services
- Potential socio-economic benefit to society

3. Commercialization and Knowledge Transfer Plan

- Description of activities toward market access
- Clarity and focus of commercialization objectives and plan
- Potential for further collaboration and funding by companies or other partners
- Explanation of the regulatory path required to bring the innovation to market

4. Intellectual Property (Patents/ Copyright/ Trademark)

- Potential for intellectual property to be developed
- Plans for protecting intellectual property arising from funding

5. Budget Justification and Milestones

- Proposed budget and justification of funding
- Milestones, description of activities, anticipated start and completion dates
- Breadth and depth of team expertise in the proposed fields of activity
- Adequacy of personnel and material resources allocated for research and technology transfer activities

6. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

- How have equity, diversity and inclusion been (or will be) considered and addressed in the development and management of the project team?
- How have considerations of diversity been (or will be) integrated into the development of the invention (as applicable and appropriate)?

7. Potential Outcomes & Next Steps

- Synopsis of further development of innovation beyond Connaught funding
- Description of potential outcomes upon successful completion of the project

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The University of Toronto recognizes that diversity is essential to the creation of a vibrant intellectual community that allows our researchers to maximize their creativity and their contributions. The Connaught Committee is therefore strongly committed to diversity in research and especially welcomes applications that engage racialized persons/persons of colour, women, Indigenous/Aboriginal Peoples of North America, persons with disabilities, LGBTQ2S+ persons, and others who may contribute to the further diversification of ideas.

The University also acknowledges that scholars have varying career paths and that career interruptions due to personal circumstances can be part of an excellent academic record. Review panel members have been instructed to give careful consideration to, and to be sensitive to the impact of, career interruptions in their assessments.

All applicants to this funding opportunity are required to answer the [University of Toronto's Employment Equity Survey](#) by no later than the application deadline. In completing this survey, applicants may voluntarily self-identify in all applicable groups, or they may log a response indicating that they decline the survey. Self-identification data is important to the University's ability to accurately identify barriers to participation and to develop strategies to eliminate these barriers. Aggregated results as of the closing of this posting will be sent to the Research Equity and Diversity Strategist and may be accessed by only a small number of designated senior administrators within the Division of the Vice-President, Research and Innovation (VPRI). Any information directly related to you is confidential and cannot be accessed by the reviewers or by VPRI staff. If you have already completed the survey, thank you; your responses will be included in the aggregated results.

Applicants are also asked to describe how equity, diversity and inclusion have been considered and addressed in the development of the project team and how considerations of sex, gender and/or diversity have been integrated into the research design and methods, as applicable to the project.

INDIGENOUS RESEARCH

The Division of the Vice-President, Research and Innovation is committed to the appropriate peer review of research with and about Indigenous peoples and communities. All applicants to the Community Partnership Research Program are asked to indicate whether the proposed project involves or impacts Indigenous individuals, communities, peoples, topics, lands, or areas of interest. In cases where an applicant indicates “Yes,” the application will be reviewed using Indigenous principles and worldviews by the Indigenous Research Circle - Review Panel (IRC-RP). Additionally, the Connaught Secretariat reserves the right to redirect proposals to the IRC-RP if deemed appropriate.

AWARD DURATION AND REPORTING

The funding period starts January 2, 2023 and ends December 31, 2023. Projects must start no later than April 1, 2023 or risk having the award revoked.

During the course of the award, the Connaught Secretariat or representatives from the Innovations & Partnerships Office (IPO) may contact awardees to discuss project deliverables and milestones. Final reports are due March 31, 2024 and must outline progress toward project deliverables and commercialization objectives. IPO will forward a summary of these reports along with written commentary to the Connaught Committee. The Connaught Committee reserves the right to request additional reports during or after the term of the award.

QUESTIONS

Inquiries regarding award administration (e.g. deadlines, submissions, eligibility, evaluation criteria, adjudication, award announcement and fund set-up) should be directed to connaught.secretariat@utoronto.ca.

Inquiries regarding invention disclosures, proposal development, intellectual property and/or project management should be directed to your IPO Commercialization Manager, or commercialization@utoronto.ca.