

ENGAGE – 2025-2026

Competition year: **2025-2026**

Deadline (pre-application): **December 5, 2024 at 16:00 (EST)**

Deadline (application): **February 27, 2025 at 16:00 (EST)**

Announcement of results: **April 2025**

Amount: **Maximum per phase: Startup \$15,000; Action \$30,000; Sharing \$15,000**

Duration: **1 year per phase**

IMPORTANT NOTES

If you are a citizen and would like more information, visit the [ENGAGE citizen page \(in French\)](#). If you would like to take part in the program, you can submit your Question using [this form \(in French\)](#). You have until 4 p.m. on December 5, 2024 (EST) to do so.

Submitting a Citizen Question is equivalent to submitting a pre-application under this program.

If you are a researcher and would like to submit an application on behalf of your Duo, the form will be available as of December 9, 2024 in your [FRQnet ePortfolio](#). **You must select Nature et technologies (managing agency), regardless of the research sector of the proposed project.** The form is available under “Available competitions: Research grants”. As Citizen Questions are submitted, they will be published on the [FRQ Citizen Questions page](#) until mid-December. This will enable you to identify topics of mutual interest and form a Duo with a citizen.

INTRODUCTION

This program refers to the [Common General Rules](#) (CGR), which apply to all FRQ programs. However, some specific conditions apply to the ENGAGE Program. These are indicated in this document and prevail over the CGR.

1-Background

The ENGAGE program is back. The Fonds de recherche du Québec (FRQ) are once again offering a competition that places citizens who are unfamiliar with the research community at the heart of the scientific process and encourages Québec researchers to develop innovative citizen research and [participatory science \(in French\)](#) practices.

For the purposes of the ENGAGE Program, the FRQ use the term “scientific process” to refer to all the steps aimed at producing new knowledge about a research problem, following a procedure based on the principles of neutrality and rigor and recognized by the scientific community.

The FRQ consider citizen research to consist of research activities that actively involve citizens and that generate new knowledge or a better understanding through the contribution of experiential knowledge.

Bridging the gap between science and society

The ENGAGE program allows citizens who are unfamiliar with research to familiarize themselves with, or even appropriate, the scientific method. The question proposed by the citizen (hereinafter referred to as the Citizen Question) serves as a starting point for forming a Duo with a researcher around a topic of common interest. The Duo co-constructs a project plan and an implementation plan drawing on both citizen and academic knowledge and the exploration of new research perspectives.

- Recognizing the significant impacts of the projects funded to date and the great potential for knowledge mobilization by and for citizens, in 2023 the FRQ began offering the possibility of a third year of funding. This additional support makes it possible to organize various types of dissemination activities, especially with the general public, aimed at sharing the Duo's experiences and findings and the new knowledge generated by their project.

See [funded citizen science projects](#) from previous years (in French)

2. Objectives

ENGAGE is a science culture initiative with the following specific objectives:

- To actively involve citizens in a scientific process based on a question that interests them;
- To support the development of new citizen research and participatory science practices and help stimulate diverse research in Québec;
- To promote the democratization of scientific knowledge within Québec society.

The ENGAGE Program consists of 3 phases (see Section 4 for details):

1 - Startup phase (1 year): \$15,000

2 - Action phase (1 year): \$30,000

3 - Sharing phase (1 year): \$15,000

The **Startup phase** focuses on the development of a participatory science process around the Citizen Question. The citizen is introduced to the scientific method, while the researcher is familiarized with a citizen's perspective. This phase involves:

- The integration of the citizen into the research team;

- Co-construction of the proposed Plan with the citizen, with a view to its implementation;
- Adaptation of research approaches and methodologies in line with the proposed Plan.

After presentation of a status report on the Startup phase (see Section 8), Duos can, if they wish, begin the **Action phase**. The main thrust of this phase is:

- The implementation of the Plan with the aim of increasing scientific knowledge related to the Citizen Question.

After presentation of a status report on the Action phase (see Section 8), Duos can, if they wish, move on to the **Sharing phase**. This final phase provides support for:

- Events, activities and initiatives for knowledge mobilization and exchange, particularly with the general public, in order to share their experiences, their findings and the new knowledge generated by their project.

3. Eligibility

Teams eligible for the program are composed of two individuals who form a Duo, as follows:

- A citizen
AND
- A researcher

A person can only be a member of **one Duo** and thus participate in **only one application**. However, a Duo member can contribute to other projects as a collaborator.

Note that a collaborator is a person declared by the Duo to bring specific expertise to the submitted Plan. A collaborator does not provide a CV and cannot be delegated to manage a portion of the funds.

Please note! When forming a Duo, the citizen and the researcher must assess the risk of real, potential or perceived conflict of interest with regard to their personal, professional, institutional or financial interests (see Section 9).

3.1. Eligibility of the citizen

Under the ENGAGE program, to be eligible, a citizen must submit a Question to the program by completing [the short online form](#) and meet all of the following criteria:

- 1- Be of legal age at the time of submitting their Question to the FRQ;
- 2- Be a Canadian citizen **OR** a permanent resident of Canada;
- 3- Reside in Québec;
- 4- Not be enrolled in an undergraduate, graduate or postgraduate university program or have a doctoral degree at the competition deadline and during the Startup phase;
- 5- Not qualify for research statuses 1, 2, 3, 4a or 4b as defined in the CGR;
- 6- Never have been granted research status 4c, 4d or 4e as defined in the CGR;
- 7- Not work as highly qualified personnel in a research institution (e.g., research professional, lab technician);
- 8- Never have been convicted of a fraudulent offence related to financial management.

Role

For the purposes of this program, the FRQ define “citizen” as someone who contributes to the project in an individual capacity, and not as a member of an organization. The citizen’s contribution is centred on experiential knowledge that gives them a key role in the project. The citizen’s relevant skills and knowledge are primarily personal, based on – for example – life experience, experience in the field, or culture, but may also be of a professional, technical or practical nature, bringing additional perspectives to the project.

3.2. Eligibility of the researcher

To be eligible, a researcher wishing to be part of a Duo must have one of the following statuses as defined in the CGR:

- Status 1: University researcher;
- Status 2: Clinical university researcher;
- Status 3: College researcher.

3.3 Other eligibility requirements

The Duo may choose a managing organization to manage part of the funding on behalf of the citizen (optional). **This organization must work in areas relevant to the topic of the Citizen Question and Plan.** The managing organization may be:

- A non-profit organization (NPO) (OBNL) registered with the Registraire des entreprises du Québec for more than 2 years;
- A museum institution accredited by the Government of Québec (IMAGQ) for more than 2 years.

There may or may not be an employment relationship between the citizen and this organization. The choice of managing organization, if applicable, must be justified in the application. A managing organization that manages part of the funding must submit an annual financial report to the managing institution, signed by a chartered accountant.

The following are not eligible:

- Companies listed in the register of companies not eligible for public contracts (RENA) as published by the Secrétariat du Conseil du trésor du gouvernement du Québec;
- Political organizations, union organizations, religious associations, foundations whose mission is essentially to collect and redistribute funds.

The members of the Duo, the Plan, the [managing institution \(in French\)](#) and the managing organization, if applicable, must meet all eligibility requirements in effect at the time of submitting the funding application, and **throughout the entire period covered by the funding**.

4. Application process

4.1 Steps leading to the submission of an application

Step 1: Express interest by submitting a Question

Eligible citizens (Section 3.1) who wish to participate in the program are invited to **complete [a short online form](#)** to submit a Question, **before the deadline of December 5, 2024 at 16:00 EST**. An individual may submit only one Question under this competition. Before submitting their Question, citizens can use the [resources provided \(in French\)](#) and receive support from the FRQ.

Step 2: Form a Duo and collaborate to develop a Plan

To facilitate the formation of Duos, Citizen Questions are published on the [FRQ website](#) and shared with the research community served by the FRQ, including researchers. As Citizen Questions are submitted, they will be published on the [FRQ Citizen Questions page](#) until mid-December.

How to form a Duo

- Researchers can **contact** citizens whose Questions are published on the FRQ website through the program manager (see Section 11).
- Citizens can **contact researchers directly** by sharing the link to their Question published on the FRQ website. Researchers' professional addresses are often listed on their institution's web page.

Citizens and researchers are responsible for forming Duos and maintaining a healthy collaboration to achieve their goals. Duo members can be part of only one Duo.

How to write the Plan

Duo members get to know each other, exchange ideas, and **jointly** draw up a Plan.

A Plan is a summary presentation of the Duo's familiarization and project development activities for the Startup phase (Year 1) and a project outline for the Action phase (Year 2). Activities planned for the Sharing phase can also be mentioned (Year 3). The plan must refer to the Citizen Question as the starting point for the project. The Plan also includes the following:

- The planned synthesis of available knowledge;
- The learning objectives for the citizen with regard to the scientific method and the means used to achieve them;
- Planned actions to adapt and democratize the resulting methodological practices and/or scientific knowledge, if applicable;
- The resources that will be used;
- Planned achievements for the Action phase, if applicable;
- Planned achievements for the Sharing phase, if applicable.

See Section 3.6 of the FRQ's Common General Rules for the language requirements of submitted forms and documents.

The following are not eligible:

- A Plan that is part of a private research initiative;
- A Plan that is part of an entrepreneurial research initiative;
- A Plan that is part of a professional project for the citizen.

Step 3: Apply

The Duo researcher is responsible for completing the form, attaching the required documents and submitting the application through the [FRQnet ePortfolio](#), selecting Nature et technologies (managing agency) regardless of the research sector of the proposed project. Applications must be submitted before the competition deadline.

4.2 Submitting an application

Applicants are advised to prepare their application well in advance to ensure that it is submitted before the deadline, taking into account time and accessibility constraints that may vary from one citizen to another.

The researcher undertakes to prepare the application jointly with the citizen, whenever possible, although the researcher is responsible for completing the form, attaching the required documents and submitting the application.

DOCUMENTS TO BE SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY

The **online form**, available in the [FRQnet ePortfolio](#), including:

1. **The Plan (maximum 3 pages), a text** which is directly and explicitly linked to the Citizen Question and should include the following points:

- The planned synthesis of available knowledge;
- The learning objectives for the citizen with regard to the scientific method and the means used to achieve them;
- Planned actions to adapt and democratize the resulting methodological practices and/or scientific knowledge;
- The resources that will be used;
- Planned achievements for the Action phase, if applicable;
- Planned achievements for the Sharing phase, if applicable.

Other documents to attach in the electronic form:

2. **A text (maximum 1 page) describing the formation of the Duo and the co-construction of the Plan.** Describe the following:

- How did the members of the Duo first connect: Direct contact? Through someone else?
- How does the Citizen Question relate to the researcher's research interests?
- How was the Plan co-constructed?

3. **An [abridged CV \(max. 2 pages\)](#) for the citizen**, prepared using the [presentation template](#).

4. **An [abridged CV \(max. 2 pages\)](#) for the researcher**, prepared using the [presentation template](#).

5. **A detailed budget for the Startup phase (Year 1) and a maximum of 2 pages of budget justifications.** These justifications may include an anticipated summary budget for the Action phase, if applicable (see eligible expense categories in Section 7).

6. For the citizen, **one proof of Canadian citizenship OR one proof of Canadian Permanent Resident status**, whichever is applicable. The following documents are accepted:

- Valid Canadian passport;
- Canadian citizenship certificate or citizenship card;
- Birth certificate or birth record issued by the appropriate Canadian provincial or territorial government authority;
- Valid permanent resident card;
- Confirmation of permanent residence issued by the Canadian immigration authorities.

7. For the Citizen, **one proof of residence in Québec.** The following documents are accepted:

- Valid RAMQ card;
- Valid Québec driver's license;
- Recent invoice from an energy, telephone or cable company (three months or less before the competition deadline).

The following may also be attached to the application, if applicable:

8. A **letter of commitment from the managing organization** (optional, see Section 3.3) and justification of the choice of managing organization.

Important notes related to this program:

- Once the application has been submitted, the composition of the Duo cannot be changed for the duration of the project (the three phases), except in the case of force majeure, medical leave, or parental leave. Any change of situation must be reported, with official supporting documents, as early as possible to the program manager (see Section 11).
- Citizens may request the withdrawal of their Question at any time by contacting the program manager (see Section 11).
- A detailed budget will be required for the Action phase (Year 2) and the Sharing phase (Year 3), if applicable, when transitioning from one phase to the next.

Important notes related to submitting applications:

- Documents sent by email or by post will not be accepted.
- The approval of the managing institution is required before the application can be submitted to the FRQ. Please note that the deadlines fixed by your institution for approval are usually earlier than those specified in the program rules.
- Required documents that are missing or non-compliant will not be requested and will render the application ineligible.
- Unrequested documents submitted with the application or pages in excess of the number permitted will be removed from the application before evaluation.
- Documents received after the competition deadline will not be considered. Once submitted, applications cannot be updated.

5. Evaluation

5.1 Evaluation committee

The FRQ submit eligible applications for evaluation by a committee whose members are recognized for their skills, expertise and achievements related to the program's objectives.

5.2 Evaluation criteria

The evaluation criteria are as follows:

1- Quality and realism of the Plan (30 points):

- Synthesis of available knowledge and identification of knowledge and data gaps related to the Citizen Question;

- Demonstration of the joint development of the Plan;
- Development of the Citizen Question and realism of the Plan;
- Presentation of the anticipated scientific process (see Step 2 in Section 4);
- Clarity, realism and sharing of each stage; quality of the budget.

2- Potential for learning the scientific method (40 points):

- Involvement of the Duo citizen in the design, co-construction and implementation of the Plan and expected benefits for the citizen in terms of learning the scientific method;
- Planned scientific support and guidance of the citizen;
- Number and frequency of planned exchanges between the members of the Duo;
- Profile of the citizen (level of familiarity with research and the scientific method).

3- Potential for innovation in participatory science practices (30 points):

- Adaptation of the researcher's methodological practices;
- Planned approach for the democratization of scientific knowledge to the general public;
- Diversity of people concerned or reached by the Plan;
- Potential for developing the Plan into a participatory science project.

To be recommended for funding, the application must receive a score of 70% or more.

6. Description and nature of funding

The maximum funding awarded to a Duo for each phase is as follows:

- 1 - Startup phase:** \$15,000 for one year
- 2 - Action phase:** \$30,000 for one year
- 3 - Sharing phase:** \$15,000 for one year

In addition, indirect costs of research (FIR) of 27% are paid to the researcher's managing institution with the exception of the stipend for the citizen's contribution.

In keeping with the program's objectives, the grant must be used to finance expenses that are directly related to the realization of the proposed Plan and knowledge mobilization activities, where applicable. Eligible expenses are as follows:

- Eligible expenses as listed in Section 8 of the CGR of the FRQ.

Other eligible expenses:

- Stipend for Duo citizen members (maximum daily rate of \$250/day, up to a maximum of \$7,500 for the Startup and Sharing phases (Years 1 and 3); for the Action phase (Year 2), this stipend may be up to a maximum of \$15,000;

- Salary and benefits for personnel directly involved in the project in accordance with the current policies of the managing institution or managing organization, if applicable;
- Staff training and development costs for the purpose of participating in the Plan, excluding tuition fees;
- Telecommunications, computers, tablets, modems, new technologies, specialized software and other hardware required for the citizen's contribution to the implementation of the Plan, if applicable, subject to appropriate justification;
- Management fee for the managing organization that manages a portion of the funding on behalf of the citizen, if applicable: up to 15% of the amount managed by the organization. These funds will be paid directly to the managing organization.

Salary support for researchers from colleges or college centres for the transfer of technology and innovative social practices (CCTT) who have no teaching duties:

- A portion of the grant may be used as salary support for Status 3 researchers. This amount will be paid directly to the college or college centre with which the CCTT researcher is affiliated.

Salary support for college researchers with teaching duties:

- A SUPPLEMENT may be requested for a release from teaching duties for eligible Status 3 researchers with teaching duties. This supplement, up to a maximum of \$5,000 per year, will be paid directly to the college or college centre to cover the portion of the researcher's salary normally paid for teaching duties.

The following expenses are not eligible:

- Remuneration of researchers with status 1, 2 or 3 as defined in the CGR (with the exception of salary support for Status 3 researchers, as described above).

Important notes:

- The funding awarded is not renewable.
- The grant **cannot be managed in whole or in part in a personal capacity**. The grant **must** be managed by the managing institution of the Duo researcher (mandatory). However, management of the funds used to pay the stipend for the citizen's contribution **may** be entrusted to a managing organization (optional).
- Only one managing institution and one managing organization are allowed per project and must remain the same for **the Startup, Action and Sharing phases**.

- Managing institutions and organizations must administer the grant funds as the property of others. The FRQ are committed to ensuring that no expenditures be made for personal or family gain or for purposes that are not strictly and directly related to the activities set out in the Plan. Rigorous and sound administration of public funds is required.

7. Follow-up and reporting



Duos are expected to take part in an annual follow-up meeting organized by the FRQ.

At each transition between phases (Startup to Action; Action to Sharing), funded Duos must produce a progress report in the form of an oral presentation demonstrating that the project is on track and including a detailed budget for the completion of the next phase. A presentation template will be provided at the appropriate time.

At the end of the project, Duos must jointly draw up and submit a final report. The format of the final report will be communicated in due course.

The **managing institution** must submit an annual financial report, in collaboration with the managing organization where applicable, to the FRQ. This report must be sent to the FRQ no later than six months after the end of the FRQ fiscal year of March 31.

8. Announcement of results

Funding awards will be announced in April 2025.

The amount of funding may be modified at any time without prior notice, in accordance with the funds made available for this program.

9. Other considerations

9.1 Ethical and responsible conduct of projects

Duos, managing institutions and managing organizations, if applicable, undertake to conduct and administer the Plan in an ethical and responsible manner, in the spirit of the [Fonds de recherche du Québec policy for the responsible conduct of research](#).

In particular, the citizen and the researcher must avoid real, potential or perceived conflicts of interest, or when they are unavoidable, manage them appropriately in accordance with the conflict of interest policy of the institution managing the grant. A conflict of interest arises when there is a conflict between the duties of the citizen and/or researcher related to the research and their personal, professional, institutional or financial interests.

9.2 Requirements relating to citizen research and participatory science

Notwithstanding any intellectual property arrangements made, both members of the Duo, the managing institution and the managing organization (if applicable) must, at a minimum, be able to use the knowledge acquired for research and teaching purposes.

9.3 Open access dissemination policy and open science

Any peer-reviewed publications resulting from the research made possible by this grant must be released in immediate open access (without embargo), under an open license, in accordance with the [FRQ open access policy for the dissemination of research \(in French\)](#) (revised in 2022).

The link between science and society at the heart of citizen research is an important means of disseminating knowledge to the general public. The FRQ invite Duos to learn more about the principles of open science, which focus on access to scientific knowledge and boosting scientific literacy, and to explore the various ways of increasing the reach of their project's impact.

10. Important dates

- Submission of Questions: **until December 5, 2024 at 16:00 (EST)**
- Creation of Duos: from the time the Question is online until the application deadline.
- Application deadline: **February 27, 2025 at 16:00 (EST)**
- Announcement of results: **April 2025**

11. Contact person for this program

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