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Overview

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

The Large Infrastructure Fund (ORF-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-LIF will contribute a maximum of forty percent (40%) towards the total eligible costs, and the research institution is responsible for obtaining at least sixty percent (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 [2025 Innovation Fund Competition](#).

The ORF-LIF program is a competitive, non-entitlement program. The ORF-LIF will not automatically match the CFI awards to Ontario institutions. ORF-LIF funding decisions will be based on scientific excellence and strategic value to Ontario. The Ministry of Colleges and Universities (Ministry) has also integrated research security assessments into all of its research funding programs. This will help to protect the province's long-term economic security and interests against risks that could result in loss or misuse of publicly funded knowledge.

To support institutions in building on existing capacity to accelerate research and technology development or to enhance emerging strategic areas of priority leading to social, economic, health, and/or environmental benefits for Ontarians, the ORF-LIF supports a broad range of research and technology development initiatives including those in natural, social and health sciences, engineering, humanities and the arts, as well as interdisciplinary research.

While the ORF-LIF will accept applications from all research disciplines and across all three 2025 Innovation Fund funding streams in alignment with CFI, funding will be prioritized for applications that support the four Ontario strategic priority areas listed below:

- Automotive industry (including electric vehicles) to support the [Driving Prosperity: The Future of Ontario's Automotive Sector](#) plan
- Critical minerals (or other research areas) to support the [Critical Minerals Strategy](#) within [Ontario's Ring of Fire](#)
- Life sciences (including genomics and medical devices) to support the [Ontario's Life Sciences Strategy](#)
- Quantum and Artificial Intelligence to support [The Pan-Canadian AI Strategy](#)

Within the application, applicants must select which Ontario strategic priorities are relevant to the project (if any). Applicants are expected to elaborate on any project alignment with Ontario strategic priorities in the Strategic Value Criteria section of the application.

Funding

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

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

Grants received for a specific purpose from the Ontario government or from an Ontario government agency, or funding which has already fully leveraged Ontario government funding, cannot be used as an institutional contribution toward the 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 ORF-LIF. ORF-LIF applicants must submit a co-funding application to the CFI 2025 Innovation Fund Competition.

Funding is open, on a competitive basis, to:

- publicly assisted universities
- colleges of applied arts and technology
- affiliated hospitals and research institutes
- Ontario based non-profit research institutions recognized as eligible to receive funding from the CFI as listed on the [CFI Website](#)
- consortia of the above, with one institution as lead applicant, assuming responsibility and accountability for the consortium

Applicants must indicate whether the infrastructure project is:

- Institutional: will involve only one Ontario research institution and eligible to receive infrastructure funds
- Regional: will involve more than one Ontario research institution and eligible to receive infrastructure funds
- National: will involve research institutions outside of Ontario, but within Canada and eligible to receive infrastructure funds

Note that in the application, the Applicant Institution is taking legal responsibility for the project. If multiple institutions submit a joint application, one institution must be assigned as the Applicant Institution.

Eligible Infrastructure Costs

An eligible infrastructure project involves the acquisition or development of research infrastructure to increase research capacity and support world-class research.

Consistent with the [CFI 2025 Innovation Fund](#) Competition the ministry will be accepting applications across all three CFI competition streams:

- Stream 1: Leading edge of exploration and knowledge generation (open)
- Stream 2: Leading edge of exploration and knowledge generation in the social sciences, humanities and arts
- Stream 3: Creation, renewal and upgrade of core facilities

Only one stream can be selected per proposal.

To be eligible for funding, research infrastructure expenditures and in-kind contributions must have taken place on, or after November 1, 2023. We consider expenditures incurred once goods are received, services have been rendered or work has been performed.

All costs normally considered by the CFI as eligible costs for an infrastructure project per section 4.6 of the [CFI Policy and Program Guide](#) are eligible, as long as they are incurred in the context of an eligible project as described in these guidelines.

In addition to the eligible costs outlined in section 4.6 of the [CFI Policy and Program Guide](#), the ministry will accept the following operating costs as eligible for this competition:

- For all three CFI funding streams:
 - Salaries of database technicians or professionals for helping researchers and other users appropriately operate and access the database or maintaining the database and integrating updated data sets and information.

- A project manager and other administrative costs associated with the management and governance of large, complex and/or multi-institutional projects where eligible per [2025 CFI Innovation Fund competition guidelines](#)
- For CFI funding stream 3:
 - Scientific and technical personnel for the operation and management of core facilities that includes platform management and coordination, operating and maintaining specialized equipment, interfacing with researchers from a variety of disciplines, outreach with the private sector, and training highly qualified personnel.

Eligible expenditures must be incurred before the deadline to submit the final CFI financial report. Please see the 2025 CFI Innovation Fund program guidelines for further details.

ORF-LIF applicants are required to provide a breakdown of their total ORF-LIF request by capital and related costs and by operating costs in their ORF-LIF application. Specifically, the budget in the application should list:

- Under **ORF Request for Operating Costs**: If applicable, the ORF request for expenditures for either, or all, of the above operating costs, as eligible for the competition.
- Under **ORF Request for Capital and Related Costs**: The ORF request for all other eligible expenditures outlined in section 4.6 of the CFI Policy and Program Guide.

All costs must adhere to the *Broader Public Sector Accountability Act – 2010*, including any procurement directives issued thereunder, to the extent applicable.

Final determination of an item's eligibility rests with the ORF-LIF, 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.

Project Funding Section of the Application

It is essential that applicants provide their best forecast of project expenditures in the budget table(s). The annual budgets provided will form the basis of the annual payment amount that will be determined when the contract is negotiated. Applicants should pay particular attention to whether their timelines are realistic. The decision to allow a grant extension will be viewed in the context of the Ministry's fiscal plan. Projects should not assume that extensions will automatically be granted.

Table 1 – Ontario Infrastructure Request: Please describe the funding requests from the Ministry, CFI and total for projects within Ontario. The first table only describes the funding request to Ontario. For national projects, please ensure the CFI Request in this table pertains only to the Ontario component of the project, not the CFI Request for the entire project.

New This Round:

If any ORF funds are being requested for the following operations-related costs as defined and eligible under the [2025 Innovation Fund Call for proposals](#), they must be separated out into the “ORF Request for Operating Costs” (vs. “ORF Request for Capital and Related Costs”) by year:

- For all three CFI funding streams:
 - Salaries of database technicians or professionals for helping researchers and other users appropriately operate and access the database or maintaining the database and integrating updated data sets and information.
 - Project manager and other administrative costs associated with the management and governance of large, complex and/or multi-institutional projects where eligible.
- For CFI funding stream 3:
 - Scientific and technical personnel for the operation and management of core facilities that includes platform management and coordination, operating and maintaining specialized equipment, interfacing with researchers from a variety of disciplines, outreach with the private sector, and training highly qualified personnel.

ORF funds requested for all other costs eligible under the section 4.6 of the [CFI Policy and program guide](#) must be listed under “ORF Request for Capital and Related Costs”.

Table 2 – National Project Budget Breakdown: Please describe the total project costs if the project also involves research institutions outside of Ontario. For projects being led outside of Ontario, please indicate the national lead institution’s name, province, and project leader. For multi-institutional projects with distributed infrastructure across Canada or infrastructure sited outside of the province, the lead Ontario institution should submit an ORF-LIF application for the Ontario component of the project. Note for this table, the ORF Request by year should be the total – combining both capital and related costs and operating costs (if applicable) - requested from the ORF-LIF.

Regional and National Projects

The lead Ontario institution seeking provincial funding for a national project must submit an ORF-LIF 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 (i.e., how will the strategic review criteria be met and what is the impact for Ontario). Institutions should ensure that out-of-province partners submit funding applications to their respective governments for their components of the regional/national project.

Note that, for the application, a collaborating institution is one that receives part of the infrastructure or uses part of its institutional envelope in a multi-institutional project.

Advanced Research Computing Infrastructure

For the purposes of this competition, the Ministry will adopt CFI’s definition of “advanced research computing infrastructure”. Proposals that include advanced research computing infrastructure and related resources to carry out a research or technology development project are eligible. However, proposals that focus predominately on major, collective and shared advanced research computing infrastructure are not.

Investments in advanced research computing infrastructure are maximized when those resources are shared. For that reason, and similar to CFI’s expectation that the Digital Research Alliance of Canada is consulted if applicants are planning to request advanced research computing infrastructure as part of their CFI application, the Ministry’s expectation is that applicants have also consulted with [Compute Ontario](#) if requesting advanced research computing infrastructure as part of the ORF-LIF application given Compute Ontario’s role in helping to coordinate advanced research computing resources in Ontario. The engagement with Compute Ontario can take place at the same time applicants engage the Digital.

Eligible Partner Contributions

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

A specific partner contribution that has already been used to leverage or match funds for another capital project at the institution will not be recognized as an eligible matching contribution to an ORF-LIF program.

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

Assessing the Value of In-Kind Contributions

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

The ORF-LIF reserves the right to make the final determination of the eligibility and value of in-kind contributions, to disallow expenditures, and reduce the ORF-LIF 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.

Application and Adjudication Process

Adjudication Process

The ORF-LIF adjudication process consists of the following independent peer-review process:

- CFI coordinated expert committees will complete a scientific review of full applications;
- The Ontario Strategic Value Review Panel 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, medium priority or low priority);
- Proposals are further reviewed by the Ministry of the Solicitor General (SOLGEN). SOLGEN reviews proposals for research security-related due diligence;
- Proposal may be further reviewed by partner ministries to comment on alignment with Ontario's strategic priorities;
- Recommendations may be provided to the CFI Special Multidisciplinary Assessment Committee to help inform CFI funding decisions;
- Following receipt of the results of the CFI adjudication process, the Ontario Research Fund Advisory Board (ORFAB) will make funding recommendations to the Minister of Colleges and Universities;
- The final funding decision rests with the Minister of Colleges and Universities. The Minister may approve applications, approve subject to terms and conditions, or decline applications at the Minister's sole discretion.

Important Dates

Activity	Date
Deadline to submit full applications to Ontario	March 24, 2025
Strategic review of full applications	Early Fall 2025
ORFAB meeting	Late Fall 2025
Ontario funding decisions	Winter 2026

Submission of Applications

Applications for the ORF-LIF must be submitted to the Ministry by March 24, 2025 via your organization's preferred secure cloud storage solution (File Transfer Protocol, drop box, google drive, etc.). The link should be sent to ORFInfrastructure.Mailbox@ontario.ca

You are responsible for ensuring Ministry access to the preferred solution. Ministry staff will access the storage drive and confirm access has been granted. No paper copies are required.

On the application cover letter list the application(s) submitted, title of the project(s) and the name of the Principal Investigator(s). Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.

- Complete the electronic application form and submit it to the Ministry. Please do not submit scanned copies of a scanned application form as these will not be accepted.

- The application(s) should be signed by the Vice-President of Research or any other officer of the institution with the authority to bind the institution. A digital signature is preferable, however, should this not be possible a scanned signed signature page will be accepted.
- The Ministry requires an electronic copy of the Canada Foundation for Innovation – Innovation Fund application as a separate document accompanying your ORF-LIF application.
- The Ministry requires a zipped file containing all the completed **Application Attestation Form for Researcher**. The Applicant Institution (the lead institution in the application) is responsible for collecting all completed and signed Application Attestation Forms from all named researchers in the application, including the PI and providing the signed forms as a zipped file.
- The Ministry requires an electronic copy of the Mitigating Economic and Geopolitical Risk Checklist for Ontario Research Fund Applications as a separate document accompanying your ORF-LIF application.
- Electronic attachments should be clearly named in the following format: Institution Name_PI Last Name_Attachment Type.
- Any scanned PDF documents should be done at a lower resolution to minimize the size of the file.
- The following attachments can be included as part of your ORF-LIF pdf application form:
 1. Letters of support (if included) should be combined into a single PDF. Do not attach individual support letters separately.
 2. Other figures and tables (if required) related to the Project Abstract and Linkages to Previous Ontario Awards sections of the application, should be included in a single document.
 3. A scanned signed signature page if a digital signature can not be provided on the ORF-LIF pdf application form.

When preparing an application, review and consider the following:

- Font type must be Arial and size must be no smaller than 11 pts. Condensed type is not acceptable.
- Attachment text must be in black and of letter quality.
- Please ensure that all pages are numbered.
- Adhere to the restrictions on characters and number of pages.
- The character limit includes spaces.
- Figures, tables and references are not included in the character limit.
- Avoid technical jargon in Project Summary section.
- Avoid long descriptive narrative. Use bullet points or summary tables where possible and appropriate.

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence

As noted in the CFI [guidelines](#) for the 2025 IF competition the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) in preparation of proposals is an emerging and complex issue. Consistent with CFI's approach, ORF-LIF applicants are encouraged to review and follow the [draft guidance](#) on the use of AI in the development and review of research grant proposals and, where applicable, disclose any use of generative AI in the preparation of the proposal. Individuals remain personally accountable for the complete contents of their application.

Tips For Preparing Applications

Common application errors and weaknesses identified in previous ORF rounds have resulted in the following suggestions for submitting successful applications:

- Clearly describe the project's anticipated societal, economic, health or environmental benefits to Ontario.
- Be sure to indicate how the proposal differs from the current state-of-the-art research in the field, within the Ontario context as well as nationally and internationally.
- Indicate how the proposed research differs from research previously funded by the Ontario government.
- Ensure enough specificity in the description of the project and its outcomes to show how the proposed work is important to the appropriate Ontario sector/community, and how it will contribute to the field.
- Clearly explain the steps that will be taken to maximize the likelihood of achieving the research impacts.
- Provide a cohesive, focused description of the proposed research (avoid presenting numerous, unrelated or loosely related projects).
- Ensure the content and language of the proposal is clear and accessible to people outside of the applicant's field (Ontario Strategic Review Panels are multidisciplinary and the application will be reviewed by panel members that are both within and outside of the applicant's specific field of research).
- Next-stage recipients and end-users of research should be clearly engaged.
- Including support letters from industry and/or other partners that specifically address the project lends credibility.
- Accurate descriptions of industry and/or other partner contributions, including how in-kind contributions are valued, should be provided.
- Budget numbers should be carefully justified.
- Provide a clear and justified Highly Qualified Personnel (HQP) plan.
- Sustainability of the infrastructure beyond government funding should be evident.

Information Sharing Between CFI and ORF

Before submitting an application to ORF-LIF, institutions must complete and submit a "Release of Information" form. Please contact ORFInfrastructure.Mailbox@ontario.ca to obtain this form. Institutions that have already submitted a form do not need to resubmit (unless the institution had since notified the ministry in writing that it had withdrawn consent).

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 the Ministry, 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.

Assessment Criteria and Review Process

The peer review process to assess the scientific merits of proposals will be managed by CFI. This will ensure that CFI and the province have a common reference point in evaluating the strategic value of proposals and engaging in discussions on federal/provincial priorities. Where possible, the Ministry will work with CFI to reduce duplication of efforts and administrative burden on the institutions.

CFI will select expert reviewers to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the proposals against their five assessment criteria (see [CFI's Innovation Fund Call for Proposals](#)). The results from the CFI's expert review process will inform the Ministry's Ontario Strategic Value Review and funding decisions.

Expert Review (Coordinated by CFI)

- **Research or technology development** — The research or technology development program is innovative, feasible and internationally competitive. In the case of core facilities, the facility enables researchers to conduct research or technology development that is innovative, feasible and internationally competitive.
- **Team** — The team has all the experience and expertise needed to conduct the proposed activities and will do so in an inclusive and equitable working environment. In the case of core facilities, the team has all the experience and expertise needed to enable multiple research or technology development activities and will do so in an inclusive and equitable working environment.
- **Infrastructure** — The requested infrastructure is necessary and appropriate to conduct the research or technology development program. In the case of core facilities, the requested infrastructure is necessary, appropriate and will enhance the facility's services.
- **Sustainability** — The infrastructure will be well managed, accessible and optimally used over its useful life.
- **Benefits** — The team and its partners have a well-defined plan to transfer research or technology development results and mobilize knowledge. The results are likely to lead to benefits for Canadians.

Ontario Strategic Value Review (Coordinated by the Ministry)

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

Panel 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.
- Medium Priority Proposals – Proposals that are aligned with Ontario's priorities and innovation goals.
- Low Priority Proposals – Proposals that are not aligned with Ontario's priorities and innovation goals.

Strategic Value Criteria

The Ministry recognizes the importance of extracting value from research investments and in stimulating sector and cluster productivity that will help Ontario communities innovate and compete nationally and internationally.

Applications are assessed based on the **three** criteria listed below. Illustrative (not exhaustive) examples are provided under each. Applicants are encouraged to document all benefits associated with their proposal.

The first two criteria relate to the **anticipated value to Ontario**. Neither category is more important than the other. While applicants must address both categories, they are encouraged to emphasize those that are most relevant to their project.

It is strongly recommended that applicants consult their institution's industry liaison office, knowledge mobilization unit, or equivalent as well as their external partners in the completion of this section. Demonstrate this engagement where appropriate.

1. Economic Benefits

Describe the economic potential of your research and when it could be achieved. Describe how your research, where applicable, will contribute to economic outcomes (see examples of potential benefits below).

Demonstrate how the economic benefit of the proposal extends beyond the private sector partners and beyond traditional IP and commercialization agreements.

This section should provide supporting analysis of the economic areas being discussed, including sources of information. Please note that your market analysis can be qualitative, but quantitative information will strengthen the application.

If applicable, describe the commercialization potential of your research, when it could be achieved and the anticipated benefits to Ontario. Describe how your research would contribute to commercialization outcomes such as spin-off companies, patents, licenses, and other forms of knowledge transfer to industry. Describe the technology (product or process) that would be developed from this IP and explain how potential customers would use this invention.

This section should provide a brief market analysis, including sources of information. Please note that your market analysis can be qualitative, but quantitative information will strengthen the application.

Potential benefits could include:

- Improving Ontario's productivity and competitiveness
- Recruiting, retaining and training of highly qualified personnel (HQP)
- Creating jobs
- Sustainable use of natural resources
- Promoting trade
- Improving efficiency in private and/or public sector
- Improving regional economic development
- Enhancing Ontario's global reputation as an innovation hub
- Expanding access to valuable data assets
- If applicable:
 - Commercialization potential and market analysis
 - Ability to produce spin-off products and/or firms
 - Likelihood of patent and licensing opportunities
 - Knowledge transfer to industry

2. Societal Benefits

Describe the potential of your research to achieve societal benefits and when they could be achieved. Describe how your research will contribute to societal outcomes including—but not limited to—positive effects on human health, environmental wellbeing, poverty reduction, education, quality of life, public policy, and profound shift in understanding of a given discipline.

This section should provide supporting analysis of the societal areas being discussed, including sources of information. Please note that your analysis can be qualitative, but quantitative information would strengthen the application.

Potential benefits could include:

- Improving health and wellbeing of Ontarians
- Preserving environmental quality
- Reducing poverty
- Engaging and mentoring youth
- Improving public policy
- Effecting a profound shift in the understanding of a given discipline
- Placing Ontario at the forefront of a particular research discipline from an international perspective

3. Plan for Achieving Impact and End-User Engagement

Describe the strategy for realizing the potential of the research, and for providing practical application and benefit to industry, the economy, and to wellbeing in Ontario in the short- and long-term. Describe the steps that will be and/or have already been undertaken to maximize the likelihood of achieving the research impacts discussed above.

As appropriate, identify the roles and responsibilities of members of the project team involved in realizing the research impacts. Describe the previous experience of the project team in appropriate types of knowledge transfer. Explain the roles of your industry and community partners, institutional liaison offices or other experienced advisors involved in the translation of your research. Applicants are encouraged to consider inter-institutional partnerships to maximize translation, such as partnerships between universities and Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology.

Describe the engagement that you will and/or have already undertaken with potential recipients of your research. This may include, but is not limited to, private sector partners, industry associations, consortia, governments, other researchers, the broader public sector, non-profit groups, community/patient groups, and philanthropic organizations. Describe the strategic alliances, partnerships, or licensing agreements you have, or plan to have, in place with these recipients.

Where appropriate please attach any End-User letters of support in Attachments section of the application.

Please consider including:

- A clear and tangible strategy for achieving research impacts
- Information on the 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
- The track record of collaboration with next-stage recipients and end-users
- The strength and commitment of interested recipient partners, demonstrated through financial contributions and/or strong evidence of vested interest in the research outcomes
- The plan for mitigating potential risks and limitations which may impede the ability to achieve impacts.

When outlining the economic and societal benefits, as well as plan for achieving impact and end-user engagement, applicants are strongly encouraged to demonstrate their project's alignment with at least one of the following Ontario strategic priority areas:

- Automotive industry (including electric vehicles) to support the [Driving Prosperity: The Future of Ontario's Automotive Sector](#) plan;
- Critical minerals (or other research areas) to support the [Critical Minerals Strategy](#) within [Ontario's Ring of Fire](#);
- Life sciences (including genomics and medical devices) to support the [Ontario's Life Sciences Strategy](#);
- Quantum and Artificial Intelligence to support [The Pan-Canadian AI Strategy](#).

The third criterion relates to maximizing the likelihood of realizing those economic and/or societal benefits. To that end, applicants are strongly encouraged to begin engagement with partners as early as possible.

Other Project Requirements and Considerations

Intellectual Property (IP)

For the purposes of this competition, Intellectual Property (IP) refers to anything that may be protected by any intellectual property right including, but not limited to, works, performances, discoveries, inventions, trademarks (including trade names and service marks), domain names, industrial designs, trade secrets, data, tools, templates, technology (including software in executable code and source code format), Confidential Information as applicable, mask work, integrated circuit topographies, documents, or any other information, data, or materials and any expression thereof. For further information, please review the Report: [Intellectual Property in Ontario's Innovation Ecosystem](#)

The Ministry does not claim any ownership or rights to any IP resulting from ORF-LIF 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.

The applicant should describe how ownership and disposition of IP generated from the project will be determined. The Ministry may request a copy of the institutional and/or relevant IP policy. Applicants are expected to make mutually agreeable commercialization arrangements with their private sector partners.

IP Resources:

The Ministry recognizes the important contribution researchers make to their field of practice, as well as the potential commercial value that their ideas hold. Strengthening the ways that Ontarians use IP to support the provincial and local economies is a key priority for our government.

In July 2020, the Ontario government announced the province's first [Intellectual Property Action Plan](#), following the recommendations made by the [Expert Panel on Intellectual Property](#). The IP Action Plan included a commitment, among others, to implement a Commercialization Mandate Policy Framework (CMPF) for Ontario's colleges and universities and was released in January 2022. The CMPF will help postsecondary institutions to adopt and implement policies and practices to better commercialize innovations, idea and products generated through "Ontario-made" research and innovation.

The IP Action Plan will drive the province's long-term economic competitiveness by prioritizing the generation, protection, and commercialization of IP. We encourage you to familiarize yourself with Ontario's intellectual property resources and opportunities for support from [Intellectual Property Ontario \(IPON\)](#), as well as those available through the [Canadian Intellectual Property Office \(CIPO\)](#). Over the duration of the project, a member of the research team will be required to complete a foundational IP course provided through [University of Toronto – IP Education Program](#) or [CIGI – Foundations of IP Strategy](#).

For more resources see the following links:

- [Intellectual Property Institute of Canada – Courses and Events](#)
- [The European Patent Office](#)
 - [Materials and programs](#)
 - [Searching for Patents](#)
- [World Intellectual Property Organization - Resources](#)
- [Patentscope – Search for patents](#)

Protection of Intellectual Property:

Applicants must implement the proper mechanisms for the protection of intellectual property in accordance with Ontario and Canadian legislation, if applicable, including without limitation the execution of nondisclosure and confidentiality agreements by personnel that are directly involved in the Project.

Exploitation of Intellectual Property

Applicants shall use their best efforts to ensure intellectual property created or developed through an ORF-LIF funded project is exploited in a way that maximizes benefits for Ontario and Ontarians.

Equity Diversity and Inclusion

The Ministry is committed to making equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) a priority through the integration of EDI principles into ORF-LIF funding opportunities.

The Tri-Agency Institutional Programs Secretariat (TIPS), through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), defines equity as the removal of systemic barriers and biases, to enact the practice of say fair and equitable treatment so that all individuals have equal access to and can benefit from the program.

To achieve this, TIPS states that institutions must embrace diversity, defined as differences in race, colour, place of origin, religion, immigrant and newcomer status, ethnic origin, ability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and age. Recognizing and valuing diversity and equity must be accompanied by concerted efforts to ensure the inclusion of diverse and underrepresented populations.

The research project should meaningfully engage members of underrepresented groups within the research and development team. Underrepresented groups include, but are not limited to, the five designated groups (women, Indigenous peoples, members of visible minorities, persons with disabilities and members of LGBTQ2+). The institution must strive to put in place the right conditions for each individual to reach their full potential.

Please use the [Creating an Equitable, Diverse and Inclusive Research Environment: A Best Practices Guide for Recruitment, Hiring and Retention](#) provided by TIPS to determine how best to address areas of improvement in your work environment and to develop equity, diversity and inclusion action plans.

Ethical, Safety and Integrity Requirements

Institutions are responsible for ensuring any experimentation will be acceptable on ethical and safety grounds.

- Research involving human subjects or human stem cells must comply with the [Tri-Council Policy Statements: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans – TCPS 2 \(2022\)](#).
- In the case of laboratory animal experimentation, the institution must comply with the [guidelines and policies of the Canadian Council on Animal Care](#).
- 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](#).
- Institutions must ensure compliance with the [Tri-Agency Open Access Policy on Publications](#).
- The Ministry expects researchers and participating research institutions to maintain the highest standards of research integrity. Research institutions are expected to have and abide by policies and procedures that govern research integrity.

Research Security Requirements

The Ministry has developed a [Research Security Guidelines for Ontario Research Funding Programs \(RS Guidelines\)](#) outlining the detailed research security requirements and processes from the pre-application stage, the application and adjudication stages including possible risk mitigation processes, through to decisions on funding by the Minister of Colleges and Universities. If funding is awarded, successful applicants agree to carry out the project in accordance with the terms and conditions set out in the transfer payment agreement to be entered into between the province of Ontario and the Applicant and for this contracting stage, certain RS details are described. Please review the RS Guidelines in conjunction with these 2025 LIF program guidelines when applying for funding under this program.

ORF Awards

Following the completion of the CFI's Innovation Fund adjudication processes, ORFAB will make funding recommendations to the Minister of Colleges and Universities, who will make final funding decisions. The Minister may approve applications, subject to terms and conditions, or decline applications at their sole discretion. ORF-LIF funding decisions for the 2025 competition are expected in 2026.

The ministry reserves the right to withdraw its support for projects not finalized within a reasonable time frame following ORF-LIF funding decisions based on the following table:

Award Finalization Expectations

Type of Project	Deadline to submit documents required to execute TPA
Co-funded by the ORF-LIF and CFI	Within 60 days of CFI award finalization
Funded by ORF-LIF only (requires applicant to secure matching funds in place of CFI funding)	Within 12 months of ORF-LIF funding decisions

The ministry reserves the right to withdraw its support for projects for which the final report (including request for holdback payment) is not submitted within a reasonable time frame to be outlined in the transfer payment agreement for the project.

Please Note: Sections of the Project Summary in the application may be used in whole or in part in news releases or similar material, if the project is approved.

Award Agreements

Approved applicants will enter into a Grant Agreement with the Ministry. The Grant Agreement stipulates terms and conditions governing the payment of the ORF-LIF grant, including, but are not limited to, the following:

- 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/or 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 in writing to the Ministry and may require Ministry approval.

It is important to ensure that a system is established to monitor the safe and secure use of ORF-LIF-funded assets.

Disbursement of Funds

Approved projects will be paid through a Request for Disbursement process. The ORF-LIF grant is subject to a ten percent (10%) holdback, which will be disbursed after the final ORF review of the project's impact, finances and fulfillment of project objectives.

This program may be subject to change. Grant disbursements are subject to the Ministry having an appropriation approved by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario for the fiscal year in which the disbursement is to be made.

Communications

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

Program Contact

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

ORFInfrastructure.Mailbox@ontario.ca

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

The Ministry is subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990 c. F.31*, as amended ("FIPPA"). Any information provided to the Ministry in connection with an application to the Ontario Research Fund Program may be subject to disclosure in accordance with the requirements of that Act or other laws.

When submitting an application, applicants may wish to consider clearly labelling or otherwise identifying any information being provided to the Ministry under this application that in their view may be considered confidential, commercially sensitive or proprietary information with reference to section 17 of FIPPA.

Applicants are asked not to provide any unsolicited personal information when completing the application form. If personal information is included in the application form, the applicant shall ensure that the individual to whom the information relates has been notified and provided with a copy of the Ministry's notice of collection of personal information, set out in Appendix B of these 2025 ORF-LIF Program Guidelines.

If you have any questions about the collection and use of your personal information, please contact:

Azin Van Moorsel | Manager, Research Programs
Operations Division | Ministry of Colleges and Universities
315 Front Street West, 17th Floor Toronto ON M5V 3A4
Email: Azin.VanMoorsel@ontario.ca
Cell: 437-881-5970

Appendix A: Canadian Research and Development Classification Codes

The Ministry has implemented the Canadian Research and Development Classification (CRDC), a system that provides a common approach to classifying research across institutions and governments. It was published by Statistics Canada on October 5, 2020.

The CRDC was developed through a collaborative effort by the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI), the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) and Statistics Canada.

The CRDC includes all current sectors of research in Canada and supports a wide range of needs within the research and development ecosystem. It is modelled after the Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification and Frascati Model 2015 (from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) and aligns with international standards.

The three classifications in the Canadian Research and Development Classification (CRDC) are:

1. Type of Activity (TOA);
2. Fields of Research (FOR); and
3. Socioeconomic Objective (SEO).

When completing your application, please refer to the CRDC guidelines and classification codes, available for download in HTML, CSV, and PDF formats (CRDC 2020 Version 1.0 is now replaced by CRDC 2020 Version 2.0):

- English: www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/subjects/standard/crdc/2020v1/index
- French: www.statcan.gc.ca/fra/sujets/norme/ccrd/2020v1/indice

Guidelines for classifying with the CRDC

This section must be complete fully prior to submitting the application to the Ministry.

Note: The applicant should use same CRDC codes as what was listed in their CFI proposal.

1. Classifying by Type of Activity (TOA)

This way of classifying research refers to whether it is basic research, applied research or experimental development.

- The research project should be allocated to a single TOA (basic research, applied research or experimental development). TOA Codes can be found online using the links noted above. You must provide the alphanumeric code as well as the title/name of the TOA in the fields provide on the application form.

Example:

Code: RDT2 Division: Applied research

2. Classifying by Field of Research (FOR)

This way of classifying research includes major classes and related subclasses of research based on disciplines, knowledge sources, objects of interest, methods, processes, and techniques used in research and development activity. This is different from socioeconomic objectives, which refer to the purpose or outcome of the research and development activity.

- You must provide the alphanumeric code as well as the title/name of the FOR in the fields provide on the application form.
- The research project should be allocated to a single FOR (major class and related subclass). FOR Codes can be found online using the links noted above.

Example:

Level 1 Code: RDF10 Division: Natural Sciences

Level 2 Code: RDF104 Group: Chemical sciences

Level 3 Code: RDF10404 Class: Macromolecular and materials chemistry

Level 4 Code (optional): RDF1040401 Subclass (Field): Characterization of materials

3. Classifying by Socioeconomic Objective (SEO)

This way of classifying research refers to the intended purpose or outcome of the research and development activity. This is different from fields of research, which refer to the disciplines, knowledge sources, objects of interest, methods, processes, and techniques used in the research and development activity in order to achieve objectives.

- The research project should be allocated to a single SEO (major class and related subclass). SEO Codes can be found online using the links noted above.
- You must provide the alphanumeric code as well as the title/name of the SEO in the fields provide on the application form.

Example:

Level 1 Code: RDS109 Division: Education

Appendix B: Notice of Direct and Indirect Collection of Personal Information

When an institution applies to a Ministry of Colleges and Universities, Operations Division, Science and Research Branch (Ministry), research funding program (Program), the application and documentation relating to the application may include the personal information of the principal investigator, any other researchers on a proposed project (co-investigators), and any other individuals that may be involved in the proposed project.

The Ministry directly and indirectly collects personal information contained in a Ministry Program application and in documentation relating to the application, such as the Application Attestation Form, the Mitigating Economic and Geopolitical Risk Checklist, and if an applicant undergoes a risk mitigation process, the Risk Mitigation Form and any additional information requested to assess research security. This personal information is collected pursuant to s. 6 of the *Ministry of Economic Development and Trade Act* and s. 2 and s. 15 of the *Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act*.

This personal information is collected for the purposes of administering a Ministry Program. Administering the Program includes organizing peer review panels to review applications, conducting research security assessments, conducting risk mitigation and attestations for high-risk projects, facilitating Ontario Research Fund Advisory Board (ORFAB) reviews, making funding determinations, and conducting performance assessments.

Information and documentation provided to the Ministry in, or in relation to, an application to a Ministry Program, including personal information, may be shared with Ministry staff, members of the Ontario Peer Review Panels, and members of ORFAB for the purposes of administering the program. The information and documentation, including personal information, may also be disclosed to other ministries within the Government of Ontario, such as the Ministry of the Solicitor General, for the purpose of administering the program, including undertaking research security assessments.

For the following additional Ministry program forms:

- [Mitigating Economic and Geopolitical Risk Checklist](#)
- Risk Mitigation Form
- [Application Attestation Form](#)

In respect of the above-noted additional Ministry Program forms, information and documentation provided to the Ministry in these forms and any supplementary research security information requested in relation to an application to a Ministry Program, including personal information, may be shared with Ministry staff and members of ORFAB for the purposes of administering the program. The information and documentation, including personal information, may also be disclosed to other ministries within the Government of Ontario, such as the Ministry of the Solicitor General, for the purpose of administering the Program including undertaking research security assessments.

If you have any questions about this notice of collection, please contact:

Azin Van Moorsel | Manager, Research Programs
Operations Division | Ministry of Colleges and Universities
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