

Frequently Asked Questions for Stage 2 of the August 2019 Call for Proposals

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Table of Contents

1. If an organization has a current Funding Agreement with the Future Skills Centre, can it submit a new proposal under this Call?
2. How are the following defined: essential skills; skills development; skills development systems; skills development infrastructure; and, training methods?
3. Can I revise an application from a previous Call and submit a Letter of Interest for this Call?
4. Our project involves costs associated with curriculum modification, assessment development, staff training, equipment, and physical infrastructure costs. Are these permitted?
5. Who would own intellectual property arising from the project?
6. Can newcomers to Canada or permanent residents of Canada be included in the target demographics of projects?
7. What stream (innovation or evidence) would our proposal fall under if it is based on a series of assessments that have significant bodies of research and are not new to the marketplace, but the combination of approaches is unique?
8. Can an organization that is part of or affiliated with the Future Skills Centre or its partners submit a Letter of Interest?
9. What budget items are eligible? Are the following eligible: student scholarships or stipends; indirect costs/overhead?
10. Is there a maximum percentage of direct costs that can be included in the budget?
11. What is the maximum percentage of overhead/indirect costs that can be applied to a request?
12. What would enable a project to qualify for the Evidence Stream over the Innovation Stream? What can be considered as evidence examples?

13. Can seniors be considered a relevant target population or an under-represented group?
14. Do projects need to be national in scope or can they be regional or local, based on need?
15. Does the Future Skills Centre intend to fund projects that aim to enhance certain Sub-components within the post-secondary education system, which can be considered as part of a skills development ecosystem?
16. Are programs with a long duration a good fit for this Call?
17. What stream (Innovation or Evidence) would our proposal fall under if it is based on a series of assessments that have significant bodies of research but the combination of approaches is unique?
18. The Call indicates that it is designed to fund new activities and the expansion of existing activities to new clients and geographies. Can a project concept originate from outside of Canada?
19. Are ‘young people’ stated in the Call synonymous with ‘youth’ in this Call and what is their age range?
20. Our project will involve working with Indigenous communities and Indigenous youth workers, and we follow the OCAP principles. Will we be able to ensure that we can continue following the OCAP principles in whatever evaluation and knowledge mobilization strategy is co-developed?
21. My organization is relatively new, is that a disadvantage?
22. Can persons who may eventually become self-employed or an entrepreneur, be a target group?
23. Who is a project partner?
24. How many cohorts of training can be undertaken in the maximum project duration (24 months)?
25. When will the next call for proposals take place?
26. We noticed that there is no economic impact/minimum participant threshold sections. Do most applicants provide this information in Relevance and Need?
27. Is there a methodology for calculating in-kind contributions? For example, how should we estimate the dollar amount that should be attributed to one-day of professional time and will this be the standard used by all applicants)?

1. If an organization has a current Funding Agreement with the Future Skills Centre, can it submit a new proposal under this Call?

In order for the Centre to identify, test, measure, and share innovative approaches regarding skills needs, we seek a range of proposals and encourage all eligible organizations to apply under this Call. Please refer to the Organization Eligibility section of the [Call for Proposals Guidelines](#).

An organization with a current Funding Agreement can submit one Letter of Interest as the lead organization to this Call. It can participate as a partner on one or several Letters of Interest.

Additional funds for the continuation of existing activities and/or to support substantive scope changes of currently funded projects are not eligible for funding under this Call.

2. How are the following defined: essential skills; skills development; skills development systems; skills development infrastructure; and, training methods?

Essential skills include reading, writing, document use, numeracy, thinking, computer use/digital skills, soft skills (e.g. problem-solving, oral communication, working with others) and continuous learning skills.

Skills development is defined as the creation or strengthening of skills, which are relevant to the workforce system, that enable individuals to participate in trade(s) or occupation(s).

A skills development system includes the intellectual knowledge; human resources; organizations; networks; infrastructure; policies, institutions, procedures and practices; and physical assets that enable skills identification, transfer, application, testing, etc.

Skills development infrastructure encompasses the digital technologies, intellectual property, physical and other resources related to the formation of skills.

Training methods include in-person, through online platforms, coaching, experiential opportunities or a combination of approaches.

3. Can I revise an application from a previous Call and submit a Letter of Interest for this Call?

All submissions will be considered regardless of the outcome of previous requests for funding.

4. Our project involves costs associated with curriculum modification, assessment development, staff training, equipment, and physical infrastructure costs. Are these permitted?

All of these costs appear to be eligible as they relate to the direct development and delivery of the project. A full list of eligible and ineligible costs will be shared with shortlisted projects for the application stage; and detailed project budgets will be reviewed at that time.

5. Who would own intellectual property arising from the project?

The Future Skills Centre or Canada will not claim any ownership rights in any intellectual property arising from a funded project.

Project proponents must agree to allow FSC and Canada to use all data, information and documentary material related to the project that is necessary for the purpose of evaluation of the project, and verification of compliance with the funding Agreement.

The goal of the Future Skills Centre is to create and disseminate new knowledge and learning for the benefit of Canada and Canadians. As such, project proponents must agree to make public all research and evaluation information resulting from the project, including the project results, interim and final articles, papers, interim and final reports. This would include publication on the FSC website, and through other means that will achieve a wide distribution.

Given the goal of the Centre is to help identify new approaches, interventions and tools that will help Canadians succeed in the current and future workforce, project proponents must agree to use reasonable efforts to make beneficial approaches, interventions or tools developed or tested through the funded project available to the public. This could include making it available free of charge, or for a fee.

6. Can newcomers to Canada or permanent residents of Canada be included in the target demographics of projects?

Yes. The Centre has a particular focus on equity-seeking groups and underserved communities, including women, youth, Indigenous peoples, newcomers, racialized peoples, LGBTQ2S+ peoples, persons with disabilities, veterans, and people from rural, remote, and northern communities.

7. What stream (innovation or evidence) would our proposal fall under if it is based on a series of assessments that have significant bodies of research and are not new to the marketplace, but the combination of approaches is unique?

As part of the adjudication process for this Call for Proposals, the adjudication panel will assess Letters of Interest to determine whether they best fit in the innovation stream or evidence stream. This would be based on a review of existing substantive evidence (as applicable).

8. Can an organization that is part of or affiliated with the Future Skills Centre or its partners submit a Letter of Interest?

All eligible organizations may apply and Letters of Interest would be considered on their own merit. The Future Skills Centre follows strict conflict of interest protocols to ensure that all appropriate measures are taken to identify and avoid unfair advantage and perceived conflicts of interest before and during the review, adjudication, due diligence and selection processes.

9. What budget items are eligible? Are the following eligible: student scholarships or stipends; indirect costs/overhead?

Eligible expenditures include:

- Salaries, including benefits for personnel;
- Expenses related to project administration, up to 12% of the funding requested;
- Project participant costs (i.e. honorariums for surveys, focus group participation, etc);
- Office supplies and services;

- Equipment and software;
- Financial and professional services required for the delivery of the project;
- Telecommunications/courier charges (e.g., telephone, Internet, mail and courier);
- Production costs for resource development such as graphic design, printing, translation into other languages, alternative formats;
- Expenses associated with outreach events and training sessions directly related to program activities;
- Audit costs, notwithstanding they are incurred outside of the Project Period;
- The cost of travel, meals and accommodation in accordance with the rates for public servants set out in the National Joint Council of Canada's Travel Directive; and,
- Hospitality costs incurred in accordance with rates set out in the Directive on the Management of Expenditures on Travel, Hospitality and Conferences, Appendix A, section 2.3 of Canada's Treasury Board.

Ineligible expenses include:

- Costs not directly associated with meeting the deliverables and milestones;
- Costs related to proposal development (including personnel costs);
- Capital costs (e.g. land, building, vehicles, leasehold improvements);
- Entertainment expenses, gifts and alcoholic beverages;
- Reimbursement for airfare purchased with personal frequent flyer points programs;
- Fines and penalties;
- Donations in the form of goodwill and other intangibles;
- Opportunity costs;
- Standard discounts;
- Interest charges;
- Allowance for interest on invested capital, bonds, debentures, bank or other loans together with related bond discounts and finance charges;
- Depreciation of assets;
- Expenses and depreciation of excess facilities;
- Annual general meetings, budget deficits, membership fees, fundraising activities, committee and political meetings, or religious activities;
- Costs covered by other government funding;
- Profit;
- Contingency or unexplained miscellaneous costs; and,
- The portion of the cost of any goods and services purchased by the Recipient for which the Recipient may claim a tax credit or reimbursement.

10. Is there a maximum percentage of direct costs that can be included in the budget?

There is no prescribed maximum percentage for direct costs.

11. What is the maximum percentage of overhead/indirect costs that can be applied to a request?

Eligible expenses can include expenses related to project administration, up to 12% of the funding requested.

12. What would enable a project to qualify for the Evidence Stream over the Innovation Stream? What can be considered as evidence examples?

Evidence Stream projects will have demonstrated that their proposed project effectively addresses a pressing skills development challenge. Evidence would include data and/or information that supports or disputes the proposed intervention. It can be qualitative and/or quantitative. Evidence that could qualify a project for the evidence stream could include previous evaluation results, published literature on the proposed intervention, organizational history of data-driven learning, field leadership approach or organizational history of identifying and implementing best practice.

Innovation stream projects will be in an earlier development phase and need to develop robust theories of change and/or explore to what extent project activities produce target outcomes.

13. Can seniors be considered a relevant target population or an under-represented group?

Seniors can be considered as a target group as they may not be (fully) participating in the workforce.

14. Do projects need to be national in scope or can they be regional or local, based on need?

The geographic scope of the project can be local, regional or national. It can be executed virtually, in-person and/or hybrid formats.

15. Does the Future Skills Centre intend to fund projects that aim to enhance certain sub-components within the post secondary education system, which can be considered as part of a skills development ecosystem?

The Centre is currently seeking proposals for innovative projects that develop and test new or emerging approaches under three broad themes. The post secondary education system is part of the skills development system and therefore is relevant to the third theme.

16. Are programs with a long duration a good fit for this Call?

It depends on a number of factors. For instance, the duration of the project, schedule of activities that are to generate actionable evidence, alternative financing secured beyond the Call time-frame. For this Call, projects must launch by June 30, 2020, and must be completed and funds spent by June 30, 2022 (i.e. the duration of projects is 24 months maximum).

17. What stream (Innovation or Evidence) would our proposal fall under if it is based on a series of assessments that have significant bodies of research but the combination of approaches is unique?

Applications with both new and tested elements will be reviewed carefully by the adjudication panel to determine which evidence-generation approach, and technical support, are best suited to successful implementation of the project. Successful applicants may be asked for more information to help inform the best stream as part of the invitation to submit a full proposal.

- 18. The Call indicates that it is designed to fund new activities and the expansion of existing activities to new clients and geographies. Can a project concept originate from outside of Canada?**

Yes

- 19. Are ‘young people’ stated in the Call synonymous with ‘youth’ in this Call and what is their age range?**

Yes and the age range is 15-30 years old.

- 20. Our project will involve working with Indigenous communities and Indigenous youth workers, and we follow the OCAP principles. Will we be able to ensure that we can continue following the OCAP principles in whatever evaluation and knowledge mobilization strategy is co-developed?**

The Centre is presently funding projects that focus on indigenous communities and follow [The First Nations principles of OCAP®](#). The Centre’s goal of knowledge mobilization is to distribute information to communities in a way that works for them and is respectful of their beliefs.

- 21. My organization is relatively new, is that a disadvantage?**

Applicants can consider the internal and/or external resources available and required to undertake the proposed activities. The adjudication committee will assess the information provided in the Letter of Interest to determine the capacity of the organization or consortium to execute the project.

- 22. Can persons who may eventually become self-employed or an entrepreneur, be a target group?**

Yes. The Call does not specify the type of employment a person should eventually attain.

- 23. Who is a project partner?**

As it relates to ‘Organization Eligibility’ in the Letter of Interest, a project partner is the organization that will be jointly applying with the lead organization for funding. Entities providing professional services (i.e. undertaking the project activities and tasks) can include the lead organization, applicant’s partners, external organizations.

- 24. How many cohorts of training can be undertaken in the maximum project duration (24 months)?**

Project design is the applicant’s responsibility although the Centre and/or its consortium partners may meet with grantees to discuss how substantive findings would be generated, as it relates to the Common Indicators Framework and research.

Considerations may include the availability of resources to conduct the training, training duration, data collection and reporting period, number of cohorts required to generate substantive findings (i.e. control and repeats), etc.

25. When will the next call for proposals take place?

Dates for future funding opportunities have not been specified as yet; the Centre will publicize these through the website, newsletter, etc.

26. We noticed that there is no economic impact/minimum participant threshold sections. Do most applicants provide this information in Relevance and Need?

The Letter of Interest indicates the required information and selection criteria related to the problem being addressed and the long-term impacts (i.e. outcomes).

The Centre does not share information on submissions to third parties, external to the grant management processes. The Centre has a Common Indicator Framework which includes socio-economic indicators to be captured through the projects (as applicable). Several of these evaluation indicators are related to economic impact, e.g. employment, salary.

Organizations may add additional indicators related to their projects, and efforts will be made to increase efficiency of data collection, reporting, etc..

The Centre is not prescriptive regarding sample sizes or minimum participant level recommendations. A range of projects may be submitted, some of which may not include participants. In other cases, organizations have the responsibility to make these determinations and apply acceptable and standard best practices of project design, analysis, reporting, etc.

27. Is there a methodology for calculating in-kind contributions? For example, how should we estimate the dollar amount that should be attributed to one-day of professional time and will this be the standard used by all applicants?)?

There is no standardized methodology