Fonds de recherche Québec

ENGAGE – 2026-2027

Année de concours : **2026-2027**

Date limite (pré-demande) : **11 novembre 2025 à 16 h (EST)**

Date limite (demande) : **12 mars 2026 à 16 h (EST)**

Annonce des résultats : **Mai 2026**

Montant : **Maximum par Phase : Démarrage, 15 000 $; Action, 30 000 $; Partage, 15 000 $**

Durée du financement : **1 an par phase, maximum 3 ans**

IMPORTANT NOTES

For the full version of the program rules, please refer to the French version of this page by selecting the language option in the top menu. It is also possible to access all our program rules through the program calendar of la Direction des grands défis de société**.**

In the event of a discrepancy between the English and French content of this program, the French version prevails.

If you are a citizen and would like more information, please visit the ENGAGE citizen page (in French only).

Submission of the Citizen Question is equivalent to pre-application under this program and must be done before a complete application can be submitted (see the steps in Section 4.1). The deadline to submit question was 11th of November 2025.

For administrative reasons, the researcher is responsible for submitting the application on behalf of the Duo. The application form will be available as of November 13, 2025 in your FRQnet electronic portfolio. Once logged in, click on "Old FRQnet portal" and **select the Nature et technologies section**, regardless of the research sector related to the application. The form will be available under "Available competitions: Research grants".

As Citizen Questions are submitted, they will be published on the FRQ Citizen Questions page (in French only). After identifying a question on a topic of mutual interest, researchers are invited to express their interest in forming a Duo with a citizen by contacting the FRQ at Engagement.gds@frq.gouv.qc.ca.

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.

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1-Background

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

For the purposes of the ENGAGE Program, the FRQ uses 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 considers 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 allows Duos to hold various types of dissemination activities, especially with the general public, aimed at sharing their experiences and findings and the new knowledge generated by their project.

See the funded citizen science projects from previous years.

2. Objectives

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

- To initiate citizens who are largely or completely unfamiliar with the scientific process and actively involve them in research activities related to 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:

1 – Startup phase (1 year): up to $15,000
2 – Action phase (1 year): up to $30,000
3 – Sharing phase (1 year): up to $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 learns about the citizen perspective. This phase involves:

- 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 7), 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 7), 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 the Duo's experiences and 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 who is largely or completely unfamiliar with research
  AND
- A researcher.

Each individual can only be part of **one Duo** and thus can only participate in **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.

Important! 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 8).

3.1. Eligibility of the citizen

To be eligible for the ENGAGE program, a citizen must submit a Question to the program before the pre-application deadline (see Section 9) by completing the short online form (the deadline was 11th of November 2025) 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 master's or 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 be currently working or have worked in a professional or technical position performing tasks related to research activities in a research institution, private company or public organization (e.g. research professional, laboratory technician), nor as a university lecturer;

8- Never have been convicted of a fraudulent offence related to financial management.

Role

For the purposes of this program, the FRQ defines "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.

Important note: The ENGAGE program is a science culture program intended for citizens who are largely or completely unfamiliar with the scientific process (see points 4 to 7 listed above). The level of familiarity is taken into account during eligibility assessment and evaluation of the application, specifically for the "Potential for learning the scientific method" criterion (Section 5).

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.** Only the portion of the funding used to pay the stipend for the citizen member of the Duo can be entrusted to the managing organization (see Section 6). 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.

The citizen may or may not have an employment relationship with 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 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 (the deadline was 11th of November 2025). An individual may submit only one Question under this competition.

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.

How to form a Duo

- Researchers can **contact** citizens whose Questions are published on the FRQ website through the program manager (see Section 10).

- 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 only be part of 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.

NOTE: The Plan prepared jointly by the Duo should be written in clear, accessible language that takes into account the diverse backgrounds of evaluation committee members (see Section 5).

See Section 3.6 of the 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 electronic portfolio. Once logged in, click on "Old FRQnet portal" and **select the Nature et technologies section**, regardless of the applicant's

research sector. The form will be available under "Available competitions: Research grants". 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 electronic portfolio, including:

1. **The Plan, a text of up to 3 pages** which is directly and explicitly related 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.

Note: The FRQ will contact the citizen member of the Duo after the application is submitted to obtain their consent to participate in the program. Evaluation of the application is conditional on obtaining this consent.

Other documents to attach in the electronic form:

2. **A text of up to one 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 6). They must also specify the terms of financial compensation for the citizen if this is in a form other than a stipend.

6. ***Required only if the grant is awarded, and to be submitted directly by the citizen to the FRQ (secure space provided for this purpose):*** 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. ***Required only if the grant is awarded, and to be submitted directly by the citizen to the FRQ (secure space provided for this purpose):*** 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 (dated three months or less before the competition deadline).

8. The following may also be attached to the application, if applicable:
    - A **letter of commitment from the managing organization** chosen by the Duo to manage the funds used to pay the stipend for the citizen (optional, see Section 3.3) and justification of the choice of this 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 soon as possible to the program manager (see the Contact section).
- Citizens may request the withdrawal of their Question at any time by contacting the program manager (see Section 10).

- 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 assigns the evaluation of eligible applications to a committee whose members are recognized for their skills, expertise and achievements in citizen science related to the program's objectives. The committee includes citizens who have been familiarized with the process and trained to serve on the committee.

5.2 Evaluation criteria

The evaluation criteria are as follows:

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

- Proposed synthesis of available knowledge and identification of knowledge and data gaps related to the Citizen Question;
- 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):

- Profile of the citizen (level of familiarity with research and the scientific method);
- Involvement of the citizen member of the Duo in the design, co-construction and implementation of the Plan, and the added value of their contribution to the project;
- Learning objectives for the citizen and the means implemented to achieve them;
- Planned scientific support and guidance of the citizen;

- Number and frequency of planned exchanges between the members of the Duo.

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

For phases 2 and 3, funding is allocated following an annual meeting and based on the recommendation of the monitoring committee (see Section 7).

In addition, indirect costs of research (FIR) of 27% are paid to the researcher's managing institution with the exception of the funds designated to pay 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**.

Other eligible expenses:

- Stipend for the citizen member of the Duo (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.

  Please note: given their role in the project (see Section 3.1), citizens cannot be remunerated through student support (student awards of any kind) or according to established pay scales and conditions for remunerating qualified persons to perform professional or technical tasks related to the research activities.
- 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.
- Scholarship or scholarship supplement and salary support for college, undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral students. This scholarship may not exceed $5,000.

  Please note: student contributions to the project are permitted as a means of acquiring skills and knowledge in citizen science. However, it must be clearly demonstrated in the budget justifications that this expenditure goes beyond support for already planned research work and that it is not used to pay a training award for students.

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 is 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 to a monitoring committee 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 in due course. Funding for the subsequent phase is granted upon favourable recommendation by this committee.

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 if 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. Other considerations

8.1 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.

8.2 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.

8.3 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's open access policy for the dissemination of research (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 invites 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.

9. Important dates and announcement of results

- Submission of Questions (pre-application deadline): **until November 11, 2025 at 16:00 (EST)**
- Creation of Duos: from the time the Question is online until the application deadline.
- Availability of application form: as of **November 13, 2025**
- Application deadline: **March 12, 2026 at 16:00 (EST)**
- Announcement of results: **May 2026**

10. Questions?

Contact the FRQ at Engagement.gds@frq.gouv.qc.ca.