

## AUDACE – 2025-2026 Program Rules

Competition year: 2025-2026

Deadline (pre-application): September 18, 2024

Deadline (application): December 11, 2024

Amount: up to \$100,000 over 12 months, may be used over 24 months

Duration of funding: 1 year

Announcement of results: end of April 2025

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** The electronic form is available in the Fonds de recherche du Québec (FRQ) electronic Portfolio. To access the form, **you must select the Société et culture (managing agency) section**. The form is available under “Available competitions, Program: Research grants”.

### INTRODUCTION

This competition refers to the Common General Rules (CGR), which are applicable to all FRQ programs. Any conditions specific to the AUDACE program are indicated in this document and prevail over the CGR.

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### 1. BACKGROUND

Since its creation in 2017, the AUDACE program has aimed to stimulate disruptive research by bringing together disciplines that usually have very little interaction, combining them in unconventional ways at the heart of high-risk exploratory projects. It also seeks to encourage projects with the potential to radically transform research and creation and generate far-reaching changes to meet the complex challenges facing Québec society.

AUDACE is part of significant efforts made by Québec’s chief scientist to foster out-of-the-box research, focusing on intersectorality and bringing together disciplines and all spheres of society. In recent years, forums on research directions; periodic consultations with stakeholders from research, the public, private and political sectors and the artistic community; and the launch of a wide-ranging process of reflection on creativity and intersectorality have enabled the emergence of a community of bold scientists. Disciplines are becoming decompartmentalized and diverse contributions from outside academia are enriching fields of research and enabling us to rethink our society.

Inspired by a review meeting with the bold scientists who have been funded since the AUDACE program’s inception and the [major consultation on Arts-Sciences funding in 2023-2024](#), the Directorate of Societal Challenges and Intersectoral Networks (Direction des défis de société et des maillages intersectoriels; DSMI) wishes to update the program’s objectives, notably by:

- Opening up the notion of intersectorality to include bold interdisciplinarity, while continuing to focus on the quality of networks and co-construction processes and their impacts on research practices.

#### **INTERSECTORAL RESEARCH**

In addition to co-construction between researchers from at least two of the three broad sectors covered by the FRQ, intersectoral research also includes networking with other spheres of society and collaborative research approaches that mobilize non-academic environments. Artists, as well as people from practice, municipal, community or other backgrounds, contribute to research through professional knowledge, ecosystemic perspectives, experiential and cultural knowledge and know-how, thus contributing to the quality and relevance of the research.

Intersectorality continues to be a pillar for opening up novel research perspectives, inaugurating groundbreaking conceptual frameworks, improving processes, casting new light on complex phenomena to promote understanding, and providing innovative solutions to multidimensional issues.

However, the DGDS recognizes the multiplicity of bold approaches and groundbreaking alliances, both between sectors and within a given research sector. AUDACE will continue to encourage intersectorality while opening up to interdisciplinary co-construction.

This adjustment translates essentially into:

- Broader eligibility requirements for team composition;
- Modification of the evaluation criterion relating to the level of intersectorality to focus on network quality and the level of co-construction.

In addition, this edition of the program is part of a new funding trajectory. Projects launched under AUDACE can now hope to obtain follow-up funding under AUDACE Plus. Every two years, AUDACE serves as an exploratory springboard, and the following year, AUDACE Plus helps projects that have reached promising milestones to build on their bold momentum.

## 2. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

### 2.1. General objective

This program aims to support and promote the contributions of diversified research to Québec society through projects that push back the boundaries of disciplines and break away from or go beyond traditional approaches, thinking outside the box. For the purposes of this program, “boldness” refers to the ability of researchers and their projects to **challenge the paradigms and knowledge that delineate their respective scientific cultures and fields of research**: theories, processes, practices, hypotheses, methods, and even modes of thought. This program therefore encourages transformational proposals which, because of their unconventional nature, could have considerable impacts (high risk/high impact potential) of all kinds, be they scientific, social, economic, technological, cultural, artistic, aesthetic, or other. It can also serve as a test bed, paving the way for novel, alternative and unexpected avenues of research with great transformative potential.

### 2.2. Specific objectives

Specifically, through this program, the FRQ aim to:

- Encourage co-constructed, joint, integrated approaches whose mode of operation lies outside of the hierarchization of fields of knowledge;
- Encourage research projects at the crossroads of different and sectors and disciplines, as well as different practices and ecosystems generating diversified knowledge;
- Support projects that are risky, unconventional, or have a high level of interdisciplinary, intersectoral or inter-environment integration, making them difficult to fund by other means;
- Support research projects with the potential to create radically new knowledge.

## 3. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

### ATTENTION!

New: Project eligibility no longer depends on the intersectoral nature of the team submitting the application. Just like an intersectoral team, a team from a single research sector covered by the FRQ can demonstrate unexpected or unusual associations between disciplines and a project outside the box, thus meeting the program's vision, objectives and evaluation criteria and helping create radically new knowledge.

### 3.1 Team composition and eligibility requirements

In order to be eligible, a project must imperatively be headed by a team of at least two researchers with Status 1, 2 or 3 as defined in the CGR. The team may also include an unlimited number of co-investigators with Status 1, 2, 3 or 4 and collaborators.



**Cochercheuse ou cochercheur de statut:**



1  
Chercheur ou chercheuse universitaire

2  
Chercheur universitaire clinicien ou chercheuse universitaire clinicienne

3  
Chercheur ou chercheuse de collège

4  
a. Chercheur ou chercheuse d'un établissement gouvernemental reconnu par les FRQ;  
b. Chercheur ou chercheuse d'une organisation du secteur gouvernemental non reconnue par les FRQ ou privé;  
c. Personne des milieux de pratique;  
d. Artiste;  
e. Personne contribuant à titre individuel.



### 3.2 Roles in the research project

#### Principal investigator (responsible for the application)

Person who acts as scientific director of the project for which funding is requested. The principal investigator has administrative responsibility for the project, including correspondence with the FRQ, financial responsibility for the grant, and meeting reporting requirements.

#### Co-investigator

A co-investigator makes a significant contribution or brings specific expertise to the project and may be delegated to manage part of the funds.

#### Co-director (to be listed in the project description in the FRQnet form)

The nature of AUDACE projects is reflected in their diverse team structures, which are based on shared leadership in both project design and implementation. While there is no dedicated section in the FRQnet form for reporting this, the FRQ invite teams to use the designation "co-director" to formalize this type of role, adding the necessary information in the application text where appropriate.

For the purpose of this competition, the FRQ define a "co-director" as a person who is committed to making a significant contribution to the effective execution of project-related activities, including project management, and who also contributes to meeting reporting requirements.

In the case of projects involving co-construction with persons from non-academic environments, the designation of co-director is permitted and encouraged, in accordance with their anticipated involvement and the nature and requirements of the project.

#### **Person from a non-academic environment**

If a person from a non-academic environment is identified in the relevant section of the application, the person's role should be essential to the realization of the project, providing:

- Theoretical, practical, technical, traditional, cultural or experiential knowledge;
- A thorough understanding of the ecosystem surrounding the project;
- A significant contribution to the entire co-construction process.

#### **Collaborator**

The research team may also include collaborators who bring specific expertise to the project for which funding is requested.

### **3.3 Participation in more than one project**

**A researcher may submit only one (1) application as a principal investigator to this competition.** A principal investigator may, however, participate in other applications as a co-investigator or collaborator.

**It is not possible to submit the same application in both AUDACE and AUDACE International.** The team must choose the competition that best suits the project presented.

## **4. PRE-APPLICATION PROCESS**

The principal investigator must submit a pre-application, which is evaluated by a relevance committee in light of the program's objectives (Section 2) and evaluation criteria (Section 6.1). Following this relevance review, pre-selected teams will be invited to submit a full application.

We invite applicant teams to refer to the documents provided in the Toolbox of the program web page to assist them in completing their application correctly.

### **4.1 Electronic form**

The electronic form is available in the [FRQ electronic Portfolio](#). To access the form, **you must select the Société et culture (managing agency) section**. The form is available under "Available competitions, Program: Research grants".

### **4.2 Documents to be attached to the electronic form**

The principal investigator must submit the following documents:

- A text of up to three (3) pages including the following points, in this order:
  - a project description addressing the program objectives and the evaluation criteria;
  - a paragraph describing the co-construction process that led the team to submit a pre-application;
  - a paragraph describing the composition of the team and each member's contribution.
- The abridged CV (academic) of the principal investigator and co-investigator(s), prepared in accordance with the presentation rules provided [here](#) (maximum 2 pages for each CV);
- The abridged CV (non-academic) of practitioners, artists and individual contributors, where applicable, prepared in accordance with the presentation rules provided [here](#) (maximum 2 pages for each CV).

## 5. APPLICATION PROCESS

Only those applicants whose letters of intent receive a favorable review from the relevance committee will be invited to apply. Recommended applicants will receive an e-mail inviting them to complete and submit an electronic application form along with the required supporting documents.

### 5.1 Electronic form

#### ATTENTION!

It is expected that the team composition may be expanded between the pre-application and application stages. However, to preserve the integrity of the preselection process, withdrawing members from the team should be avoided.

### 5.2 Documents to be attached to the electronic form

The principal investigator who submits the application form must include the following required documents:

- A text of up to three (3) pages including the following points, in this order:
  - a project description addressing the program objectives and the evaluation criteria;
  - a paragraph describing the co-construction process that led the team to submit a pre-application;
  - a paragraph describing the composition of the team and each member's contribution.
- The abridged CV (academic) of the principal investigator and co-investigator(s), prepared in accordance with the presentation rules provided [here](#) (maximum 2 pages for each CV);
- The abridged CV (non-academic) of practitioners, artists and individual contributors, where applicable, prepared in accordance with the presentation rules provided [here](#) (maximum 2 pages for each CV).

- A budget and up to one (1) page of budget justifications.

### 5.3 Digital document

- A digital accompanying document describing the project, its co-construction or its leaders. The choice of content is left up to the applicant, but its duration should not exceed 3 minutes (180 seconds). The following formats are accepted:
  - a video or audio recording;
  - an animated presentation (e.g. PowerPoint) with a maximum of 10 slides.

**This document must be identified** as follows: *APPLICANT'S NAME-APPLICATION NUMBER* and sent to the FRQ (link will be available soon).

### ATTENTION!

Applicants are requested to submit their accompanying document only once, in its final version. In case of duplicate transmission resulting from a manipulation error, the most recent version will be considered for evaluation.

### 5.4 Frequency of the competition

The competition is offered every two years, alternating with AUDACE Plus.

## 6. EVALUATION

### 6.1 Evaluation committee

Pre-applications and applications will be evaluated by committees whose members are recognized for their skills, expertise and achievements related to the program's objectives and the submitted applications. **Given the diverse profiles of committee members, applicants are encouraged to present the project in such a way as to be easily understood by an intersectoral committee.**

### 6.2 Evaluation criteria

The evaluation criteria are as follows:

#### 1 – Network quality (40 points)

- Level of co-construction
- Level of integration between sectors, disciplines, environments or practices

The notion of research networking refers to a collaborative approach that seeks to shed new light on common or shared research issues by bringing together a team with multiple different perspectives to work on a given topic in an integrated fashion. Members strive to broaden their horizons by exploring new ideas and practices. It goes beyond the simple combination or juxtaposition of several disciplines, sectors or environments.

The level of integration takes into account the history of collaboration between research disciplines and sectors and strategies for bringing together disciplines that are generally quite distinct or unlikely to work together.

## **2 – Potential for disruptive innovation or unconventional and innovative nature of the project (40 points)**

The potential for disruption or the unconventional nature of the project lies in its ability to go beyond the boundaries of what is known and significantly challenge the foundations, knowledge and practices that govern a field of research and the approaches and methods used to study the research topic. The proposal is expected to break away from traditional frameworks and standards to produce radically new knowledge of a theoretical, epistemological, methodological, aesthetic, artistic, ecosystemic, organizational or technological nature.

## **3 - Transformative potential and scope of the anticipated impacts (20 points)**

The notion of “impacts” is to be understood in its broadest sense, but must nevertheless be framed within the context of a project with high impact potential. The transformative impacts should benefit all the research fields and practices involved, both academic and non-academic, as well as Québec society. Impacts may be scientific, social, economic, technological, cultural, aesthetic or other in nature.

In all cases, the impacts of the project, as envisaged, must be considerable in the event of success.

To be recommended for funding, an application must receive an overall score of 70% or higher.

## **7. IMPORTANT DATES AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF RESULTS**

- **July 9, 2024:** Competition and pre-application form published online
- **July 23, 2024 from 10:00 to 11:00 EST:** Information webinar (in French); registration is compulsory. [Click here](#) to register (the webinar will be recorded and available in the Toolbox on the program’s web page)
- **September 18, 2024 at 16:00 EST:** Deadline for pre-application
- **Early November 2024:** Pre-selected teams invited to submit an application
- **December 11, 2024 at 16:00 EST:** Deadline for application
- **End of February 2025:** Selected teams invited for an interview
- **March 2025:** Interviews and presentation before an international committee
- **End of April 2025:** Announcement of results



## **8. DESCRIPTION AND NATURE OF FUNDING**

Funding consists of a grant of up to \$100,000 over a period of 12 months. However, the grant may be budgeted and used over a 24-month period.

Indirect research costs, equivalent to 27% of the budget awarded, are used by the institutions managing the award and are paid directly to them.

In accordance with the program objectives, the grant must be used to cover expenses directly related to the implementation of the project. All budget items listed in the CGR are eligible (Section 8 of the CGR).

Also eligible:

- Support for project coordination and management, given the focus on networking and co-construction.

### **ATTENTION!**

If the project involves stakeholders from non-academic environments, the budget is expected to provide for fees or compensation to enable them to contribute fully and in keeping with their role in the project.

## **9. FOLLOW-UP AND REPORTING**

In accordance with the CGR, grant holders are required to complete and submit a final report, available in their FRQnet electronic Portfolio, by March 31 following the end of the grant utilization period.

In addition, in the interest of promoting the impacts of the projects funded under this program, teams must contribute, on invitation, to events such as forums, conferences and follow-up or transfer activities organized by the FRQ. The FRQ also encourage funding recipients to carry out and take part in knowledge mobilization activities for practice communities and the general public, whenever such activities are relevant.

## **10. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

For projects co-constructed with diverse stakeholders who may have intellectual property requirements to consider, it is advisable to address this issue upstream of the project and refer to policies in force in research management institutions as well as policies recognized by non-academic environments.

Here are some guiding principles for this program with regard to the joint creation of new knowledge and intellectual property:

- Grant researchers the right to use the fruits of their research for non-commercial purposes in their teaching or subsequent research activities;
- Stimulate the creation of new knowledge in a spirit of open innovation based on open-access knowledge and the sharing of results for the collective improvement of a field of research or a sector of activity.

Any potential conflict of interest should be declared and managed in advance where possible. The aim of the research must not be the personal enrichment of team members.

## **11. OPEN ACCESS**

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

## **12. EFFECTIVE DATE**

These rules apply to the 2025-2026 fiscal year.