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NOVA – FRQNT-NSERC PROGRAM for junior researchers (PILOT)

Year: 2022-2023

Deadline (Application): 2022-09-15 4 p.m.

Annual amount: \$75,000 (NSERC \$45,000 and FRQNT \$30,000)

Duration of funding: Maximum 3 years

Announcement of results: March 2023

Program rules

Important Changes - Second Edition

- Introduction of a FRQNT funding and career advancement continuum linked to eligibility and participation limits.
- Removal of the pre-application step.
- Team registration in the NSERC online system with submission of a simplified Letter of Intent.

This program refers to the FRQ's Common General Rules (CGR), which govern all Fonds de recherche du Québec — Nature et technologies (FRQNT) programming. This document provides rules specifically applicable to the NOVA program, which take precedence over the CGR and NSERC policies.

The link to the FRQnet e-Portfolio and the forms associated with this competition is available under the Portal Access tab of the website. More information is available under the *Documents* menu of the FRQnet e-Portfolio. It is the applicant's responsibility to choose the correct application form. Should an error occur, the Fonds will not transfer the application from one program to another and the application will be deemed ineligible.

The Fund requires the Canadian Common CV and its PDF file of the detailed contributions to be included in the *Canadian Common CV section* of the FRQnet e-Portfolio. The applicant must ensure that the Fonds de recherche du Québec -Nature et technologies version of the Canadian Common CV is completed. These documents must be updated as of June 2021.

Please refer to the *Instructions for Detailed Contributions and the Canadian Common CV - FRQNT* and the *Presentation standards for files (PDF) attached to FRQnet forms* documents available under the Portal Access tab of the FRQ site and under the Documents menu section of the FRQnet e-Portfolio for complete submission instructions.

FILES SUBMITTED TO THE FONDS AFTER THE COMPETITION DEADLINE OF 4 P.M. ON SEPTEMBER 15, 2022 (APPLICATION) WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED BY THE FONDS.

ATTENTION:

By submitting a proposal to this competition, you agree to allow the partner agencies (FRQNT and NSERC) to share the information contained in your proposal. Principal investigators must ensure that all co-investigators and collaborators are aware of the rules regarding the sharing of the information contained in the proposal. There will be no sharing of confidential personal data (gender-specific data).

1 Objectives

Offered in partnership with NSERC, the main objective of the NOVA program is to support research projects led by junior Québec researchers in collaboration with researchers from other Canadian provinces and territories. Funded projects must be in the natural sciences, mathematics or engineering (NSE).

The specific objectives of the NOVA program are to:

- Increase and stimulate the capacity for research collaborations between junior Québec researchers and researchers from other Canadian provinces and territories;
- Strengthen the international competitiveness of researchers from Québec and the other Canadian provinces and territories;
- Generate new knowledge or knowledge applications likely to produce social, environmental, technological or economic benefits or influence public policy in Québec and/or the rest of Canada on issues of importance to the community;
- Create a plan to mobilize the results of the research in Québec and the rest of Canada.

2 Characteristics

The grant is for a maximum of three years and a maximum of \$75,000 per year. This grant is non-renewable.

The grant is in the form of two awards, and the amounts are distributed as follows:

- FRQNT portion: up to **\$30,000 per year**
- NSERC portion: up to **\$45,000 per year**

Indirect research costs (IRC) of 27% are paid to the principal investigator's institution for the financial portion of the FRQNT and is added to this grant.

An additional amount of up to \$50,000 (taxes included) from the FRQNT may be added to the operating grant for the purchase of individual scientific equipment (the unit cost of each piece of equipment is \$7,001 or more). This amount is granted according to the quality of the research project, the identified needs and within the limits of the budget.

The application for funding must be submitted via the FRQnet portal. All members of a NOVA team (principal investigator and co-investigators) must also have an account in the [NSERC online system](#). Additional information is available in the section 4.2 and in the [NSERC Frequently Asked Questions](#) document.

The NOVA program is part of **continuum of funding and career advancement**, within a portfolio of three FRQNT programs:

- Research Support for New Academics
- NOVA
- Team Research Project.

Each of these three programs has eligibility requirements related to the career stage of the principal investigators of the application. Please refer to the diagram below to see if NOVA applies to your situation.

Number of years since the PI's first position as a university professor		
LESS THAN 3 YEARS	FROM 3 TO 6 YEARS	MORE THAN 6 YEARS
RESEARCH SUPPORT FOR NEW ACADEMICS	NOVA-FRQNT-NSERC	TEAM RESEARCH PROJECT
EARLY CAREER	JUNIOR	ESTABLISHED
In office since Sept. 2, 2019	In office between Sept. 2, 2016 and Sept. 1, 2019	In office before Sept. 1, 2016

3 Eligibility

All research projects, principal investigators, research teams and participants must comply with the eligibility requirements in effect at the time of application for funding and for the duration of the grant. Eligibility requirements include the program eligibility rules, the CGR rules and [NSERC's eligibility rules](#). Any project, researcher, research team or individual that does not meet or no longer meets the eligibility requirements listed below is not or is no longer eligible. Failure to comply with program rules or to provide information to establish eligibility or to evaluate the proposal may result in ineligibility.

Application eligibility is determined jointly by the FRQNT and NSERC, based on the information and documents received by the competition deadline.

3.1 Principal investigator (PI)

The PI of the application is:

- A researcher in a Québec university **AND**
- Corresponds to **Status 1 definition i)** as defined in the FRQ's CGR **AND**
- Have held a first career position in a university between **September 2, 2016 and September 1, 2019***.

*A career position involves supervising students and conducting research. Similar positions held outside Québec are within this eligibility period for a first-career position. A researcher having occupied such a position before September 2, 2016 or after September 1, 2019 is ineligible.

Status 1 researchers salaried according to the definition ii) of the CGR cannot be principal investigator under this program but can join the team as co-investigators.

Retired researchers are not eligible to be PI.

Contracted researchers with status 1 of the CGR who hold a non-tenure-track position at their university must provide a letter from their university.

Limits on participation as a PI apply (Section 3.7).

3.2 Team composition

The team is composed at least of a junior principal investigator from Québec, at least one co-investigator in Québec and at least one co-investigator from other Canadian provinces or territories (Outside Québec).

3.3 Co-investigators (Co-I)

From Québec:

- At least one co-investigator from a Québec university or college with status 1, 2 or 3* as defined in the CGR.

Co-I from Québec can be at any stage of their career, and may be contracted or retired researchers, if they have university affiliation that allows them to supervise students on their own.

From other Canadian provinces and territories (Outside Québec):

- At least one co-investigator from a university or college in another Canadian province or territory **AND**
- Who is from an eligible institution recognized by NSERC ([List of Eligible Institutions](#))

Co-I from Québec and other Canadian provinces and territories can be at any stage of their career, and may be contracted researchers or retired researchers provided that they have university affiliation that allows them to supervise students on their own.

Limits on participation as a Co-I apply (Section 3.7).

College-level co-investigators from outside Québec must hold or have a firm offer of an appointment at an eligible Canadian college, and must occupy this position for the duration of the grant. The appointment can be a permanent position or a term or contract position of no less than three years. The position held must allow the co-investigator to engage in research-related activities without the supervision of another researcher.

3.4 Collaborators

Any person meeting status 1 to 4 as defined in the CGR or research institution may join the team as a collaborator. A CV is not required. In addition, international researchers are also eligible.

The complementary nature of the expertise required to carry out the research project must be reflected in the composition of the team and bring together the best complementary expertise from across Québec and the other Canadian provinces and territories.

Collaborators do not have access to FRQNT and NSERC funds, they must provide their own resources.

3.5 Research project

Note that only applications in research areas covered by the FRQNT and NSERC are eligible for funding. Should there be any doubt as to the compliance of their research topic with the fields and sub-fields of the FRQNT and NSERC, researchers can contact the program officer to ensure that their project falls within the areas covered.

Research projects jointly funded by the FRQNT and NSERC cannot be concurrently funded by other granting agencies.

3.6 Intersectorality

The FRQNT and NSERC encourage applicants to include university and college Co-I in fields other than NSE in the team. Research costs associated with work that is not in NSE-related fields must not exceed 30% of the NSERC funding portion. The eligibility requirements for non-NSE participants are the same as for Co-I or collaborators as described above.

3.7 Participation limits

Researchers may only participate in **ONE** NOVA application as a PI, and a maximum of **TWO** NOVA applications as a Co-I, under the conditions listed below.

As a PI:

PI's situation	Number of participations allowed NOVA
No active grant in either Research Support for New Academics or NOVA programs	ONE
Last year of an active grant in the Research Support for New Academics program	ONE
Active NOVA grant	NONE

As a Co-I:

Co-Investigator(s)' situation	Number of participations allowed NOVA
No active grant in the NOVA and/or Team Research Project programs	TWO
ONE active* grant in the NOVA and/or Team Research Project programs	ONE
TWO active* grants in the NOVA and/or Team Research Project programs	NONE

* A Co-I in their final year of an active grant is eligible for additional participation in this competition.

3.8 Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI)

It is the responsibility of the research team to create a more diverse, inclusive and equitable research environment with a climate and culture in which all individuals feel supported and respected. The concrete practices and actions that will be put in place to integrate EDI considerations must be described in the training plan, using the NSERC guides ([EDI in your training plan](#); [Guide for Applicants](#)) as a reference. **Implementing EDI considerations in the training plan is an eliminary criterion for application eligibility.**

Notification of transmission for evaluation or ineligibility of the application will be transmitted to the PI in October.

4 Application

Applicants will not be asked to provide any items missing from the application. All documents received after the deadline for submitting applications to the Fund will not be considered and applications will not be updated. Any excess pages will be removed from the file. These rules will be strictly enforced. Incomplete applications are not eligible. Please refer to section 3 of the CGR for information on how to submit an application. For applications written in English, the title and abstract must be provided in both French and English.

The PI and all Co-Is (from Québec and other Canadian provinces and territories) must update their profile by completing the self-identification questionnaire in the FRQnet portal. All members of a NOVA team (applicants and co-applicants) **must also have an account on the NSERC online system** (Section 4.2).

ATTENTION:

The PI must use the template provided in the Program *Toolbox* to submit the research project description. The PI must also submit separate budgets for FRQNT and NSERC, while respecting the eligible expenses of each organization in each budget.

4.1 Required documents

The complete application includes:

- The electronic application form including the following tabs:
 - **Project description:** description that addresses the 5 evaluation criteria (**maximum 12 pages** including the list of references, tables and figures; Template to complete)
 - **Release from teaching duties – Québec college researchers:** identification of the team members concerned and justification of release from teaching duties (**1 page**)
 - **Budget:** Attach a consolidated PDF file presenting the justification of the planned expenditures for the FRQNT (maximum 2 pages), the justification of the requested equipment from the FRQNT (maximum 1 page), and the budget table and the justification of the planned expenditures for the NSERC (maximum 3 pages)
 - **Other documents*:**
 - A. A letter from the university for any retired researchers from Québec;
 - B. A letter from the university for a principal investigator or co-investigator from Québec who is under contract, if applicable;
 - C. FRQNT equipment grant: two quotes from suppliers if the cost of a single piece of equipment exceeds \$25,000 (including taxes);

- D. Personal data form with CCV attachment (NSERC Form 100A) for all Co-I from other Canadian provinces and territories and their detailed contributions for the last 5 years (starting September 2, 2016) and updated since June 2021 ([Form 100A](#) as a PDF file).
- Canadian Common CV and detailed contributions of the PI **and** the Co-I from Québec (attached via the FRQnet electronic portfolio). The detailed contributions must present the last 5 years (as of September 02, 2016) in FRQNT format. The Canadian Common CV and detailed contributions must have been updated since June 2021

*Documents to be attached in the *Other documents* section of the form:

A. Retired Québec researcher

A letter from the university attesting that, for the duration of the grant, the retired researcher will have access to the facilities and the logistical support needed to carry out the proposed research activities, and will continue to train students and prepare them for a career in research. The university must also confirm that it will manage and administer the funds in the usual manner.

B. Contracted researcher

Eligible PI and Co-I who hold a non-tenure-track position must provide a letter from their university indicating that they will maintain this status for the duration of the grant. An insufficiently documented letter could render the contracted researcher ineligible.

C. FRQNT equipment grant application

Two quotes from suppliers for any equipment with a unit cost greater than \$25,000 (taxes included). Exceptionally, a single quote can be submitted provided that this is fully justified in writing.

IMPORTANT

Note that institutional approval is required prior to submission of the application to FRQNT. It is therefore likely that internal deadlines prior to this competition have been established by your institution. It is important to consider this for Co-I from Québec as well as from other Canadian provinces and territories. **It is your responsibility to inform yourself so that your file can be transmitted to the FRQNT before the competition deadline.**

4.2 Team registration at NSERC: Simplified Letter of Intent

In parallel to the submission of the application on FRQnet, on behalf of the team, the PI must submit a simplified Letter of Intent to NSERC, which includes completed NSERC Personal Data form with CCV attachment- [Form 100A](#), for each team member and a description of EDI considerations in the training plan. An [Impact assessment form](#) must be completed and uploaded to the Environmental impact page, as required.

Each member of a NOVA team (principal investigator and co-investigators) must have an account in the NSERC online system. If you do not already have an account, you can create one by [Registering for NSERC e-Services](#). More information is also available in [NSERC's Frequently Asked Questions](#). The PI and all co-Is must create a Personal Data form with CCV attachment- Form 100A, in the NSERC online system. Please refer to the [Instructions](#).

The PI is responsible for providing all required documents and information, including:

- Current Personal Data form with CCV attachment- [Form 100A](#) from each member (PI and Co-Is) of his/her NOVA team (co-Is will be invited to provide their Form 100A in the online system);
- EDI considerations in the training plan (maximum one page) meeting the eligibility criteria*;
- An [Impact assessment form](#) must be completed and uploaded to the Environmental impact page, as required.

*Applicants should refer to NSERC guides on EDI ([EDI in the Training Plan](#), [Guide for Applicants](#)). **REMINDER:** Implementing EDI considerations in the training plan is an **eliminary criterion** for application eligibility. Applicants should use the EDI template available in the toolbox of the FRQNT program website.

Instructions for the PI for creating the simplified LOI and providing the above information:

- Log in to the [online system](#) and choose *Create a new form 101*;
- Select *Research partnerships programs*, then *Alliance Grants*;
- For the *Proposal type* field, select *Letter of intent*;
- For the *Type of call* field, select *FRQNT-NOVA* from the drop-down menu.

THE DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION IS THE SAME AS THE COMPETITION DEADLINE, 4 P.M. ON SEPTEMBER 15, 2022

5 Evaluation

The applications are evaluated by multidisciplinary assessment committees (MAC), which may request the opinion of experts to complete the committee's expertise. MAC members also make recommendation on the amount of equipment to be awarded, if any.

Applications for funding are evaluated according to the following criteria:

Criterion 1: Quality of the project (30 points)

- Innovativeness in relation to the state of the art;
- Clarity of the objectives and deliverables; appropriateness of the scope of the planned activities for the intended outcomes; justification of planned expenditures;
- Appropriateness of the identified indicators and methods for monitoring progress during the project and for assessing outcomes at the end of the project.

Criterion 2: Research team (25 points)

- Extent to which the collaboration brings together the best expertise from Québec and the rest of Canada to achieve the stated objectives;
- Complementary nature of the expertise required to carry out the research project;
- Contribution of collaborators, where applicable.

Criterion 3: Relevance and outcomes for Québec and all of Canada (20 points)

- Significance of the intended outcomes and of the social, environmental, cultural, technological, economic or other benefits;
- Potential for generating new scientific knowledge;
- Extent to which the strategy chosen to apply the research results is likely to achieve the intended outcomes.

Criterion 4: Training plan (20 points)

- Opportunities for enriched training experiences that let undergraduates, graduate students and postdoctoral fellows develop both their research skills and their interdisciplinary professional skills (such as leadership, communication, collaboration, entrepreneurship);
- Experience of project members in mentoring students;
- Capacity to integrate highly qualified personnel into the labour market.

Criterion 5: Consideration of the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion (5 points)

This criterion assesses the team members' efforts to promote equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI), not the composition of research teams*.

- Training: specific actions already taken and/or planned to promote EDI in the training of the next generation (recruitment, mentoring and career development practices, etc.);
- Research: where relevant, the consideration of EDI in the design and execution of research projects (research questions, methodology, etc.) and the dissemination and mobilization of knowledge to a diverse audience;
- Involvement: specific actions already taken and/or planned to promote EDI in the team's community or field or within the research community in general (committees, inclusive scientific events, awareness activities, etc.).

*The applicant should not provide any information as to whether they, or members of their team, belong to marginalized or underrepresented groups. For more information, please refer to the document *Considering equity, diversity and inclusion in the evaluation of FRQNT grant applications* in the section *Documents* of the electronic Portfolio.

IMPORTANT

The evaluation of the funding application has a **passing threshold of 80%**.

6 Expenses

The grant must be used only for current expenses directly related to the conduct of the research project, within the eligible expenses of each organization. These must be rigorously justified in the application. Any unjustified expenses may be removed from the budget during the evaluation.

Terms and conditions for persons whose salary is charged to the regular budget of an institution subsidized by the government or any other government agency

Except in the specific case of college researchers (Status 3), Fonds's granting must not be used to pay salaries or salary supplements to CO-PIs or individuals whose salaries are paid out of the regular budget of a government-funded institution such as a university, a government department or its institutions, or any other government agency. Refer to the CGR for further details.

6.1 Eligible expenses

Under this program, the principal investigator will receive two grants, one from NSERC and the other from the FRQNT.

All budget items provided for in the CGR (Section 8) are eligible for the financial portion of the FRQNT, with the exception of expenses covered by subsection 8.7. The specificities of this program are described below.

Eligible expenses under this program for the **NSERC funding portion** must comply with the [Tri-Agency Guide on Financial Administration](#).

Research costs associated with work that is in non-NSE-related fields must not exceed 30% of the NSERC funding portion and must be clearly indicated in the project's budget justification.

Salary support for eligible Status 3 college researchers with no teaching duties

Part of the grant awarded by the FRQNT may be used as **salary support** for college researchers on the team who have no teaching duties. **This amount must be entered in the Budget section and can be transferred by the PI's institution** directly to the college, or to the college with which the CCTT is affiliated in the case of a CCTT researcher.

Supplement for Release from teaching duties for eligible Status 3 college researchers with teaching duties

For **each college researcher on the team who has teaching duties**, a maximum additional amount \$16,000 will be paid directly to the college to cover the portion of the salary dedicated to the **release from teaching duties**. This amount, paid directly to the managing college institution, may be used to compensate for the portion of the researcher's salary dedicated to release time from teaching duties or to ensure that the researcher's teaching duties are performed by another college faculty member.

6.2 Grant for equipment purchases- FRQNT

A grant may be added to the operating grant for the purchase of individual scientific equipment whose cost is **between \$7,001 and \$50,000 (including taxes)**. This grant is awarded on the basis of the justification of the need for the equipment and according to the criteria mentioned below. Where applicable, the reuse of scientific equipment and the purchase of second-hand equipment are encouraged. Due to budget limitations, the equipment grant is not automatically offered in the event of an award.

Applications for equipment must be made in the first year of the period for which an operating grant is requested. The appropriations are issued in full the first year but may be spent any time in the three years covered by the grant.

For equipment whose total cost exceeds \$50,000, the Fonds's contribution comes into effect as soon as applicants submit supporting documents indicating they have obtained other sources of complementary funding for the purchase of the requested equipment. The supporting documents must be sent to the Fonds within one year following the grant announcement.

The following criteria are used to evaluate equipment applications:

- Relevance of the equipment requested to the research project;
- Non-overlap between this equipment request and any other sources of funding already obtained since the start of the position (CFI equipment grant, NSERC, etc.);
- Availability (physical or in use) of similar equipment at the institution or in the region;
- Structuring effect of the equipment on the sustainability of the laboratory and the training plan for users;
- Possibility of repairing and reconditioning equipment (if applicable);
- Possibility of using computing and genomic platforms (if applicable);
- Risk management plan if equipment is not funded.

6.3 Maternity and parental leave (Students and postdoctoral fellows)

Maternity PREMIUM for Québec female students (FRQNT)

This is intended to promote the retention of women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields, where they have historically been underrepresented

A student who receives an award funded by a grant under this program can get paid maternity premium from the FRQNT for a period of up to twelve months for the birth or adoption of a child. To be eligible, the student must have been paid from the FRQNT grant for at least six months. In addition, she may not hold an award from another granting agency and may not receive benefits from the Québec Parental Insurance Plan.

To obtain paid maternity premium, the student must send a request by email to the program officer and provide a copy of the medical certificate attesting to the pregnancy and, when the time comes, the child's birth certificate or adoption proof, and proof of interruption of university enrolment. In addition, a copy of the student's award contract must be provided. The maternity premium may begin up to eight months prior to the birth or adoption of the child. The FRQNT will transfer the maternity premium to the post-secondary institution upon receipt of the required documents.

Maternity premium is authorized by the Fonds provided that the institution allows to take time off from her study project to devote herself to her parental project. The grant director undertakes to resume supervision of the student after her leave. The Fonds reserves the right to reject any request that is not adequately justified.

IMPORTANT: The maternity premium offered by the FRQNT cannot be combined with the maternity leave offered by NSERC, regardless of whether the Québec student's award is funded by the FRQNT portion or the NSERC portion of the grant. It is therefore up to the Québec student to decide which support related to the maternity (FRQNT premium or NSERC leave) she wishes to take.

Paid maternity/parental leave for students and postdoctoral fellows (NSERC)

NSERC will provide maternity/parental leave supplements within 12 months following a child's birth or adoption to an eligible student or postdoctoral fellow ([Tri-Agency Guide](#), Part 5) who is the child's primary caregiver. The supplement amount will be based on the student's or postdoctoral fellow's current salary/stipend and is paid from the NSERC grant for up to 12 months to cover the leave period.

If both parents are supported by grant funds, each parent may take a portion of the leave for a combined maximum of 12 months. The supplement will be pro-rated if the student or postdoctoral fellow is being trained in research on a part-time basis.

7 Management and Follow-up

Grants are awarded for a maximum period of three years. The first disbursements of the FRQNT and NSERC grants are expected in March 2023, shortly after adjudication.

Each agency will provide award letters with the terms and conditions of the grant ([NSERC](#) and FRQ's CGR) and any additional conditions or requirements, where applicable.

FRQNT portion. The unspent funds at the end of the grant may be carried forward, but only for one additional year. They are subject to the conditions of CGR 6.10.

NSERC portion. NSERC will allow residual unspent funds to be retained by the managing institution under certain conditions determined by their Finance and Awards Administration Division. These funds will be transferred to a General Research Fund (GRF).

Annual financial report:

- FRQNT portion: the managing institution must submit, no later no later than September 30 of each year, an annual financial report via the FRQnet E-portfolio;
- NSERC portion: the managing institution must submit, no later than June 30 each year, an [annual reconciliation report](#) to NSERC as well as a final statement of account expenditures.

Progress reports:

- A follow-up report must be submitted to the FRQNT 24 months after the start of the project at nova@frq.gouv.qc.ca;
- The principal investigator is required to submit a final report no later than 15 months after the end date of the grant (not including the additional year, where applicable). This report must be completed and submitted in the FRQnet E-portfolio.

In the event that the final report is not filed within the time frame specified by the Fund or if the report is not to the satisfaction of the Fund, the grantee is not eligible to receive further financial assistance from any of the three Funds or may have its payments suspended until this condition is met.

8 Open Access Dissemination Policy

Peer-reviewed publications resulting from the research made possible by this award must be made freely accessible immediately (without embargo), under an open license, in accordance with the FRQ Open Access Policy for the Dissemination of Research (revised in 2022).

9 Effective date

These rules apply to the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

10 Contact person for this program

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