

IMPULSION PROGRAM

Competition year: 2021–2022

Deadline (application): April 29, 2021, 4 p.m.

Amount: up to \$100 000

Funding period: 1 year

Announcement of results: July 2021

This program refers to the [Common General Rules](#) (CGR) of the Fonds de recherche du Québec (FRQ), which apply to all FRQ programs. Only the specific conditions with respect to the **IMPULSION** program are detailed here and take precedence over the CGR. In the event of a discrepancy between the English and French versions of this program, the French version prevails.

The links to the [Electronic Portfolio](#) (E-portfolio) and competition forms are available in the [Portal access](#) tab of the website. Further details are available in the *About FRQnet* section. It is the entire responsibility of the applicant to select the right form. In the event of an error, the Fonds shall not transfer any form from a program or call for proposals to another and shall deem the application ineligible.

Applicants are required to add their [Canadian Common CV](#) (CCV) and detailed contributions (in PDF format) to their E-portfolio. Note: Applicants must ensure that all CCVs are in the appropriate format, as required by the Fonds that is managing the call for proposals.

APPLICATIONS RECEIVED AFTER THE COMPETITION DEADLINE OF APRIL 29, 2021, AT 4 P.M. SHALL BE DEEMED INELIGIBLE.

BACKGROUND

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly changed the lives of Quebecers. The implications of the health crisis have had an impact on many aspects of our society and undermined key pillars, including the province's economy and financial health. To support the pandemic exit, it is important to create concrete initiatives that will underpin Québec's research strengths and help rebuild the economy. With that in mind, the three Fonds de recherche du Québec are joining forces to launch the **IMPULSION** program, which targets four priority areas.

1- OBJECTIVES

The **IMPULSION** program chiefly aims to create favourable conditions and an environment that supports the post-pandemic economic recovery. Funded projects must provide solutions to a range of societal issues and establish or develop collaborations in the very short term with community organizations, private companies and other user

communities in Québec to foster the quick and proper ownership of knowledge that addresses their needs.

Under the **IMPULSION** program, four calls for proposals will be launched to support the development of rapid deployment research projects rooted in one of these areas:

1. Agri-food
2. Education
3. Green energy
4. Ageing

Projects funded under the **IMPULSION** program must:

- explore a research issue that is aligned with the needs of community organizations, private companies and user communities by drawing on current knowledge;
- generate results and benefits in the very short term in the form of concrete solutions that community organizations, private companies and user communities can quickly make their own; and
- create added value for Québec (improvement of processes, resource optimization, enhanced well-being, inclusion, development of intellectual property, job creation and support, etc.).

RESEARCH AREA – EDUCATION

With its confinement, preventive measures, curfews and other health measures, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound effect on Québec youth of all ages, from infants to young adults. The day-to-day lives of college and university students were acutely affected. The very rapid transition to solely virtual learning combined with the loss of direct ties with teaching staff and peers and lack of social, sports, artistic, community and other campus activities have impacted education at all levels for students as individuals, as citizens struggling to exist in a society that faces dramatic changes and as **future members of the workforce**.

Indeed, the ongoing pandemic is jeopardizing the link between education and employment without any clear assessment of the ways or extent. The areas for action therefore do not plainly emerge, especially since the work world and labour market are also experiencing upheaval, triggering even deeper insecurity among students and recent graduates.

With this in mind, as part of this call for rapid deployment projects **in higher education** (college and university), the FRQSC would like to invite members of the scientific community to submit proposals in line with the two-fold approach to:

- 1) **document the situation** in Québec as it relates to the various impacts of the health crisis (listed below) by referring, when possible, to a basic survey of experiences in Canada outside Québec and/or abroad; and
- 2) **propose perspectives and concrete solutions** that may be implemented in the very short term to mitigate the impacts and better support students, who have been very hard hit by the pandemic in their training and career planning efforts, while keeping in mind that certain sectors have been particularly affected.

Researchers shall choose among two key needs for knowledge and solutions that have emerged:

NEED no.1

Researchers whose projects will attempt to respond to this first need for knowledge are invited to analyze the impacts of the pandemic on Québec students in connection with two topics:

- **Students' paths and courses:** compared to recent periods, how many students have dropped or stopped out of college or university because they struggled to adapt to distance or hybrid education and/or balance their academic and family responsibilities (college and university students) or because they experienced mental health issues? What strategies did students who pursued their studies in the face of these challenges look to (e.g. student services, including career planning, federal government support, return to family home, etc.)? How many changed their career path? How many changed their teaching level or grade so as not to find themselves out of a job? Indeed, it has been documented that enrolment in academic institutions tends to rise when unemployment is high. How many foreign students could not enrol in the program to which they were accepted? What are the impacts on their career paths? These behaviours could affect the employability of students and graduates in the short and medium terms. A comparative analysis of their paths before and during the pandemic that accounts for their gender, age, social background, belonging to an ethnic group and region will shed light on the changes that may be observed in their training pathways and entry into the labour market and identify groups for which priority interventions should be provided.
- **Students' school-to-work transition:** how has the health crisis impacted graduating students' school-to-work transition, the delay and challenges to access employment, the types of employment (fixed-term or open-ended contract) and the relevance of training to employment? Considering the challenges, as the case may be, what strategies have students adopted to gain employment? (accepting

a job that does not match their level of education or field of training, doing volunteer work to create a network that could assist in their job search) How many of the women and men who were already part of the workforce (employed or not) went back to school to increase their employability or followed training to gain access to positions that are more stable, more in demand, higher paying or more in line with their training?

A comparative analysis of students' paths and employment conditions for graduates before and during the pandemic will identify the integration challenges brought about by the crisis and provide individual and institutional stakeholders seeking solutions with data to facilitate the integration of graduates and enhance their employability.

NEED no.2

The projects aiming to address the second need for knowledge and solutions should examine the impacts of the health crisis on the **employability** of post-secondary students considering the following:

- A. Evolution of the number of graduates** from higher learning institutions since the start of the pandemic. What are the observable differences between pre- and post-COVID-19 cohorts in terms of skills, qualifications, orientations, learned behaviours, etc.?

The target audiences are:

- faculty members (college and university) who support the evolution on a daily basis; and
- students, specifically graduates, who can attest to the challenges related to motivation, mental and physical health, the continuation (or discontinuation) of peer networks, career prospects and/or career shift, etc.;

- B. Evolution of the demand for graduates** by employers. What workplace needs have emerged since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic from the quantitative and qualitative perspectives? What areas of business have had to suspend their activities in the medium and long terms? What areas have been forced to redefine themselves in order to pursue their activities, thus impacting their needs in terms of expertise?

The target audiences could be:

- representatives from employer groups from the nine RSRI or intermediating organizations such as labour force committees (Comités sectoriels de main-d'œuvre), employers' associations (ADRIQ, Manufacturiers et exportateurs du Québec, chambers of commerce, etc.), the three social innovation

intermediating organizations (CTREQ, TIESS, Humanovis), teaching institutions, etc.

The supply and demand of graduates must be **correlated** to understand the degree to which it is possible to match the changes that have occurred in both environments (training and employment) in the short term. Under what conditions is it possible to reconcile them? (by distinguishing the cyclical and structural factors) What short- and longer-term perspectives emerge?

2- ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The research team must include at least three (3) individuals:

- One principal investigator with status 1, 2 or 3 under the [CGR](#);
- One co-investigator with status 1, 2 or 3 under the [CGR](#); and
- One co-investigator with status 4a), 4b) or 4c) under the [CGR](#) who represents a user community.

Researchers may only submit one application to the **IMPULSION** program (all areas) as a principal investigator. However, there is no limit to the number of proposals an individual may contribute to as a co-investigator.

Research teams may include an unlimited number of additional members:

- **Co-investigators** with status 1, 2, 3, 4a), 4b), 4c) or 4d) under the [CGR](#);
- **Collaborators:** individual with one of the four research statuses under the [CGR](#), with the exception of the statuses applicable to training awards (page 7 and following of the [CGR](#)), which are ineligible.

The role and status of each team member must be clearly stated in the application documents. All team members must adequately demonstrate their active contribution to the proposed project and indicate their level of involvement. The engagement of user communities must also be detailed.

The Fonds de recherche strongly encourage collaborations between researchers with expertise in different research areas.

3- SUBMISSION OF THE APPLICATION FOR FUNDING AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

The form for calls for proposals in agri-food and green energy is only available through an FRQNT E-portfolio, for proposals in education through an FRQSC E-portfolio and for proposals in ageing through an FRQS E-portfolio.

As indicated in the [CGR](#), the form may be filled out in French or English. However, the title and abstract must be in French, since they may be used by the Fonds for promotion and dissemination purposes.

Only the forms accessed, completed and submitted via the FRQnet platform are eligible. Any information in excess of the maximum number of pages for each section of the application shall be removed from the submission and shall not be considered in the review process. Any attachment to the application that is not required under the competition rules shall not be submitted to the review committee. Any documents received after the competition deadline shall not be considered. The Fonds reserve the right to validate the authenticity of any document or information provided in the application with relevant authorities.

Applicants must submit these documents:

- Online application form, including the tabs:
 - Project description based on the evaluation criteria (up to 6 pages);
 - Budget to account for planned spending (2 pages);
 - Other documents:
 - A. For clinical researchers: a letter from the clinical department director or faculty dean stating the number of hours for which the applicant shall be released from her/his clinical obligations to lead the research project;
 - B. [Canadian Common CV](#) of the status 4a) researcher and detailed contributions;
 - C. Abridged CV (2 pages) of status 4b), 4c) and 4d) co-investigators.
- [Canadian Common CV](#) of the principal investigator and all team members, except co-investigators and collaborators with 4b), 4c) and 4d) status;
- Detailed contributions of all team members, except co-investigators with 4b), 4c) and 4d) status.

Co-investigators and collaborators with 4a) status must provide the principal investigator with their CCV and detailed contributions in PDF format. Those with 4b), c) and d) status must provide the principal investigator with their abridged CV (2 pages) in PDF format.

IMPORTANT NOTE

All team members with status 1, 2 or 3 must fill in their CCV (updated in the 12-month period preceding the competition deadline) in the format required by the Fonds that is

managing the call for proposals. The detailed contributions must be filled in the format required by one of the Fonds and included with the submission in the relevant section of the E-portfolio of the Fonds that is managing the call. For more information, read the document Preparing a CV for the Fonds in the program toolbox. Any changes to the format of a CV (for a different Fonds) must be made at least **24 hours prior to the competition deadline** or the application shall not be submitted.

To ensure its successful submission to the Fonds, the detailed contributions of team members must be in PDF format (.PDF) and sent through the Canadian Common CV section of the [FRQnet portal](#) of the FRQSC.

Each co-investigator must consent to being part of the team prior to the deadline set by the managing institution, if applicable, or the form shall not be submitted. Co-investigators who have not created an FRQnet account should follow the steps to create one in the toolbox.

4- REVIEW PROCESS

As stated in Section 4 of the [CGR](#), the Fonds receive applications, determine the eligibility of the applications and submit them for review by committees assembled for this purpose. When necessary, the Fonds may also call upon external experts. The reviewers may be from Québec, Canada or elsewhere.

To be recommended for funding, the application must earn an **overall score of at least 70%**.

Applications are evaluated according the following criteria, sub-criteria and weightings.

Criteria	Weighting
Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project’s ability to adequately meet the need(s) identified by targeted user communities in innovative ways; • Clarity of the issue addressed by the project and methodological rigour; • Feasibility and realism of the project timeline. 	25
Team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevance and complementarity of the project-related expertise and output of team members; • Team’s ability to collaborate with community organizations, companies and other user communities; • Integration of students and post-doctoral trainees. 	25

<p>Short-term benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of applicability of the proposed solution or approach and significance of potential benefits for user communities; • Efficiency of the planned strategy to mobilize and transfer knowledge to user communities and ability to foster the appropriation of the solutions developed as part of the project; • Concrete contribution to the post-pandemic economic recovery, especially through value creation. 	50
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Review committee members will give special consideration to the relevance of projects in relation to the specific objectives and themes of the program areas and benefits in the very short term.

5- DESCRIPTION AND NATURE OF THE FUNDING

The funding period is one (1) year with no extension.

Type of funding	Maximum budget per project (including IRCs)	Period
Research project	\$100 000*	1 year
Maximum number of projects funded in each research area	5	
Total budget for the four (4) calls (ageing, agri-food, education, green energy)	\$2 000 000	

**The amounts may be revised at any time and without notice depending on factors including the credits available under the program.*

Refer to Section 8 of the [CGR](#) for information on eligible expenses. Under the **IMPULSION** program, the indirect research costs (IRCs) are considered as an eligible expense, according to the following breakdown:

Status of the principal investigator	Maximum amount in funding	Maximum amount in IRCs
Status 1 or 2	\$78 740	\$21 260**
Status 3	\$100 000	\$0 ***

** IRCs represent 27% of the total funding.

***IRC's do not constitute eligible expenses for status 3 principal investigators.

ADDITIONAL amount for eligible status 3 college researchers with teaching duties

Subject to budgetary availability, as part of the [*Program to Release College Researchers from their Teaching Duties*](#) (CHZ), college researchers who join a research group may each receive an additional amount of up to \$40 000 and/or a statutory supplement that will be paid directly to the college institution to compensate for part of the salary to release the researcher from teaching duties. Applications must include a supporting document to this effect in the *Release – Colleges (Dégagement – collèges)* tab of the FRQnet form. The principal investigator must identify the college researchers for whom a release from teaching duties is requested.

Should funding be granted and the principal research project leader accept it, a form meant specifically for the amounts related to a release from teaching duties will be available in the E-portfolios of team members who are college researchers.

6- FOLLOW-UP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

In accordance with sections 6.2 and 7.1 of the [*CGR*](#), the grant holder shall approve the annual financial reports submitted by the managing institution in the three months following the end of the Fonds' fiscal year ending on March 31 of each year, before June 30.

By accepting the grant, the grant holder agrees to submit a scientific report. The terms and conditions of accountability and content of the report shall be detailed in the grant letter.

The FRQ may use the scientific report for reproduction, adaptation, publication, translation and communication to the public through any means, in compliance with copyright and for non-commercial purposes only.

In all releases, reports, articles and communications, the grant holder shall acknowledge that the research was funded by the FRQ.

7- ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE RESULTS

The grants awarded by the FRQ are conditional upon the allocation of credits by the National Assembly of Québec and the decisions of the boards of directors of the FRQ. They are therefore subject to change without notice.

For information on the results of the competition, contact the program manager or consult the website of the Fonds.

8- CONTACT PERSON

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Program Manager

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