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Innovation Networks Support Program

Do you
have
questions?

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Summary

Competition year :	2019-2020
Deadline (notice or letter of intent) :	November 20th, 2018, 4 PM
Deadline (application) :	February 19th, 2019, 4 PM
Amount :	Maximum of \$ 300 000\$ (\$100 000 per year)
Duration :	3 years
Announcement of results :	Mid April 2019

Program Rules

The Innovation Networks Support program refers to the **Common General Rules** of the FRQ, which are applicable to all FRQNT programming. Where different, the provisions of the present rules prevail over the Common General Rules.

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1. Objectives

Note that only networks in the research fields covered by the FRQNT are eligible (Common General Rules, Article 3.1).

With the **Innovation Networks Support** program, the FRQNT, in collaboration with research user partners, intends to fund the consolidation and development of sustainable interfaces between university, college and government researchers and the research user community with the aim of significantly increasing research activities, improving the quality of training of highly qualified personnel and enhancing innovation related to the needs of the user community in Québec's priority sectors. The program's objectives are to:

- Encourage the pooling of university, college and research user expertise to meet the research needs of the user community;
- Facilitate the creation of opportunities for the user community to express its research and skill development needs;
- Facilitate the development of university-college-user community partnerships;
- Support the transfer of knowledge and technology;
- Valorize and commercialize the research results.

2. Nature and characteristics of an innovation network

An innovation network brings together researchers and representatives from the research user community working in areas that are development priorities for Québec. In particular, an innovation network plays a mobilizing role by promoting the consolidation of a critical mass of science and technology experts from a given sector or in related and complementary fields of activity. **It has a specific structure that distinguishes it from a department, faculty or strategic cluster.**

An innovation network also focuses on creating opportunities for the user community to express its research and skill development needs, and on the valorization and commercialization of the research results. It must demonstrate the implication of the user community in the network's activities and adequate planning of knowledge and technology transfer mechanisms.

3. Eligibility requirements

Only a researcher with one of the following statuses may lead an innovation network (see researcher status definitions in the Common General Rules):

- University researcher;
- College researcher.

The network must have a minimum of twelve (12) members and a maximum of twenty (20) members. These members are researchers and representatives of the user community and must have one of the following statuses (see the definition of researcher statuses in the Common General Rules):

- University researcher;
- Clinical university researcher
- College researcher;
- Other researcher, practitioner or artist.

The network must receive support from the research user community that is equal to or greater than the value of the grant requested from the FRQNT. This support may be in the form of financial, material or human resources; however, **at least 50%** of the contribution from all user partners must be financial in nature.

The principal investigator can only submit one letter of intent for this competition.

To qualify for a grant, the applicant (network leader) must be employed by a managing institution at the time of submitting the application. Every funding year, the managing institution must confirm that it continues to employ the applicant on an ongoing basis (including maintaining appropriate visas, if applicable).

4. Presentation of the letter of intent and funding application

The letter of intent and funding application must be completed using the form available in the applicant's FRQnet electronic portfolio.

The letter of intent must be accompanied by an Attestation of contribution form for each user partner taking part in the network. This form is available on the competition web page, under Toolbox. It must be signed by an authorized manager. This or these forms must be added in the *Other documents* section of the letter of intent form in PDF format. in PDF format. If there is more than one partner, all signed attestation forms must be

consolidated into a single PDF. It is important to note that the Attestation of contribution form(s) must be resubmitted at the time of the application for financial assistance.

The FRQNT uses the Canadian Common CV and requires the attachment of a PDF file of detailed contributions in the FRQnet E-Portfolio. Refer to *Preparing a CV for the Fonds* and *Detailed Contributions attachment to the Common Canadian CV* in the FRQnet E-Portfolio for more details.

Only the applicant's Canadian Common CV and detailed contributions attachment are required with the letter of intent. The funding application must be accompanied by a Canadian Common CV and detailed contributions attachment for each network member.

Exception: Individuals with the status of *Other researcher, practitioner or artist* are exempt from the requirement to submit a Canadian Common CV. However, they must provide an abbreviated CV (maximum 2 pages) that summarizes the following information as it pertains to the network's programming, in this order: 1) training, 2) relevant experience and, where applicable, 3) any publications or other scientific achievements. This abbreviated CV must be created using a word processor, converted to PDF format and sent to the applicant who will attach it in the *Other documents* section of the application form. If there is more than one person with the status of other researcher, practitioner or artist, **all shortened CVs must be combined into one PDF.**

It is important to distinguish between the *Co-investigators* and *Collaborators* sections of the form. Individuals appearing in the *Co-investigators* section will be evaluated by the scientific committee. The *Collaborators* section presents other individuals who contribute to the network but who are not regular members. Collaborators do not need to provide a CV.

If applicable, the applicant must demonstrate, within the project description, how he/she will take into consideration sex and gender issues in the realization of the network's activities.

Letters of intent and funding applications should be written in French, but may also be in English. However, the title and summary to be used for communication and dissemination purposes must be provided in French.

All required documents and files, including the Canadian Common CV and its PDF attachment of detailed contributions, must be submitted at the same time as the form.

Applicants are advised to prepare their letter of intent and application form well in advance to ensure that their application is approved by the institution and submitted before the deadline, given the large number of applications and requests received by the Fonds at the end of the competition.

Guidelines for files to be attached to electronic forms

All files attached to e-forms must meet the following requirements:

- Files must be prepared on 8½ x 11 inch pages (216 mm x 279 mm)

- Files must be submitted in PDF format without password protection

- Pages must be single-spaced with a maximum of 6 lines per inch

- All text must be in Times New Roman font (12 pt.) for users of Microsoft Office or Open Office, or Nimbus Roman font (12 pt.) for LaTeX users

Narrow fonts are not permitted

Margins must be at least 1.9 cm (¾ in.)

Pages must be identified as follows:

Upper right corner: *applicant's last and first names*

Upper left corner: *title of document*

Bottom centre: *page number*

The maximum number of pages, including tables, figures and references, varies according to the type of document and is specified in the form.

PDF files that do not meet these requirements will be removed from the application.

Pages that exceed the maximum page limit will be removed by the Fonds from the letter of intent or application submitted for evaluation. Any document that is not required under the program rules will also be removed.

Elements missing from the application will not be requested.

Any documents received after the application deadline will not be considered and applications cannot be updated.

An application that does not contain the information necessary to establish eligibility or which cannot be evaluated will be deemed ineligible by the FRQNT.

5. Evaluation of letters of intent and applications

Letters of intent are submitted to the FRQNT scientific advisory board, which may call on external experts as needed. Letters of intent are assessed according to the following indicators:

Priority research sector for Québec (10 points)

Distinctiveness of the network in comparison to other existing clusters or networks in the field, including FRQNT strategic clusters (10 points)

Relevance of bringing together the science and technology experts and research users (20 points)

Establishment of effective mechanisms enabling the user community to express its needs for research and development of skills for consulting partners who use knowledge and transfer results (20 points)

Establish effective mechanisms to promote the development of university-college-user-community partnerships (20 points)

Significant support from research user partners (20 points)

The assessment of the letter of intent is an eliminatory step.

If the letter of intent is accepted, the applicant can submit a funding application via the FRQnet electronic portfolio.

Applications are evaluated by a scientific peer committee according to the following criteria and weighting scheme:

Quality of the group making up the network (35 points)

Quality of researchers

Appropriateness and balance of member skills in relation to the research area

Complementarity between researchers and knowledge/research users

Quality of organization, management and governance (35 points)

Network objectives and development plan

Management leadership

Management and organizational models

Presence and role of research users in governance

Realism and appropriateness of the budget

Leverage and diversification of funding sources

Quality of dissemination and knowledge transfer mechanisms (30 points)

Relevance and impact of dissemination and transfer activities

Alliance with relevant organizations

A passing score on the scientific evaluation is required.

6. Announcement of results

The competition results will be announced at mid-april 2019. Funding decisions are sent to the applicants and to the institutions concerned. For further information concerning the results, applicants should contact the research office of their institution or consult the Fonds website.

All decisions made by the Board of Directors of the Fonds de recherche du Québec-Nature et technologies are final and without appeal.

Awards are subject to the budget appropriations granted by the Québec National Assembly and the decisions of the Board of Directors of the Fonds, and may be modified at any time without prior notice. It is therefore highly recommended that no funding be committed before it has been officially announced.

7. Description and nature of funding

Grant holders should refer to the Common General Rules for the rules governing the use and management of the grant.

The maximum grant amount is set at \$100,000 per year for up to three years. The grant is not renewable. The funding is primarily intended to support coordination, outreach, networking and transfer activities. The funding is not intended to support research activities. Thereby, no indirect costs of research (FIR) are provided under this program.

The following budget items and expense categories are eligible under the **Innovation Networks Support program**. Further information regarding these expense categories can be found in Section 8 of the Common General Rules.

Support for highly qualified personnel - salaries (including benefits) *(for outreach, networking, validation, demonstration and funding activities)*

Research professionals

Research technicians

Support for administrative staff - salaries (including benefits)

Administrative staff

Fees and compensation

Guest speakers

Guest researchers

Scientific services and expertise

Travel and accommodation expenses

Travel costs related to the research *

Conferences (seminars, symposia, lectures) *

Telecommunication costs

Telecommunications

Knowledge dissemination and transfer costs *(for dissemination, consultation and transfer activities)*

Publishing, reproduction and translation

Knowledge dissemination and transfer †

Information dissemination

Website related to the grant

Organization of events or activities

* See also work-family balance measures in the Common General Rules.

† Expenses related to the dissemination of research results to the public (e.g.: media relations, video production, general public activities, production of popularized content for mass media, the web and social media) and those generated through ethics activities are also eligible.

8. Conditions for disbursement of grant instalments

Allocation of the grant and disbursement of funds for the first year are conditional on:

- the applicant's agreement to carry out the network's activities according to the objectives and timeframe established in the funding application, with the financial resources granted and in compliance with the conditions set out in the summary sheet accompanying the announcement letter;
- the filing of an official undertaking confirming the contribution of each user partner, as proof of support for the network;

All other funding conditions set out in the Common General Rules must also be respected. Any additional conditions will be indicated in the funding letter or at the time of subsequent payments.

Follow-up

The network must submit a brief annual report detailing the network's activities as well as a financial statement. The report must be accompanied by proof of the contribution made by each user partner listed in the funding application. These documents will be assessed and must be deemed satisfactory by the FRQNT in order for funding to be maintained.

Reports can be written in French or in English. If the final report is written in English, it must be accompanied by a title and a summary in French.

Failure to submit a report by the date indicated is interpreted as a decision on the part of the applicant not to pursue the network's activities. From that point on, grant instalments will no longer be paid and a final report must be provided by the applicant.

In the event that the final report has not been filed within the prescribed deadline or if the final report is not accepted by the FRQNT, the person who holds the grant is not eligible to receive new financial assistance from any of the three Funds or may have their payments suspended until this condition is met.

9. Duration of grants

Grants are awarded for a period of three years. Unexpended funds may be carried over from one year to the next for the duration of the grant. The balance remaining at the end of the grant period may be carried over to complete research activities for which the grant was awarded, but only for a maximum period of one year and must be justified. At the end of this period, the balance must be returned to the FRQNT.

10. Research ethics and Compliance

Any individual or institution that receives funding must demonstrate the highest standards of research ethics and scientific integrity. See the Common General Rules for further details.

11. Integrity of the evaluation process

At no time may applicants or their institutional authorities make contact with evaluation committee members, unless such contact is specified as part of the evaluation process. Similarly, evaluation committee members must not make contact with applicants, unless such contact is specifically indicated in the evaluation process. The identities of evaluation committee members are kept confidential to avoid any attempt at collusion. The Fonds reserve the right to withdraw an application from competition if there is any inappropriate intervention, lobby, undue influence or collusion during the evaluation process, as stipulated in the *Policy for the Responsible Conduct of Research*.

12. Liability of the Fonds

The Fonds make all reasonable efforts to ensure optimal service. However, they cannot be held liable for any direct or indirect damage resulting from their handling of applications for funding. Furthermore, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the Fonds are not liable for any direct or indirect damage resulting from the disclosure of personal or confidential information that was not authorized by the Fonds.

13. False or misleading information

The Fonds presume the good faith of the declarations provided in funding applications or in any other document submitted at any time during the funding cycle, from the initial funding application to the final report. Applicants and funding holders must be transparent and provide accurate and precise information. They must be conscientious about advising the Fonds of any changes in their situation, where applicable.

Under the *Act Respecting the Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur, de la Recherche, de la Science et de la Technologie* (CQLR, c. M-15.1.0.1), any individual who submits an application containing false or misleading

information to obtain or procure financial support is committing an offence, is liable to a fine and could be barred from receiving financial support for a period of up to five years. Where a legal person commits such an offence, every director or representative of that legal person who was aware of the offence may be liable to a fine. Furthermore, such a declaration constitutes a breach of responsible research conduct, as set forth in the Fonds de recherche du Québec *Policy for the Responsible Conduct of Research*, and may be subject to sanctions in accordance with this policy.

The Fonds reserve the right to take immediate measures to stop the use of public funds obtained through false or misleading information, and to take legal action to recover fraudulently obtained funds and claim compensation for damages caused where appropriate.

14. Other aspects

Please refer to the Common General Rules for any questions regarding the responsible conduct of research, confidentiality and the protection of personal information, intellectual property and the protection of academic freedom.

15. General considerations

Researchers and institutions must meet the general eligibility requirements in effect at the time of submission of the letter of intent and the funding application. All specific program rules set out in the call for proposals guide and the Common General Rules must be followed throughout the period covered by the grant.

16. Contact

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Latest update: May 2021



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2014