REGARDS – Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Program - 2025-2026

Competition year: 2025-2026
Deadline (application): November 7, 2024 at 16:00 (EST)
Amount: $12,000 per project
Duration: 12 months (not renewable)
Announcement of results: April 2025

Note

The electronic form is available in the FRQnet Electronic Portfolio (ePortfolio). To access the form, **you must select Santé (managing agency)**, regardless of the applicant's research sector. The form is available under "Available competitions, Program: Dissemination grants".

In addition to these program rules, it is the responsibility of funding applicants to read the Common General Rules (CGR), which apply to all Fonds de recherche du Québec (FRQ) programs. Any specific conditions that apply to this program are set out below and prevail over the CGR.

Interested in this program? The Directorate of Major Societal Challenges is planning an event this fall to give the research community and the general public an opportunity to learn more about scientific communication, discover FRQ-funded projects and meet the teams behind them. Activities include an application preparation workshop for those wishing to apply. Show your interest by completing the registration form available at the following link (in French).

Also an **informative webinar** (in French) will be offered on Monday October 21st, 2024 from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. EST. Click here to register. Registration is mandatory. The webinar will be recorded and available in the toolbox of the program webpage after the event.

1. BACKGROUND

The phenomenon of disinformation has grown over the past decade, exacerbated by the emergence of social media. Disinformation is an obstacle to bridging the gap between science and society: it undermines the credibility of scientific information and has consequences for collective and individual decision-making on sensitive issues such as climate change.

In the fight against disinformation, the Chief Scientist and the Fonds de recherche du Québec (FRQ) have taken numerous actions in recent years, particularly following the forum on researchers in the public sphere.

To work with the new generation of researchers on preserving the integrity of scientific information and helping attain the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Québec, the Chief Scientist and the FRQ have created a science communication grant program **for students**. The student community is invited to propose science communication projects

in digital form (video, podcast, blog, etc.) with the goal of engaging and communicating with 18- to 30-year-olds about SDGs.

Read about [funded REGARDS-SDG projects](#) and discover [the achievements of the program's recipients](#) (in French).

2. OBJECTIVES

Inspired by the [COVID Jeunes](#) pilot program conducted in 2020-2021 at the height of the health crisis, the objectives of the REGARDS-SDG program are to:

- Fight disinformation about SDGs;
- Mobilize young people on the importance of attaining SDGs in Québec;
- Contribute to attaining SDGs in Québec;
- Support young people in practical training and the management of science communication projects.

While we recognize the importance of the 17 SDGs, priority will be given to science communication projects related to the priority SDGs identified during the [day of reflection](#) held by the FRQ:

- SDG 3: Health and well-being
- SDG 4: Quality education
- SDG 10: Reducing inequality
- SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities
- SDG 13: Action to combat climate change.

By reflecting on issues of health and well-being, by looking at ways to ensure quality education for all, or by imagining a sustainable future for our cities and communities, successful students will establish a rich dialogue with other young people, leading to innovative actions through an original approach.

3. ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible, the lead applicant (identified in the "Applicant" section of the FRQnet form) must:

- Be enrolled in an undergraduate, master's or doctoral program;
- Attend a Québec educational institution, university-affiliated institution or research institution at the competition deadline;
- Include at least **one other student (co-applicant) enrolled in a college, undergraduate, master's or doctoral program** who is attending a Québec educational institution, university-affiliated institution or research institution at the competition deadline (identified in the "Co-Applicant" section of the FRQnet form). The student

co-applicant is co-leader of the project and shares equal responsibility for the conduct of the project with the applicant;

- Be supervised by a researcher (identified in the "Supervisor" section of the FRQnet form). It is strongly recommended that the supervisor have expertise related to the SDG(s) targeted by the project. The supervisor must have one of the following statuses as defined in the Common General Rules (CGR) of the FRQ:
    o Status 1: university researcher;
    o Status 2: clinical university researcher;
    o Status 3: college researcher.

In addition to providing scientific supervision, the supervisor agrees to review and co-sign the activity and financial reports prepared by the student project leader and submitted to the FRQ.

Not eligible:

- *Projects that are directly related to another source of funding, unless the support awarded under the REGARDS - SDG program would be used to achieve complementary objectives.*
- *Projects that are directly related to a project funded under the FRQ Postdoctoral Scholarship – Knowledge Mobilization Plan program (Société et culture sector) or the DIALOGUE program (any component).*

Important notes on team composition

- The team is also encouraged to work with other individuals who have expertise in science communication and individuals or organizations that can contribute to the outreach and dissemination of the digital project (influencers, artists, community groups, etc.).
- **All individuals identified in the application may participate in only one application** under this program, including student collaborators, but excluding service providers (e.g., influencers).

Project location

- If the grant is awarded, the applicant and co-applicant must carry out the project in Québec.

4. **APPLICATION PROCESS**

The electronic form is available in the FRQnet ePortfolio under "Available competitions, Program: Dissemination grants".
To access the form, you must select Santé (managing agency), regardless of the lead applicant's research sector.

4.1 Required documents

1- The electronic form including:

- A text of no more than five pages containing:
  - A project description in light of the objectives and evaluation criteria of this program including project stages and a timeframe (max. 2 pages). Be sure to describe and contextualize the SDG(s) that will be the subject of your project;
  - The team's motivation with regard to the targeted SDG(s) (max. 1/2 page);
  - A description and justification of the team composition and collaborators (max. 1/2 page);
  - The dissemination strategy including a precise description of the digital tools that will be used (max. 1 1/2 pages);
  - Anticipated reach and impact (max. 1/2 page). Be sure to specify how the audience of 18- to 30-year-olds will be reached.
- Identification of the researcher supervising the project in the "Supervisor" section. The supervisor will receive an email to complete and submit a consent form. **This step must be completed before the application deadline.**

2-Official transcripts for the current program of both the lead applicant **AND** the co-applicant, **combined in a single PDF document** (see notes in Section 4.2 for details).

3-The **abridged CVs** of the lead applicant **AND** the co-applicant (max. two pages each) prepared using the [presentation template](#).

The CV of the lead applicant should be attached in the "Other documents" section.

4-A **detailed budget with justification of expenditures** (max. 1 page; see the eligible expense categories in Section 6). The budget will be carefully analyzed by the committee. A budget devoted mainly to student salaries or the purchase of equipment could be viewed unfavourably. If necessary, the committee will make recommendations.

5-The **abridged CV of the researcher supervising the project** (identified in the "Supervision" section of the FRQnet form) prepared using the [presentation template](#) (max. 2 pages). This CV must be attached in the "Supervision" section of the FRQnet form.

IMPORTANT NOTE RELATED TO THE PROJECT

- Given the project's potential for outreach not only in Québec but internationally, and the objective of disseminating scientific knowledge to a wide audience, **the communication tools related to the project may be in a language other than French, provided that a French translation is provided (e.g., video subtitles).**

4.2 Important details related to official transcripts

Transcripts that are missing, incomplete, unofficial, uncertified or not up to date shall render the application ineligible.

A copy of all transcripts are required for all the applicant's academic studies, whether completed or not, including transcripts from exchange programs and courses (equivalencies), if applicable.

When no transcript is issued, attach:
- an explanatory letter from the institution (registrar's office or equivalent administrative body) detailing the reason(s) for the missing transcripts. The Fonds reserves the right to verify the admissibility of the reasons given;

Or

- When no transcript is issued and the applicant is unable to obtain a letter from the university, an explanatory letter from the applicant, signed by the department head of the host institution, justifying the absence of transcripts.

The transcripts and, if applicable, the explanatory letter explaining the grading system in effect, must be consolidated into a single scanned document in PDF format. They should be in vertical orientation and arranged in chronological order, starting with the most recent. Your document must not have any read protection or special configurations.
The elements that make a transcript official may differ from one academic institution to the other. Nevertheless, in order to be considered official by the Fonds, each transcript must:

- be issued by the relevant academic institution;

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- include elements that prove it is an official transcript from the academic institution, including the university seal and/or signature of the registrar and/or wording such as "official transcript", etc.

A WATERMARK does not render a transcript unofficial as long as the requirements specified above are met.

If there is any doubt as to the authenticity of a transcript, the Fonds reserves the right to confirm the information with the applicant and with the academic institution.

A transcript received in a sealed envelope from a registrar's office may be opened and scanned.

4.3 Important notes related to submitting applications

- All required documents must be included with the application for it to be considered eligible. Documents that are illegible or low-resolution and those that do not make it possible to determine eligibility will not be accepted.

- Official documents submitted in a language other than French or English must include a certified translation. Other documents submitted in a language other than French or English must be accompanied by a basic translation.

- No appendices or documents other than those required will be shared with the evaluation committee.

- Applications cannot be updated after the competition deadline.

5. <u>EVALUATION</u>

A mixed committee made up of researchers, research students and science communication specialists will evaluate the applications received. Given the diverse profiles of committee members, applicants are encouraged to present the project in such a way as to be easily understood.

Applications will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

Relevance and originality of the science communication project: 25%

- o Alignment with the program objectives;
- o Relevance of the digital media used to reach the target audience (likely to appeal to young people, attractiveness of the proposed format, platform with high deployment potential);
- o Innovative nature of the project (e.g., angle of approach, graphics processing, concept, etc.);
- o Quality and clarity of the proposal.

Team composition: 25%

- o Expertise in a field related to the SDG(s) targeted by the proposed project (in particular for the scientific supervisor) and the contribution of team members;
- o Experience in science communication and with individuals or organizations that can contribute to the outreach and dissemination of the digital project (influencers, artists, community groups, etc.);
- o Relevance of the proposed collaborators for the project.

Potential for outreach and impacts: 25%

- o Anticipated impacts (media coverage, interviews, visibility, anticipated number of people and audience reached, creation of tools, content lifespan);
- o Demonstration that the proposed project would not have gone ahead without the funding provided under this program, or at least that it generates science communication activities that go beyond existing activities.

Feasibility of the project with the means and resources available: 25%

- o Clear and appropriate project stages;
- o Realism of the timeframe;

o   Consistency of the project with the proposed budget and available resources.

6. DESCRIPTION AND NATURE OF FUNDING

6.1 Amount

- Successful applicants will receive a grant of up to $12,000, divided into two equal payments.
- This grant may be held concurrently with a training award (master's, doctoral, postdoctoral, etc.), but it **may not be held concurrently** with a DIALOGUE grant (any component).
- In line with the program objectives, the grant is paid directly to the funded students, who are responsible for the financial management of their project. The grant must be used to finance expenses that are directly related to the implementation of the project.

6.2 Eligible expense categories

Dissemination and knowledge transfer costs
- Costs of setting up, maintaining and promoting a digital platform (website, blog, YouTube channel, etc.).
- Costs related to the production and dissemination of videos (filming, editing, materials, etc.).
- Costs related to the production and promotion of popularized content (including social media advertising, partnerships with influencers, etc.).
- Science communication training.

Professional fees and compensation
- Science communication resource persons or service providers essential to the project.
- Stipend in the form of a bursary for student team members, up to a maximum of $2,000.

Travel and subsistence costs

- Travel expenses for the team (maximum 10% of the budget).

Not eligible:

- *Indirect costs of research for managing institutions affiliated with the lead applicant, co-applicant or supervisor.*
- *Remuneration of the researcher supervising the project.*

7. **REPORTING**

- Successful applicants will be required to participate in follow-up meetings with all grant holders under this program.
- After six months (mid-term) and at the end of the project, the lead applicant must produce financial and activity reports, have them approved by their supervisor, and submit them to the FRQ. The format of these reports will be communicated in due course. The second payment will be released after receipt of the mid-term report. **Supporting documents for expenses incurred may be requested at any time.**

8. **ANNOUNCEMENT OF RESULTS**

The results will be announced in April 2025.

For the conditions regarding the announcement and acceptance of awards, please refer to Section 5 of the CGR.

9. **CONTACT PERSON FOR THIS PROGRAM**

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