

# Update

June 2024



- 
- **2025 Innovation Fund competition**
  - **Major Research Facilities**
  - **Project implementation timelines**
  - **Research security obligations for the John R. Evans Leaders Fund**
  - **Taking advantage of Infrastructure Operating Fund reporting flexibilities**
  - **Deadline imminent: Infrastructure operational status questions and project progress reports**
  - **Promoting your institution's facilities listed on the CFI's Research Facilities Navigator**
  - **Promoting the greening of CFI-funded infrastructure**
  - **Summer podcasts: Add 10,000 ways to your list**
  - **Important upcoming dates**
- 

## **2025 Innovation Fund competition**

The **call for proposals** for the 2025 Innovation Fund competition is now out. Two virtual information sessions took place on June 18 (English) and 19 (French) to outline details of the call and to provide an opportunity for potential applicants to ask questions. Recordings will be made available for those who were unable to attend.

## **Major Research Facilities**

We are pleased to announce that the Government of Canada has officially recognized the Canada Foundation for Innovation's pivotal role in supporting Major Research Facilities (MRF) by entrusting us to implement, in collaboration with Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED), a newly approved decision-making framework for these facilities.

The MRF framework will be rolled out in phases over the coming years and is subject to availability of resources. It aims to enhance federal decision-making on MRF by introducing coordinated capital and operation and maintenance (O&M) funding and embedding lifecycle and portfolio-based approaches into investment decisions.

The framework designates a group of research facilities currently supported through the Major Science Initiatives Fund (MSIF) as MRF. They are the Canadian Light Source (CLS), CCGS *Amundsen* research icebreaker, Ocean Networks Canada (ONC), the Ocean Tracking Network (OTN), the Sudbury Neutrino Observatory Laboratory (SNOLAB), and the Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization (VIDO).

In collaboration with ISED, the CFI has been tasked with developing an MRF implementation plan to deliver to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry by April 30, 2025.

Over the coming months, the CFI will engage with the MRF and MSIF community and will host virtual meetings to provide more clarity about the MRF framework and plans for implementation, and to gather feedback from the community.

## **Project implementation timelines**

As mentioned in our special notice of **March 2024**, following the Treasury Board's rejection of our recent request to reallocate funds to future years, institutions must ensure projects are finalized and implemented promptly. Details follow.

### ***Time to finalize CFI contribution***

According to our Policy and program guide, institutions must submit award finalization documents to the CFI within nine months of the CFI Board approving funding for the project. Currently, just over 50 percent of projects meet this deadline, with extensions granted for the remainder. While we understand that unforeseen circumstances, such as problems in securing matching funding, can cause unexpected delays, extensions will only be granted on an exceptional basis with strong justification and for a period of no more than two years after the CFI Board's decision.

As per our existing policy, we reserve the right to withdraw our support for projects not finalized on time.

## ***Time to implement***

We recognize that over the past few years institutions have faced significant challenges in implementing projects, including inflation, labour shortages and supply chain issues. Our analyses also indicate that the size of the project is the most closely correlated factor with the time required for research infrastructure projects to be implemented.

Based on the data available and on the fiscal imperatives of our contribution agreement with the federal government, we expect institutions to submit a final financial report for CFI-funded projects within the following timeframes:

<b>CFI contribution to a project*</b>	<b>Maximum time between decision and submission of the final financial report</b>
≤ \$1 million	4 years
> \$1 million and ≤ \$4 million	5 years
> \$4 million	7 years

\* Note that some funding opportunities might refer to the total cost of a project rather than to the CFI contribution. Consult the call for proposals for details.

The data shows that less than 50 percent of projects are currently meeting these deadlines. To encourage timely project implementation, we are exploring various strategies. For instance, we now schedule and announce regular competition cycles. This approach offers institutions an alternative submission date for strategically valuable projects that are not yet mature enough for the current competition. Additionally, we are reviewing our finalization and project oversight processes to identify ways to help institutions accelerate project implementation.

As stated in our Calls for proposals, we reserve the right to withdraw support for projects that are not implemented within a reasonable timeframe.

We are currently revising our fund literature to clearly outline these requirements. These changes have already been included in the **2025 Innovation Fund** competition and the latest **College Fund call for proposals**.

## **Research security obligations for the John R. Evans Leaders Fund**

Starting on June 25, institutions applying to the **JELF–unaffiliated stream** have research security obligations. These obligations will vary depending on whether the research supported involves a private-sector partner and whether it aims to advance a sensitive technology research area.

In late March, we published **guidance** that details CFI implementation of research security measures. This guidance provides information regarding what you need to do when your institution applies for funding and after your institution receives funding.

At this moment, these requirements do not apply to the JELF–partnership stream (i.e., CRC, CERC, NSERC, SSHRC).

We will publish updated guidelines for proposals and reviewer guidelines to reflect the new requirements for research security. In addition, we have introduced some other changes to the JELF documents for each of the streams:

- We removed the minimum threshold to be JELF-eligible. Universities recognized as eligible by the CFI can apply to JELF via the Small Institution Fund (SIF) even if they do not have a minimum annual average of \$200,000 over the last three years in research funding received from the three federal research funding. This change took effect when the 2023–26 allocation was distributed, but the change was not reflected in the documentation.
- We updated the Advanced Research Computing section to harmonize it with the Innovation Fund 2025 information.
- We included a new table detailing the project implementation timeline to reflect the new project completion requirements.

The new version of these documents will be available on our website by mid-July.

## **Taking advantage of Infrastructure Operating Fund reporting flexibilities**

Institutions can help the CFI meet its financial targets by using the Infrastructure Operating Fund as one of their earlier sources of operating and maintenance (O&M) funding and by taking advantage of the flexibilities we have outlined below. This in turn helps reduce the risk of additional funding reductions.

The CFI knows that in many cases an institution’s IOF allocation only covers a fraction of the actual operating and maintenance (O&M) costs of the CFI-funded infrastructure. This is why over the years we have developed templates and introduced flexibilities to make it as easy as possible for institutions to report the use of their IOF allocation to the CFI. The flexibilities we have outlined below allow you to draw down on your IOF allocation more quickly and reduce your administrative burden.

You can report the following O&M costs in your IOF annual report, even if this is not the way you have internally allocated these funds, as long as the costs were not claimed for reimbursement from an external source:

- The full salary and benefits for technicians and professionals directly involved in the operation and maintenance of the CFI-funded research infrastructure, if the infrastructure cannot be operated without their assistance. For example, you do not need to pro-rate the salaries and benefits based on the proportion of time spent operating and maintaining the CFI-funded infrastructure. A **template for reporting the salary of technicians and professionals** is available on our website.

- Services (e.g., electricity, security, cleaning) that directly support space funded by the CFI or for space that is essential to house and use CFI-funded infrastructure, which may include common areas, if applicable. To make it easier for you to report these costs, institutions can use a simplified method with the **facilities charges rate tables and template** that we update annually.
- Electricity costs for the use of CFI-funded infrastructure can also be reported using a simplified method with the **electricity costs rate tables and template** that we update annually.

Consult section **4.7.1 Eligible costs for operation and maintenance of the infrastructure** of our Policy and program guide or our [IOF webpage](#) for more details.

## **Deadline imminent: Infrastructure operational status questions and project progress reports**

Project progress reports (PPRs) must be submitted in CAMS by June 30, 2024. For institutions with pending responses to the operational status question, please ensure researchers provide a response promptly so that PPRs of operational projects can be completed and submitted before the deadline. Failure to provide a response to the operational status question by the deadline will result in the project being deemed not operational during the 2023–24 fiscal year.

The PPRs are a key source of information for the CFI. They are used to manage projects, assess the impact of investments and inform annual outcome reporting. We rely on receiving your PPRs by the deadline to ensure the accuracy of our internal and external reporting.

The CFI will withhold all institutional payments when an institution does not comply with performance reporting requirements for any of its awards.

To see which projects have outstanding reporting requirements check the “Project progress reports (PPRs)” section in your CAMS dashboard.

## **Promoting your institution’s facilities listed on the CFI’s Research Facilities Navigator**

The Navigator’s 10th anniversary campaign is running all year long! Tell us how you use the Navigator in your work by sending us **your stories**. Contact **Danielle Fremes**, Senior Stakeholder Relations Officer, for information on how to participate. In case you missed it, check out the **video by the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry**, the Hon. François-Philippe Champagne, on the value of the Navigator to Canada’s innovation community.

## Promoting the greening of CFI-funded infrastructure

During Canadian Environment Week (June 2–8), we published a story on our website — ***Keeping research infrastructure green*** — which recognized the efforts CFI-funded labs are making to reduce their environmental impact. We would like to thank institutions that submitted their “greening” efforts to be part of the story. This initiative supported our **Ready for a changing world** promotional campaign, which over the last year has been showcasing the research CFI funding has enabled in the area of climate change and environmental sustainability. Do you have other infrastructure greening initiatives you’d like to share? Feel free to reach out to Director of Communications, **Elizabeth Shilts**, with your stories.

## Summer podcasts: Add 10,000 ways to your list

We have wrapped up the second season of our podcast, **10,000 ways**, which looks at how some of the researchers working with CFI-funded equipment approach their work, face challenges and inspire the next generation of innovators. Listen to our most recent episodes on **Kelsey Leonard** of the University of Waterloo who focuses on water and climate justice, and **Céline Surette** of Université de Moncton, who researches the impacts of environmental pollution on health and community. Or find all episodes by subscribing to the Canada Foundation for Innovation podcast page wherever you get your podcasts.

## Important upcoming dates

You can always find key dates for all the CFI’s funding opportunities on our website. Here are a few important dates coming up:

June 30, 2024	Deadline to answer the “Operational status” questions in CAMS and submit the project progress reports (PPRs)
July 15, 2024	Deadline to submit 2024 annual performance report for facilities currently funded by the Major Science Initiatives Fund
September 17, 2024	Deadline to submit proposals to the College Fund
October 2, 2024	Deadline to submit notices of intent for the 2025 Innovation Fund competition
October 15, 2024	Deadline to submit proposals for the John R. Evans Leaders Fund – unaffiliated proposals
November 19, 2024	CFI Board of Directors’ meeting

**Stay connected and up to date on CFI activities and announcements: [Subscribe to our communications today.](#)**