CIHR 2014 Foundation Scheme
“live pilot”

University of Ottawa

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Background and Context
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Funding agencies around the world are being challenged to keep pace with a rapidly advancing research frontier and struggle to reduce the burden on applicants and reviewers.

The objectives of the reform to CIHR’s investigator-initiated programs and peer review processes are to:

• Capture excellence across all four research pillars, from knowledge creation to knowledge translation
• Capture innovative, original and breakthrough research
• Integrate new talent to sustain Canada’s pipeline of health researchers
• Improve sustainability of the long-term research enterprise

In meeting these objectives, the reform is also meant to address a number of current operational challenges:

• Workload and costs for applicants
• Peer review burden
• Lack of consistency and efficiency of peer review process
• Growing discrepancy between research evolution and committee structure
• Program complexity

A more detailed overview of why these changes are being proposed can be found on the CIHR Reforms website
A design document was developed to outline a set of proposed changes to the Open Suite of Programs and peer review processes to address these challenges.

Feedback from the research community on the proposed changes was collected from February 8, 2012 to May 1, 2012:

- Work was completed to assess all of the feedback and enhance the overall design.

- The revised design was released in December of 2012
New Design

Key elements of the design have been endorsed by CIHR’s Governing Council and Science Council:

1. Two separate, complementary funding schemes will replace the current Open Suite of Programs:
   - Project Scheme
   - Foundation Scheme

2. A peer review process that will include:
   - Application-focused review
   - Multi-stage review
   - Structured review criteria
   - Remote review of applications at the initial stage(s)

3. A College of Reviewers that will support excellent peer review across the spectrum of health research
Design Elements

- **Multi-stage competition process**
  - Effective screening of applications
  - Decrease applicant burden and reviewer burden
  - Focus reviewer attention on specific criteria for each stage of review

- **Application-Focused Review**
  - Avoid “force fitting” applications into standing committee structure
  - Assign appropriate expertise to each application

- **Structured Review Criteria**
  - Minimize inconsistent/inappropriate application of review criteria
  - Improve transparency of review process
  - Decrease peer review burden

- **Remote (virtual) Screening/Review**
  - Facilitate access to expertise, including international
  - Improve cost-effectiveness of the process
  - Minimize group dynamics and committee culture biases
College of Reviewers

- To deliver on the vision and objectives, CIHR will work with funding partners and peer reviewers to build a College of Reviewers.

- It will be a centrally-managed, national resource.

- The College will be made up of faculties of experts from both within and outside Canada.

- Specific roles will be defined to support the peer review processes (e.g. moderators and chairs) and to support the peer review system as a whole (e.g. faculty chair).

- Specific programs will be developed to train and mentor reviewers, and to monitor performance.

- Recruitment will include transitioning existing reviewers to the College (after discussions with Chairs and SOs), conducting targeted recruitment strategies and implementing a nomination process that can be used by institutions and existing reviewers.
Background and Context

Transition

• The transition to the new Open Suite of Programs and peer review processes will occur over a number of years.

• Course corrections and adjustments may be required along the way as we learn from the results of the pilots.

• The transition strategy includes three phases:
  1. 2012 to 2015: Piloting key peer review design elements
  2. 2014 to 2016: Gradually phasing-in the new funding schemes
  3. 2014 to 2016: Gradually phasing-out the existing Open funding programs
Pilots

Piloting key elements of the new design is a critical step in the implementation of the Reforms as it will:

- Allow CIHR to adjust and refine processes and systems in order to best support applicants and reviewers;
- Provide a learning opportunity for applicants, reviewers and CIHR staff; and
- Contribute to the key literature on peer review;

CIHR is using a number of existing competitions to run the pilots so that we can properly train applicants, orient reviewers, and monitor outcomes in a managed fashion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fellowships</td>
<td>Second pilot currently underway</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge Synthesis</td>
<td>First pilot currently underway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnerships for Health Systems</td>
<td>Will occur using the 2014 competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement (PHSI)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation Scheme</td>
<td>First two competitions will be pilots (2014 and 2015)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Considerations Within Pilots

- Consultation with key stakeholders (internal and external), in both design and testing.
- Comprehensive data analysis of pilots
- Dissemination of research findings to CIHR’s community
- Continuous improvements to:
  - Process
  - Content
  - IT solution
- Monitoring and Evaluation
  - To identify areas that need improvement and to inform the future direction of peer review innovation
Foundation Scheme
The Foundation Scheme is designed to contribute to a sustainable foundation of health research leaders.

It is expected to:

• Support a broad base of research leaders across career stages, areas and disciplines relevant to health;

• Develop and maintain Canadian capacity;

• Provide flexibility to pursue new, innovative lines of inquiry as part of an overall program of research;

• Contribute to the creation and use of health-related knowledge.

The Foundation Scheme will have one competition a year.
What is the competition Process for the new Foundation Scheme?

The Foundations scheme will be a multi-stage competition with 2 distinct applications and 3 review stages. Only successful Stage 1 applicants will be invited to apply to Stage 2.
What are the adjudication criteria for the Foundation Scheme?

A structured adjudication process will be used to help reviewers assess applications.

The budget requested will not be factored into the scientific assessment of the application; however, reviewers will be asked to provide a recommendation on the appropriateness of the requested amount.
What are the application requirements for the Foundation Scheme?

Applicants will submit a structured application and CV to the Foundation Scheme.

**Stage 1**

- **Summary** (~1 page)
- **Caliber of the Applicant(s)**
  1. Leadership (~½ page)
  2. Significance of Contributions (~½ page)
  3. Productivity (~½ page)
- **Vision and Program Direction** (~1 page)

**Stage 2**

- **Summary** (~1 page)
- **Quality of the Program**
  1. Research Concept (~1½ pages)
  2. Research Approach (~1½ pages)
- **Quality of the Expertise, Experience, and Resources**
  1. Expertise (~3 pages)
  2. Mentorship and Training (~2 pages)
  3. Quality of Support Environment (~1 page)
- **Budget** (~½ page)

Application requirements are now available on the web. These will be updated if any substantive changes are required as a result of the ongoing pilots.
How will the ranking process work with 5 reviewers?

Reviewers will assess applications through a multi-stage process and submit a ranked list.

Each application will be matched to five reviewers with each reviewer assessing approx. 15–20 applications. Structured assessments will be conducted by individual reviewers using established review criteria.

Preliminary reviews will be shared with other reviewers assigned to a specific application. Reviewers can only see the other reviews once their prelim. reviews are submitted. After discussions reviewers will submit their final ranked list.

Face-to-face meetings will be held in Stage 3. The discussion will focus on applications with a high variance in reviewer rankings.

Each application will have 5 rankings (one from each reviewer), a consolidated ranking and variance (std. dev.).
What is the requirement for Institutional Support?

- Institutional support for the Foundation Scheme will be the same as with all other CIHR grants.
- This includes a formal sign-off from institutions.
- Early design considerations had contemplated enhanced institutional support but it was determined that current requirements are sufficient.
How many Foundation grants will be funded in the first competition?

- Approximately $500M will be available for the 2014-15 Transitional OOGP and 2014 Foundation Scheme “Live Pilot”.

- Modeling assumptions based on historical data estimate 120 to 250 Foundation grants will be supported in the first pilot.

- Once fully implemented, the Foundation Scheme will fund approximately 114 grants a year.

- An investment at this level assumes a robust application pressure therefore, the actual number of grants awarded may vary.
What are the competition timelines?

- The 2014 Foundation Scheme “live pilot” funding opportunity was published in November 2013.
- Key dates include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registration Date</td>
<td>June 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application Stage 1 Deadline</td>
<td>September 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipated Stage 1 Notice of Decision Date</td>
<td>December 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application Stage 2 Deadline</td>
<td>February 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipated Stage 2 Notice of Decision Date</td>
<td>May 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipated Stage 3 Notice of Decision Date</td>
<td>July 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding Start Date</td>
<td>July 2015</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Application requirements and Q&A’s were developed to help researchers prepare.
- Application templates will be available through ResearchNet in June 2014.
What are the eligibility requirements for the Live Pilot competitions?

The following health researchers are eligible to apply to the first Foundation Scheme "live pilot" competition:

• As of **July 30, 2013**, Nominated Principal Investigators and Co-Principal Investigators of an Open grant with a grant term expiry date no earlier than October 1, 2014 and no later than September 30, 2015. This includes:
  – An OOGP grant with a grant term expiry date of March 31, 2015; or
  – An OOGP grant with a grant term expiry date of September 30, 2015.

• New/early career investigators

• Researchers who have never held Open CIHR funding as a Nominated Principal Investigator or Co-Principal Investigator

Institutions were provided with lists of researchers who have Open grants ending no earlier than October 1, 2014 and no later than September 30, 2016. Please contact your research office or Roadmap-Plan.Strategique@cihr-irsc.gc.ca if you have any questions regarding your eligibility.
Is there a separate stream for new investigators?

- New/early-career investigators are eligible to apply to the Foundation Scheme competition as a Program Leader.

- CIHR defines a new/early career investigator as:

  A researcher who, at the Stage 1 application deadline, has assumed his/her first independent academic position (e.g., faculty appointment) within the last 5 years.

- New investigators will be assessed with other applicants in Stages 1 and 2. Reviewers will be asked to consider career stage when assessing the application against the specified criteria.

- At Stage 3, new/early-career investigators will be assessed and ranked against other new/early career investigators.
Are the terms Nominated Principle Applicant and Co-applicant being used in the Foundation Scheme?

- The program is designed to contribute to a sustainable foundation of **health research leaders**.
- As part of the new scheme some new terms are being introduced. The applicant(s) is/are the Program Leader(s)
- No differentiation will be made between multiple Program Leaders on a single Foundation grant, all are equally responsible for overseeing the direction of the research program.

```plaintext
- Nominated Principal Investigator
- Co-Principal Investigator

- Co-Investigator
- Collaborator
- Partner
- Knowledge User

Program Leader(s) -> Expert
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Why is CIHR launching the Transitional OOGP Competition in parallel to the Foundation Scheme?

• The last OOGP competition (i.e. Transitional OOGP) and the 2014 Foundation Scheme “live pilot” will be run in parallel.

• Launching the two funding opportunities at the same time will allow the community to understand how the two programs relate to each other.

• Applicants who are unsuccessful in Stage 1 of the 2014 Foundation Scheme “live pilot” competition will have the opportunity to apply to the Transitional OOGP competition.

• Principal Applicants must not have submitted a Stage 2 application as a Program Leader to the 2014 Foundation Scheme “live pilot” competition.

• The application requirements and processes for the Transitional OOGP will remain the same as the current OOGP.
Questions regarding the Foundation Scheme Competition can be directed to:

Roadmap-Plan.Strategique@cihr-irsc.gc.ca
What are the specific funding gaps that researchers may experience during the CIHR Reforms transition period?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grant expires</th>
<th>Would normally renew in</th>
<th>Renewal options</th>
<th>Funding start date</th>
<th>Funding gap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30-Sep-14</td>
<td>201403MOP</td>
<td>201403MOP</td>
<td>01-Oct-14</td>
<td>none</td>
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<tr>
<td>31-Mar-15</td>
<td>201409MOP*</td>
<td>201403MOP (early renewal)</td>
<td>01-Oct-14</td>
<td>none (6 months early)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Foundation 1st live pilot</td>
<td>01-Jul-15</td>
<td>6 (3) months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>201503MOP (T-OOGP)</td>
<td>01-Jul-15</td>
<td>6 (3) months</td>
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<tr>
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<td>201403MOP (early renewal)</td>
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<td>none (12 months early)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>none (3 months early)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>201503MOP (T-OOGP)</td>
<td>01-Jul-15</td>
<td>none (3 months early)</td>
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<td>31-Mar-16</td>
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<td>201503MOP (T-OOGP) (early renewal)</td>
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<td>none (9 months early)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Foundation 2nd live pilot</td>
<td>01-Jul-16</td>
<td>6 (3) months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Spring 2016 Project Scheme</td>
<td>TBC</td>
<td>TBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-Sep-16</td>
<td>201603MOP*</td>
<td>201503MOP (T-OOGP) (early renewal)</td>
<td>01-Jul-15</td>
<td>none (15 months early)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Foundation 2nd live pilot</td>
<td>01-Jul-16</td>
<td>none (3 months early)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Spring 2016 Project Scheme</td>
<td>TBC</td>
<td>TBC</td>
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*not being offered
What mechanisms are being put in place to help minimize the negative impact of funding gaps/changing programs?

CIHR believes that it has found a way to reduce the current 6 month gap to 3 months (will be confirmed shortly)

CIHR recognized early in the design process for the Open Program reforms that there would be an impact on the cycle of funding start dates during the transition period, and as such has provided the community with the relevant funding opportunities, and associated timelines, well in advance of the transition period to allow current grant holders to plan for any potential gaps in CIHR funding.

Grant holders are reminded that they may continue to use grant funds for at least one year after the grant's expiry date and may request an additional year if needed.

To add some additional flexibility to the research system during transition, CIHR is also permitting grant holders whose renewal applications would normally be submitted to the fall 2014 OOGP competition to submit their renewal application early to the spring 2014 OOGP competition without penalty while still retaining their eligibility for the Foundation Scheme first live pilot if unsuccessful in the spring 2014 OOGP competition.
Can you explain the difference (if any) between Transitional-OOGP and current OOGP?

Specifically, will application process, format, and review process remain as in OOGP?

There is no substantive difference between the current OOGP and the transitional OOGP:

• Application forms will remain the same
• The committee structure and complement of committees will remain unchanged (although some committees may be split depending on application pressure received)
• The evaluation criteria and rating scale will remain the same
If a researcher applies for the September 2014 Pilot Foundation Scheme, will they also be allowed to submit to the March 2015 T-OOGP?

Someone who applies as a Program Leader the 2014 Foundation Scheme competition may apply as NPA to the transitional OOGP if they are unsuccessful at Stage 1 of the competition.

Program Leaders who submit a Stage 2 application are not eligible to apply to the transitional OOGP as NPA.
When will ‘Everyone’ be eligible for Foundation grants?

The first “regular” Foundation scheme competition will be held during the Fall 2016.

Are there any special rules, such as the number of times that researchers can apply during a given period?

An individual may only submit one application as a Program Leader to a Foundation Scheme competition and may only hold one Foundation grant as Program Leader. CIHR is currently exploring a moratorium for unsuccessful applicants.

Are Foundation Grant ‘Experts’ allowed to apply for both Project and Foundation funds while acting as experts?

An individual who is an expert on a Foundation grant may submit an application as a Program Leader.

Please clarify that both Program leaders and ‘co’-Program Leaders for Foundation Grants will NOT be eligible to apply for other sources of CIHR funding.

A Program Leader on a Foundation grant may not apply as a Program Leader on another Foundation grant or as a Project Leader on a project grant. Program Leaders may participate as experts on other Foundation/Project Grants or apply for CIHR strategic funding.

What will the renewal process be for Foundation Grants? Will researchers who are not successful in renewal have time to apply for new (multiple) grants in order to keep labs running?

Foundation grantees interested in continuing their program of research beyond the duration of the Foundation grant may submit a new application in Year 6 (for 7-year grants) or Year 4 (for 5-year grants) to the regular Foundation Scheme competition.

In exceptional circumstances, Foundation grantees may choose to submit a new application in an earlier year with the goal of obtaining a higher level of grant support. Unsuccessful applications will result in the currently-held Foundation grant being terminated one year after the published funding start date for the competition in which the application was unsuccessful.
Has the format of the Project Grant been decided?

The project scheme details will be made available well in advance of the competition. There will be a single structured application and 2 stage review that focuses on the concept and feasibility.

Are there any special rules, such as the number of grants or the number of times that researchers can apply during a given period?

CIHR is currently exploring application limits.

How will Project Grants be reviewed? How will Project Grant review differ from OOGP review?

There will be a 2 stage review process. The current OOGP committee structure will be replaced with an application focused review.

Will figures/preliminary data be included in Project Grants?

Preliminary data will not be required.

**Will a PI be able to hold more than one Project Grant?**

Yes, an individual may hold multiple project grants.