



John R. Evans Leaders Fund

Guidelines for completing research infrastructure
proposal

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SECTION 1 – Introduction

These guidelines are intended for researchers and institutional research services personnel wishing to prepare and submit a proposal to the Canada Foundation for Innovation’s John R. Evans Leaders Fund (JELF).

NB: Applicant institutions submitting a JELF – partnerships proposal (joint submission with any of our [funding program partners](#)) should consult the [JELF – partnerships guidelines](#). Similarly, applicant institutions intending to submit a proposal for a current Canada Excellence Research Chair holder should consult the [JELF – CERC guidelines](#).

For further information on this fund, consult the [JELF program description](#) on the CFI’s website. Researchers and institutional research services personnel will use the CFI Awards Management System (CAMS) to prepare and share proposals for this fund. Links to the technical instructions for using CAMS to create JELF proposals, and other useful resources, are listed below.

Helpful links

Getting started with CAMS: [An overview document for researchers](#)

Getting started with CAMS: [An overview document for institutional research services personnel](#)

Deadlines

There are three submission deadlines per year for JELF. The timelines are outlined below. If the deadline falls on a weekend or holiday, it will be extended to the following business day.

Submission date	Anticipated decision date
February 15	June
June 15	November
October 15	March

SECTION 2 – Guidelines for attachments

Electronic requirements

The CFI does not distribute paper copies of its forms. Proposals for JELF must be completed and submitted to the CFI through CAMS. The electronic version submitted through CAMS is the official copy.

Conformance with instructions for proposal preparation

It is important that all proposals conform to the instructions provided on the electronic proposal form as well as those in this guide. Prior to electronic submission, it is strongly recommended that researchers and institutional research services personnel review the forms to ensure that proposals comply with these proposal preparation guidelines.

Proposal pagination instructions

CAMS will automatically paginate proposals submitted to the CFI. Attachments *must not* be individually paginated prior to upload to the electronic system.

Page formatting

Since many reviewers will be assessing proposals electronically, applicants should only use a standard, single-column on an 8.5" x 11" page layout for attachments. Avoid using a two-column or landscape format since it may cause difficulties when reading the document electronically.

The proposal must be clear and easily readable. Legibility is of paramount importance and should take precedence in the selection of an appropriate font for use in the proposal.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to use a 12-point, black-coloured font and use single line spacing (six lines per inch) with no condensed type or spacing. Small font sizes make it difficult for reviewers to read the proposal; consequently, the use of a small font not in compliance with the above recommendation may result in the CFI returning the proposal for further revision.

Additionally, the CFI expects attachments to conform to the following guidelines:

- **Header:** Indicate the applicant institution on the top left of each page and the project number on the top right of each page.
- **Footer:** Do not include any information in the bottom right side of the page as this area will be used for automatic page numbering.
- **Page margin:** Insert a margin of no less than 2.5 centimetres (1 inch) around the page. The header and footer may be within the margin.
- **Document format:** Only PDF files may be uploaded. Documents in other formats should be converted to PDF prior to upload and should not be encrypted or password-protected.

Adherence to the page formatting guidelines and requirements noted above is necessary to ensure that no applicant will have an unfair advantage by using smaller type, line spacing or margins to provide more text in the proposal.

SECTION 3 – Proposal structure

The proposal should clearly present the merits of the project. The requisite proposal preparation guidelines are contained herein. Sufficient information should be provided to enable reviewers to evaluate the proposal in accordance with the merit review criteria established by the CFI, as outlined below (refer to *Assessment criteria*).

The proposal consists of three separate modules:

1. **Project module:** Information about the proposed project and how it meets the fund's objectives;
2. **Finance module:** Information pertaining to the budgetary details of the proposal; and
3. **Suggested reviewers module:** Recommendation of potential reviewers of the proposal.

The online forms will dictate the maximum number of characters that can be included in each section and/or the page limits for uploaded files.

Project module

The project module consists of the following sections:

- Project information
- Project summary
- Candidates
- Assessment criteria (attachment)
- Financial resources for operation and maintenance
- Past CFI investment (to be completed by the institution)
- Sustainability (to be completed by the institution)

Project information

The Project information page captures basic information about the project such as the title, applicant institution and keywords.

Plain language summary (1,500 characters)

The CFI's ongoing efforts to remain accountable to the Government of Canada include showing how CFI investments lead to tangible social, economic and environmental outcomes for Canada and Canadians. To do so, we need your help in providing information that will help us tell the stories about how CFI-funded infrastructure plays a key role in outcomes such as creating jobs and spin-off companies, and improving products, policies, processes and services. Please provide a short summary of the proposed project in plain language, focusing on the expected outcomes and benefits for Canada, beyond the academic accomplishments.

Note: This summary will not be used in the review process. Should the project be funded, the CFI may use it in its communications products.

Project summary (maximum two pages)

In language appropriate for a multidisciplinary committee, provide an executive summary that concisely addresses the established criteria for this competition by describing:

- The proposed research and technology development program;
- The expertise and ability of the candidates to undertake the proposed research or technology development program;
- The requested infrastructure and how it will enable the proposed research or technology development program;
- The expected benefits to Canadians;
- The operating and maintenance needs of the infrastructure; and
- The institutional support in this area of research or technology development and for this particular project.

Candidates

Up to three candidates may be listed on the proposal when there is a demonstrated need to share infrastructure. When more than one candidate is listed, the CFI requires that the justification for the need for the infrastructure be articulated for each candidate. The sharing of infrastructure is encouraged provided the candidate(s) have sufficient access to carry out the proposed research program. **Candidates must have a CAMS account and must agree to participate in the project before the proposal can be submitted to the CFI.** The curricula vitae of the candidates will be appended to the proposal.

Assessment criteria (maximum 15 pages)

For this section of the online form, upload a PDF document that contains key information on how the proposal meets the objectives and established review criteria for this fund. Ensure that the document follows the guidelines on format, spacing and font detailed in this document. Additionally, applicants should address each criterion in the order in which they appear below. Each assessment criterion will be evaluated against a standard. Reviewers will be asked to rate the degree to which the proposal meets each standard.

The attachment allows institutions maximum flexibility to address each criterion, including the use of figures or diagrams where appropriate. The exact distribution of pages among sections is at the applicant's discretion, up to the total page limit noted. Based on historical data, a typical distribution of pages among the sections is:

- Research or technology development 8 pages
- Researchers 3 pages
- Need for the infrastructure 2 pages
- Training of highly qualified personnel 1 page
- Benefits to Canadians 1 page

Research or technology development

Each of the following must be addressed:

1. Describe the proposed research or technology development program and its innovative aspect.
2. Explain why it is important to pursue the proposed research or technology program at this time.
3. Explain how the proposed research or technology development program complement or differ from comparable programs being conducted nationally and/or internationally.

Criterion standard:

The proposed research or technology development is of high quality and originality, and meets international standards. It will create knowledge or develop technology leading to innovation.

Criterion standard:

Compared to researchers at the same stage in their career, the candidate(s) demonstrate(s) excellence and leadership.

The candidate(s) has/have the necessary expertise and relevant collaborations in place to successfully conduct the research or technology development program proposed.

Researchers

Each of the following must be addressed:

1. Describe the expertise and ability of the candidate(s) to lead the proposed research or technology development program.
2. Describe the technical expertise of the candidate(s) that will allow them to make the best use of the requested infrastructure.
3. Describe the existing collaborations and partnerships essential to the success of the research or technology development program.

Need for the infrastructure

Each of the following must be addressed:

1. Describe the requested infrastructure and how it will enable the proposed research or technology development program.
2. Explain how the infrastructure will be fully utilized by the candidate(s) and other users (if applicable).
3. Identify similar infrastructure available within the institution, the region and the country.
4. Describe the value added of an additional award in cases where a candidate has previously received a CFI award.

Criterion standard:

The infrastructure is necessary and appropriate to conduct the research or technology development program.

In cases where the infrastructure will not be fully used by the candidate(s), the institution has developed plans to maximize its utilization within and/or outside the institution.

Criterion standard:

The infrastructure requested will create or enrich an environment promoting the attraction of high-quality trainees.

This environment will help impart new high-level skills to highly qualified personnel and adequately prepare them for research and other careers.

Training of highly qualified personnel (HQP)

Each of the following must be addressed:

1. Describe how the infrastructure will enhance the current training environment for HQP in this area.
2. Describe how the infrastructure will better prepare HQP for research and other careers.

Benefits to Canadians

Each of the following must be addressed:

1. Beyond the creation of new knowledge and the training of highly qualified personnel, describe the expected benefits to Canadians and why they are significant.
2. Identify potential end users of the research or technology development results and describe the plans for knowledge mobilization and/or technology transfer.

Criterion standard:

The research or technology development program has the potential to lead to tangible benefits for society, health, the economy and/or the environment.

There are measures in place to transfer the research results and outputs of the technology development to potential end users in a timely manner.

Financial resources for operations and maintenance

This page of the project module captures the annual costs and sources of committed support to ensure the effective operation and maintenance of the infrastructure for the first five years after implementation. Applicant institutions are asked to refer to these tables in the section entitled *Sustainability*.

Past CFI investments

This portion of the project module is to be completed by institutional research services personnel. The data is captured for statistical purposes only and is not part of the review process.

Criterion standard:

The institution has made, and will continue to make tangible and significant commitments in support of this area of strategic priority leading to the attraction and/or retention of key personnel.

The proposed infrastructure will be effectively operated and maintained for its useful life.

Sustainability (two page PDF attachment)

In completing this section, applicants are asked to refer to the tables in the section entitled *Financial resources for operation and maintenance* which will be automatically appended to the end of the project module attachment for ease of reference for the sustainability criterion.

Each of the following must be addressed:

1. Describe how the proposed project is of importance to the institution and the tangible contributions the institution has made or will make in support of this established area of strategic priority.
2. Describe the operating and maintenance needs of the infrastructure over its useful life.
3. Outline sources of support for operation and maintenance costs and explain the contingency plans should any of this support become unavailable.
4. Describe how the requested infrastructure will help attract and/or retain excellent researchers who will advance the institution's capacity in this area.

Finance module

The finance module consists of the following sections:

- Cost of individual items
- Contributions from eligible partners
- Infrastructure utilization
- Budget justification
- Floor plans (if applicable)

For each section of the finance module, the applicant should ensure that all requested information has been entered into the relevant fields.

Note: The finance module has changed from previous JELF competitions. Specifically, the per-year breakdown of costs and funding from eligible partners is no longer required. Recognizing that institutions must follow their purchasing and tender policies, the CFI also no longer requests the name of the contributing partner for each item in the *Cost of individual items* section.

Contributions from eligible partners

Institutions are encouraged to bundle all expected in-kind contributions from vendors into a single line in the *Contributions from eligible partners* table. If partner contributions are expected but have not yet been confirmed, outline the plans for securing these funds.

Cost of individual items

When completing the *Cost of individual items* section, the CFI recommends that applicant institutions bundle items into functional groupings (e.g., list small items together). The budget justification should, however, detail and provide justification for each item within a group. Section 4.5 of the [CFI Policy and program guide](#) outlines the eligible costs for infrastructure projects.

Infrastructure utilization

This section of the finance module captures the use of the requested infrastructure for CFI-eligible and non-CFI-eligible purposes and any applicable prorating of costs.

Budget justification (maximum six pages)

In this section of the online form, upload a PDF document that conforms to the page formatting instructions provided in Section 2: *Guidelines for attachments*.

The budget justification should provide a clear and concise explanation for the requested infrastructure items. Applicants are strongly encouraged to reference items with their respective line item number and description as presented in the *Cost of individual items* section. For proposals that include renovation costs, institutions must include in the budget justification a description of the space and the nature of the renovations.

Sufficient information should be provided to enable reviewers to answer the following questions:

1. Is the requested infrastructure necessary, effective and efficient in view of the research activities planned?
2. Are the cost estimates realistic?
3. If applicable, are the plans adequate for the renovations proposed?

Floor plans (if applicable)

JELF projects may involve renovations in existing buildings only when the space is essential to house and use the eligible infrastructure. While the CFI recognizes that some projects may involve complex renovation components, institutions are expected to have completed planning and development work for such projects at the proposal stage. Applicants must include floor plans of the proposed area(s), showing the location of the infrastructure and the scale of the plans (when renovation involves multiple rooms).

Note: Floor plans must be provided in an attachment that is clearly legible. The floor plans will be a separate attachment and *not* included in the six page maximum for the budget justification attachment.

Suggested reviewers

Applicants are asked to suggest at least six reviewers who they believe are especially well qualified to review the proposal. Suggested reviewers must not be in conflict of interest.

A conflict of interest may be deemed to exist or perceived as such when external reviewers:

- Are a relative or close friend, or have a personal relationship with the candidates;
- Are in a position to gain or lose financially/materially from the funding of the proposal;
- Have had long-standing scientific or personal differences with the candidates;
- Are currently affiliated with the candidates' institutions, organizations or companies including research hospitals and research institutes;
- Are closely professionally affiliated with the candidates, as a result of having in the last six years:
 - Frequent and regular interactions with the candidates in the course of their duties at their department, institution, organization or company;
 - Been a supervisor or a trainee of the candidates;
 - Collaborated, published or shared funding with the candidates, or have plans to do so in the immediate future; or,
 - Been employed by the applicant institution; and/or
- Feel for any reason unable to provide an impartial review of the proposal.

Note: The decision whether or not to use the suggestions remains with CFI staff.

SECTION 4 – Submission process

Proposal submission

JELF proposals must be submitted to the CFI through CAMS. Note that the CFI does not require a hardcopy of the proposal. Rather, a list of all proposals being submitted to the CFI for a given submission deadline must be provided. The CFI encourages institutions to use the template provided for submission of proposals (refer to Appendix 1). The letter is provided [online](#) in MS Word format. Should you require this document in another format, please contact the JELF administrative assistant at the CFI.

This letter must be signed by an authorized signatory at the institution, as per the Institutional agreement with the CFI, and sent to the CFI by courier or regular mail service by the appropriate submission deadline.

Collaboration with provinces

To coordinate the review processes and avoid duplication of review efforts, the CFI will provide review material to relevant provincial and territorial funding authorities. Disclosure of review material will be made only in accordance with agreements between the CFI and provincial or territorial authorities, as permissible pursuant to paragraph 8(2)(f) of the Privacy Act.

Appendix 1

Template: JELF proposal submission letter to the CFI

Patrick Pilot
Manager, JELF
Canada Foundation for Innovation
450 - 230 Queen Street
Ottawa ON K1P 5E4

Re: Confirmation and institutional approval of proposals to the Canada Foundation for Innovation's (CFI) John R. Evans Leaders Fund

Dear Mr. Pilot,

I am pleased to approve the submission of the proposals outlined in the attached document to the John R. Evans Leaders Fund.

In signing this letter, I confirm that the institution:

- Agrees to and accepts the conditions governing CFI funding, as outlined in the *CFI Policy and programs guide* and the Institutional agreement;
- Accepts its commitment to ensure appropriate resources are provided for the operation and maintenance of the proposed CFI-funded research infrastructure over its useful life (i.e. the period of time over which the infrastructure is expected to provide benefits and be usable for its intended purpose, factoring in normal repairs and maintenance); and,
- Has previously, or as an attachment to this letter, submitted to the CFI its most recent strategic research plan.

Sincerely,

President (or authorized signatory)

Signature

Institution

