

ORF-RE FAQs

1. What funds can be used towards institutional contributions (where relevant)?

- Lead PI (Salary + 24.5% benefits @ X% of time towards project x duration of project)
- Co-PIs (Salary + 24.5% benefits @ X% of time towards project x duration of project)
- Start-up funds
- CFI IOF Funds (30% of CFI award)
- Note that there is also an additional 40% of in kind indirect costs (IDC, aka overhead) that can be counted as institutional contributions; the formula is in the internal budget sheet. In addition, we can count 40% of in-kind institutional IDC on the private sector's in-kind contributions, as they are not permitted to count in-kind IDC; budget 40% of total direct expenses (e.g., for a \$1m grant, the IDC calculation would be $\$1\text{m}/1.4*0.4=\$285,714$).

2. Maximum ask from ORF for the following items:

- Facilities and Equipment: no more than 10% of total direct costs.
- Salaries for graduate students: ORF funding can be used to cover up to \$20,000 per graduate student annually and \$50,000 per PDF annually but other sources can be used to top up these amounts.
- Management and Administration: up to 10% of total direct costs.
- Youth Outreach: all applications must include a plan for annual youth outreach activities (up to 1% of the ORF funds).

3. Budget Justification

- Provide details sufficient to allow a reviewer to fully understand the rationale for the costs and necessity of the expenses. For example, explain why you need: a costly piece of equipment; X number of PDFs who are required to do ABC; etc. The review panel is likely to delve into these details and compare to the sections of your application to justify the validity of the individual costs.

4. What is the difference between a Co-PI, collaborator, and end user?

- Co-PIs & Co-Is are individuals that significantly contribute to your research objectives. They usually also provide PSP and/or institutional matching and will receive ORF funds.
- Collaborator is an individual who plays a significant role in the conduct of your research or research activity. They do not receive funds from your budget or provide matching.
- End users are groups or individuals that benefit directly from the outcome of your research.

5. Is a blended budget acceptable?

While a blended budget is acceptable, you should note that other applications will likely have full private sector contributions/commitments and this competition is highly competitive. In the ORF-RE Round 11, the overall success rate was 37%. That is, your IP/commercialization, benefits to Ontario, and end user engagement would need to be very strong as you will be competing with other projects that have the full 1/3 of private sector matching. Most of the UofT applications over the last eight competitions have had 1/3 PSP matching.

6. Who do I contact for the commercialization portion of the proposal?

The Innovations and Partnerships Office should be contacted while putting together the commercialization aspect of your proposal. Please contact:

Akshita Vincent
Business Development Officer – Industry Partnerships
The Innovations and Partnerships Office (IPO)
Tel: 416.978-3471
Email: akshita.vincent@utoronto.ca

or

Colin Swift
Business Development Officer – Industry Partnerships
The Innovations & Partnerships Office (IPO)
Tel: 416.978-6653
Email: colin.swift@utoronto.ca

7. What is the earliest start date for secured contributions and expenses?

Contributions, both in-kind and cash, are eligible if received (but not spent) by September 27, 2022 (i.e. up to one year before the application due date).

Expenditures are only eligible after the project start date. The earliest a project can start is June 15, 2023.

The maximum duration of a project is 5 years (Stream 1) or 4 years (Stream 2) and generally projects are not shorter than 3 years.

8. What are the Deadlines?

July 4, 2023 – Email orf@utoronto.ca with Intent to Apply

August 14, 2023 – Internal Budget (IBT) and Security Sections for Internal Review

- Submit IBT and security sections to orf@utoronto.ca. See funding opportunity page for templates

August 21, 2023 – Application Text and Letters for Administrative and Editorial Review

- Submit application text, institutional letter of support, and IPO letter of support (for stream 2 applications) for administrative and editorial review
- See funding opportunity page for templates

September 18, 2023 at 5:00 PM EST– Final Full Application Package Due to RSO

- PDF version of complete application with all attachments
- Excel Budget (IBT)
- MRA required

September 27, 2023 at 5:00 PM EST – Final Application Deadline to MCU

9. For stream 2 applications, what is the difference between the PSP letters of support (as required in previous rounds) and the Ontario-based company and Industry partner letters of support? Are separate PSP letters still required?

There is no difference, it depends on what is relevant to the project. For Stream 2 you are required to have at least 1 Ontario-based company as a partner. There are no restrictions to how many letters may be included, but there are restrictions on the total pages in the attachments (can be no more than 20 pages).

Note that Stream 2 applicants also need to submit a letter of support from the industry liaison office (IPO) which outlines the plan for supporting commercialization.

10. What does End User refer to? i.e. End User Letter of Support

End users are those people that ultimately will use the results of the research. The onus is on the applicant to outline how end users are engaged, see section on Plan for Achieving Impact in the program guidelines.

11. Is there a suggested cash-to-in-kind proportion for both institutional and PSP?

There is no set requirement for the program. It depends on what is appropriate and relevant for the project and the onus is on the applicant to make the case on the application.

That said, Ontario likes to see cash as it provides the PI with more control and flexibility to run the program of research.

12. How does ORF-RE assess or determine TRL level of 3 or more?

Refer to the program guidelines Appendix B. Applicants are also asked to describe their TRL level under the Commercialization Potential section of the application.

13. Will different initiatives in the 2023 Ontario ORF Budget be given the same priority? (What does prioritization mean - will a certain pot of funding be dedicated to these areas?)

Ontario has not publicized that there will be a separate allocation for priority areas. However, this round does have priority sectors as outlined in the program guidelines, so Ontario may yet choose to fund preferentially to priority areas. Both streams are open to all disciplines and they are welcome to apply.

14. Are there any differences between the ORF-RE Round 11 and ORF-RE Round 12 application form?

Please note that there is no section in the application for expert reviewers in Round 12.

15. Research Security – what do I need to know?

All proposals will be given a research security review by the Research Security team at the University prior to submission. Please make sure you are detailed, thorough and transparent when completing the relevant sections for your security risk assessment (see funding opportunity for word template). You must disclose all recent and ongoing collaborations, affiliations, and funding with foreign institutions and commercial entities for the project team.

Please carefully read through p.12-14 of the guidelines for more information and research security resources.