2015 Pan-Canadian Consultation

Summary Report and Action Plan

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In the fall of 2015, after the April Federal Budget announcement of $1.33 billion allocated to the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) — the largest one-time investment in our history — and after an agreement was signed with the Government of Canada in September, the CFI undertook one of its most comprehensive pan-Canadian consultations ever. This consultation highlighted the community's ongoing commitment and continued interest in ensuring our funding architecture:

a) Remains relevant to Canada's research community,
b) Meets the needs of the full spectrum of institutions across the country, and
c) Is well-positioned to respond to and address evolving and emerging needs of the Canadian research community.

It also provided us with an opportunity to seek input on a few key strategic issues of importance to the research community and other CFI stakeholders.

The process

In late September, we published a discussion paper on our website about CFI's funding architecture to help stimulate reflection for thought-provoking discussions with institutions, researchers and stakeholders. The paper presented some observations and raised a series of key questions and core issues.

The pan-Canadian consultation included:

- 17 town hall meetings involving nearly 500 participants from 85 different institutions;
- meetings with representatives from nine provinces;
- 14 meetings and teleconferences with institutions, associations and stakeholder organizations;
- 48 formal written submissions from CFI-eligible institutions, organizations and individuals.

Appendix 1 provides a full list of the associations and stakeholder groups that met with the CFI, and the list of formal written submissions received. Over the past several weeks, the CFI has reviewed with great interest each of the submissions and meeting reports, and proceeded to undertake a careful analysis and synthesis of the suggestions, ideas and thoughts shared with us. This document provides a summary of the common themes and issues raised by our stakeholders, key messages, and an action plan based on the suggestions and ideas proposed as part of the consultation. We have already acted on several suggestions and plan to implement a number of others in the coming months. A number of other suggestions will require more time and analysis, and may find their way in our new strategic roadmap and advocacy strategy.

The outcome

As mentioned in the December 2015 *VP update*, there are four overarching messages to be taken from the 2015 pan-Canadian consultation:

- Overall, the CFI funding architecture continues to be well-aligned with the needs of institutions and their researchers. We received a number of valuable suggestions for improvements to our funds, policies and application forms which we will carefully review and act on accordingly.
- We should continue to explore ways to minimize application, review and administrative burden, including streamlining and simplifying proposal requirements and relying on institutions to confirm that the proposals are well-aligned with their strategic research plan.
- We should consider ways to maximize the impact of the John R. Evans Leaders Fund as a key strategic tool to build and enhance research capacity for the full spectrum of institutions across the country.
- Through continued interaction and consultation, we must collectively continue to be alert to emerging trends and changes in our environment that present opportunities (and threats) to further strengthen and secure Canada's research and innovation leadership. This includes the desire to see the CFI working even more closely with the three federal granting agencies (the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), and Genome Canada.

What we heard

The following summary provides an overview of the key messages and ideas that were shared with the CFI over the past few months. There is an even larger number of suggestions and ideas that are not captured below, but which we have shared and discussed with key CFI staff. CFI will act on many of these suggestions; others go beyond our remit, or the limits of our funding agreement with the Government of Canada, but, where we can, we will share them with the relevant granting agencies and CFI stakeholders for their consideration.

1. ON APPLICATION, REVIEW AND ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

On application requirements

Many indicated that the CFI application requirements were reasonable and not too onerous, but agreed that simplifying requirements that minimize redundancies and duplication should be explored as long as applicants have sufficient space to fully address all assessment criteria. The consensus was that the application requirements should reflect the size and complexity of the

proposal as they relate to different CFI funds, and that for more modest funding requests, application requirements could be further streamlined.

CFI should find ways to simplify the CV process and improve the interface between the CFI CV and the Common CV (CCV). More specifically, the CFI should reconsider the need to require supplementary information in addition to the CCV information imported to the CFI CV module on the CFI Awards Management System (CAMS). We were also encouraged to maintain a CFI CV option, particularly for non-Canadian principal users named on proposals who should not be required to create a CCV profile. There were a few suggestions encouraging the CFI to adopt the two-page bio-sketch, a CV approach that is now used by a growing number of international funding agencies.

On institutions' strategic research plans

Strategic research plans remain a key tool for institutions to identify and select proposals to be submitted to the CFI. It is, above all, a responsibility of the institutions to ensure that all proposals submitted to the CFI are aligned with their strategic priorities. There was a strong consensus that "fit with strategic research plan" should not be an element of the merit review, but should be evident (or not) in the proposal as demonstrated through the institutional track record and past and future commitments in the area of the proposal.

Furthermore, the CFI was encouraged to allow institutions the choice to submit either the five page summary or the full version of their strategic research plans.

On the sharing of good practices, misconceptions and the CFI Awards Management System

Many institutions have asked the CFI to continue to enhance the dissemination and sharing of good practices in all areas of CFI institutional activity: proposal development, internal selection processes, award finalization, monitoring and reporting, and institutional CFI-related policies. Interestingly, there also remain a number of misconceptions regarding our guidelines and policies. These provide us with an opportunity to continue to work with institutions to share good practices and help dispel some of these enduring misconceptions. Finally, we received a few suggestions to see whether any improvements can be made to improve the efficiency of the CFI's amendment module in CAMS.

On the consultation process with Compute Canada for CFI award conditions

There is strong support for maintaining the consultative approach with Compute Canada for proposals requesting advanced research computing infrastructure. Institutions and researchers recognize the added value of the advice and guidance provided through this consultation process. However, the CFI was encouraged to explore ways to expedite and streamline the post-award administrative process to determine the most appropriate location and operating arrangement for advanced research computing infrastructure, commonly referred to as the "Compute Canada condition".

2. ON OUR FUNDS

On the Innovation Fund

Overall, institutions and CFI stakeholders are pleased with the design and delivery of the Innovation Fund. The ability to propose ambitious institutional and multi-institutional initiatives, with an emphasis on collaboration has broad support in the research community. The ability for the CFI to announce the timing of future competition(s) was seen by institutions as critical for planning and proposal development purposes.

In particular, the recognition of all collaborating institutions rather than only the lead institution, and the opportunity to request additional funding for administrative costs for multi-institutional proposals was very positively received by all CFI stakeholders in the last competition. Some questioned whether technology development proposals fare well in the Innovation Fund competition and suggested the CFI could enhance its guidelines to reviewers to ensure these proposals are properly assessed. Opinions regarding exclusions to the application envelopes to encourage national or multi-institutional proposals were split; many felt that using part of the institutional envelope was a clear demonstration of commitment to the proposal.

Smaller institutions recognized that a significant proportion of the proposals they submit under the Innovation Fund focus on building their institutional research capacity, and thus are not necessarily well aligned with the Innovation Fund objectives. Collaboration via multi-institutional initiatives was also viewed very positively. Small institutions stressed the importance of including a smaller institution perspective in the merit review process. The vast majority of small institutions suggested that the preferred mechanism for their specific research infrastructure needs lies with the John R. Evans Leaders Fund, and that any enhancement to this fund that would accelerate their ability to build institutional research capacity would be desirable.

It was also suggested that the institutional cover letter could include a description of the internal decision making process to identify the Innovation Fund proposals submitted in the 2017 competition. More specifically, it would allow the CFI to better estimate the total number and quality of proposals (submitted and not submitted) to the Innovation Fund. This would provide invaluable insight to support our advocacy efforts for stable and predictable funding for the CFI.

On the John R. Evans Leaders Fund

The John R. Evans Leaders Fund generated the most comments and feedback during the consultation. Many institutions shared with the CFI how they use this fund to attract and retain their best researchers, and many described their internal policies and processes. The majority of institutions use the John R. Evans Leaders Fund for both attraction and retention purposes, but a growing number of (smaller) institutions indicated that this fund is being increasingly used for retention purposes only or to support Canada Research Chairs, mainly from the lack of new faculty hires in recent years and their limited John R. Evans Leaders Fund envelopes. Some institutions maintain a policy of using this fund for attraction purposes only, or use it solely to

support their Canada Research Chairs. The CFI was encouraged to keep the John R. Evans Leaders Fund as flexible as possible; several suggestions were made on how to enhance its flexibility so that it can be more effectively used as a strategic tool to build and enhance institutional research capacity.

All institutions welcomed the news of increased funding to the John R. Evans Leaders Fund as a result of the 2015 Federal Budget allocation to the CFI. A few institutions suggested the CFI create separate dedicated allocations from this fund for Canada Research Chairs (CRCs), Canada Excellence Research Chairs (CERCs) and Canada First Research Excellence Fund (CFREF) awards. The CFI believes that the significant increase in John R. Evans Leaders Fund funding (47 percent increase) will provide institutions with the flexibility they seek to address the needs of CRCs, CERCs and CFREF awards. The feedback on the proposed changes to minimum and maximum requests from the John R. Evans Leaders Fund was generally positive, but cautioned that raising the minimum request could create some barriers to more modest yet strategic investments. There were even a few suggestions that the CFI allow institutions the ability to use a small portion of their allocation from this fund to acquire inexpensive equipment without undergoing merit review. **The John R. Evans Leaders Fund is not a small equipment fund**.

Many institutions proposed that the guidelines for this fund be expanded to allow institutional or even multi-institutional proposals for critical research infrastructure that serve larger groups of researchers. In many cases, these were characterized as foundational capacity-building infrastructure, commonly referred to as “workhorses.” The acquisition of new “workhorses,” or the upgrading or replacement of aging “workhorses,” which are viewed as being less compelling or competitive in Innovation Fund competitions, was seen as a critical improvement to the John R. Evans Leaders Fund by a large proportion of institutions, big and small. In light of the small proportion of funding they receive under the Innovation Fund, this was seen as critical for smaller institutions.

Institutions also recommended that the CFI continue to monitor tri-council funding of John R. Evans Leaders Fund awardees and any emerging trends.

Several institutions recommended that the CFI provide a clear definition of attraction and retention under this fund, and perhaps reinstate the check boxes in the application form to better track the two types of candidates.

<u>On the Major Science Initiatives Fund</u>

There were several recommendations to make the Major Science Initiatives Fund more flexible with respect to the 40/60 funding formula. While the matching funding requirements may work well for some national research facilities, a greater degree of flexibility would allow the CFI to better tailor the support for all national research facilities given their different funding and business models. Some institutions encouraged the CFI to create a travel/access grant to cover

costs to send students to national research facilities supported through this fund; at the same time, institutions recognize this falls outside the CFI's mandate.

On the College-Industry Innovation Fund

Colleges, cégeps and polytechnic institutes are pleased that the CFI will be holding annual competitions under the College-Industry Innovation Fund for the next four to five years, enabling them to properly plan and grow their applied research and development portfolio of activities. Additionally, there is strong agreement to collectively foster the development of communities of practice and encourage networks in specific domains of applied research where clusters of awards have been made. Given that some institutions are quickly growing and expanding their applied research activities and expertise, the CFI was encouraged to consider removing the limit of one application per competition under Stream 1. Interestingly, the CFI was also encouraged to consider decoupling the CFI component from the Stream 2 joint CFI-College and Community Innovation proposal, delaying the submission of the CFI component by up to a month to allow more time for institutions to prepare quality proposals. Decoupling the two components defeats the purpose of a joint proposal. Finally, the CFI believes that the Innovation Fund remains the most appropriate opportunity for colleges who are considering or developing more ambitious projects, which may include multi-institutional initiatives with other colleges or universities.

On the Infrastructure Operating Fund

Sustainability and ongoing operational support for research infrastructure continues to be a key challenge for institutions. Many have suggested a significant increase to the Infrastructure Operating Fund allocation, the most common suggestion being to double it from 30 percent to 60 percent of the CFI contribution. This would represent approximately 24 percent of the overall research infrastructure award. Aligning the eligibility guidelines of the Infrastructure Operating Fund and the Major Science Initiatives Fund would also be a welcome improvement.

On the Cyberstructure Initiative Challenge 1 proposals (research data infrastructure projects)

Some confusion persists on the appropriate mechanism for proposals seeking to develop and build research data infrastructures, and whether these a) are eligible, and b) should be submitted under the Innovation Fund or the Cyberinfrastructure Initiative Challenge 1 competition. While research data infrastructure projects are eligible under both funds, their aims and characteristics are different. In particular, the Challenge 1 proposals require a larger reach as they seek to bring together large consortia of researchers, something that is not an explicit requirement for the Innovation Fund. Many suggestions were received about how the CFI could help research consortia by supporting research data planning efforts to ensure their proposals are sufficiently mature and competitive.

3. ON STRATEGIC ISSUES

On funding architecture

A hallmark of the CFI has been its simple funding architecture and its small suite of funding mechanisms. We were encouraged to resist the urge to create more and more "boutique funding mechanisms."

On operating support for regional facilities

The sustainability and ongoing operational support of regional facilities and platforms that serve a larger and more diverse community of users remains an ongoing challenge for institutions. While these facilities maximize the effective use and sharing of research infrastructure, some require operating and maintenance (O&M) support that goes beyond the capacity of a single institution. We have received many suggestions over the past few years to extend the Major Science Initiatives Fund model to include regional facilities that have significant operating needs, and this was again the case in the 2015 pan-Canadian consultation. Although some regional facilities are managed quite successfully under an institutional consortia model, many institutions see a role for the CFI in providing some O&M support for these facilities.

On institutional core facilities

Over the past few years, a rapidly growing number of institutions have implemented institutional core facilities and developed formal designation and supporting policies to offer broader access to state-of-the-art services, facilities and technologies by co-locating research infrastructure or by centralizing its management and operation. These efficiencies — economies of scale, developing in-house maintenance capabilities and securing the availability of skilled operators — translate into the research infrastructure being sustained over its useful lifetime.

While the opinions on whether the CFI should play a more active role in supporting the ongoing operational costs of core facilities were divided, the CFI was strongly encouraged to incorporate greater flexibility in its funding architecture (i.e. John R. Evans Leaders Fund) to enable the acquisition, upgrade and replacement of research infrastructure in core facilities, often referred to as "workhorses." We also heard that we should consider enhancing our Research Facilities Navigator to include a section for core (and regional) facilities.

On other strategic issues

A number of other strategic issues were raised which generally fell in one of four recurring themes:

1. CFI must continue to find ways to work even more closely with the other federal granting agencies (NSERC, SSHRC, CIHR and Genome Canada) and other research stakeholders. In particular, the growing data-intensiveness of research requires a

collective plan that can only be properly addressed by all granting agencies working together.

2. The CFI should explore ways to further enhance Canada's presence and profile on the world-stage. Some have suggested a dedicated "International Fund," while others point to mechanisms designed to facilitate Canadian participation and leadership in global research initiatives that are quite often underpinned and enabled by large-scale research infrastructure.

3. There is renewed interest and growing need to re-engage in broader research and research infrastructure planning exercises beyond the institutional level. A number of research communities (such as arctic, marine, genomics, digital humanities) are expressing a desire to develop longer range plans, recognizing both the value and the need, and that the time is right to undertake such exercises. With growing support and calls for Canada to develop a Big Science framework and roadmap, such long range planning exercises represent a critical first step. This presents an excellent opportunity for the CFI and other federal granting agencies to work closely together.

4. For research infrastructure with a short useful life, such as advanced research computing infrastructure, the CFI should give serious consideration to the concept of "Infrastructure as a service (IaaS)", where it may make more sense to buy services than acquire the infrastructure.

The action plan

The CFI has carefully considered the feedback, suggestions and ideas collected during this consultation. We purposely timed the launch of the 2016 College-Industry Innovation Fund and the 2017 Innovation Fund to take into account the findings of this exercise. We are pleased to report that we have already incorporated some of the suggestions on application and review requirements for both competitions. Several suggestions were made and ideas proposed that will require more careful consideration and planning before they can be implemented. A number of interesting suggestions were made to help us shape our future directions and which will be tremendously helpful in defining our advocacy strategy in the coming years. Finally, some suggestions we received go beyond our mandate or outside the parameters of our agreement with the Government of Canada; while the CFI may not be able to act on these, there are opportunities for us to share these with other CFI stakeholders, most notably with federal funding agency partners and the federal government.

Immediately, the CFI will:

- Streamline and reduce application requirements where feasible. For instance, the streamlining of aspects to address in College-Industry Innovation Fund proposals will result in a significant reduction in proposal length. We will also streamline requirements for the 2017 Innovation Fund proposals, tailored to their size and complexity.
- Eliminate the need for strategic research plans as part of the merit review process. Rather, the CFI will require that institutions, at the time of submission, confirm that their proposals fit with their strategic research plan. The CFI will ask reviewers to assess whether the evidence provided for institutional track record and commitments represents a tangible demonstration of institutional priority.
- Allow institutions to submit either the five-page summary or the full version of their strategic research plan for the Innovation Fund competition.
- Investigate options for streamlining the CV requirements, and implement the best available option in time for the 2017 Innovation Fund competition. However, because of the wide-ranging implications of the bio-sketch option proposed, it will not be considered in the short term.
- Streamline the administrative process to resolve CFI "Compute Canada" award conditions more expeditiously.
- **For the 2017 Innovation Fund competition**, maintain and enhance opportunities for multi-institutional initiatives by providing large application envelopes that enable institutions to participate in such initiatives. Accordingly, we will not incorporate envelope exclusions for national projects. We will also convene one or more multidisciplinary assessment committees to exclusively review proposals from smaller institutions. We will also ensure that reviewer guidelines are reflective of the assessment of proposals across the spectrum of R&D activities including technology development. Finally, we will clarify the eligibility of research data infrastructure projects under the Innovation Fund.
- Take stock of lessons learned in the inaugural Challenge 1 competition for research data infrastructure projects under the Cyberinfrastructure Initiative. This involves reconsidering the timeline for the second Challenge 1 competition to provide all project proponents and research consortia more time to properly plan and fully develop these pan-Canadian initiatives.

Over the next year, the CFI will:

- **For the John R. Evans Leaders Fund (JELF 2017-20 allocation)**, examine ways to further enhance its use as a strategic capacity-building tool for all institutions, with a particular emphasis on how smaller institutions can best build and enhance their research capacity through this fund. This includes carefully considering whether proposals for the acquisition, upgrading or replacement of "workhorse" infrastructure that support larger groups of researchers should be eligible under this fund.

- We will work closely with the Tri-Council regarding the issues raised about the growing difficulty of securing funding for small inexpensive research tools and equipment. Additionally, we will streamline application and CV requirements, and examine ways to maximize the dynamic management of institutional envelopes. We will continue to actively monitor trends in the use of the John R. Evans Leaders Fund and the profile of both funded and unfunded candidates.
- Explore various mechanisms to promote the sharing of good practices (and dispelling CFI misconceptions), including better use of the CFI's website and more proactive dissemination methods. As part of this effort, the CFI has recently announced that it will extend its monitoring visits to smaller institutions starting in 2016.
- Consider how the CAMS project amendment module can be improved and, where feasible, simplified.
- Consider the need for, and impact of, increasing the application limit (from one to two) per competition under the College-Industry Innovation Fund. We will explore ideas and mechanisms to foster communities of practice and networks in areas of large clusters of awards, working with the Tri-Council's College and Community Innovation Program partners and stakeholder organizations such as Colleges and Institutes Canada, Polytechnics Canada and the Association pour la recherche au collégial
- As part of the institutional cover letter for Innovation Fund proposals, request that institutions provide us with a description of the internal process guiding institutional policies for Innovation Fund proposal identification, development and selection.
- Give careful consideration to the concept of Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) for research infrastructure with a short useful life, such as advanced research computing.
- Consider potential improvements to the Infrastructure Operating Fund, including better alignment between it and Major Science Initiatives Fund eligible costs.
- Share with relevant stakeholders and other funding agencies the ideas and suggestions received which fall outside the CFI's mandate or go beyond the parameters of the CFI's agreement with the Government of Canada.
- Work closely with other funding agencies, institutions and stakeholder organizations (such as Compute Canada, CANARIE, the Leadership Council for Digital Infrastructure and Research Data Canada) on the emerging challenges and opportunities of data-intensive and computationally-intensive research and research infrastructure, research data planning and other elements of a proposed national digital research infrastructure strategy.

Over the next two years, the CFI will:

- Work with key stakeholders to secure predictable and stable CFI funding, particularly to enable institutions to better plan and develop their initiatives, and allow their funding partners to better plan and align their ability to support CFI projects.
- Work with key stakeholders toward the development of: a Big Science roadmap for Canada that will lead to a better understanding of the Big Science landscape in Canada and abroad; a framework for establishing priorities and making rigorous, evidence-based decisions on the funding of Big Science projects; and appropriate oversight on the sound governance, management and operations of Big Science projects. This includes examining ways for the CFI to facilitate and enable Canada's participation and leadership role in large-scale international projects and initiatives.
- Work with key stakeholders and other funding agencies to explore the interest, need and value of research and research infrastructure planning exercises that reach well beyond institutional strategic planning exercises. More specifically, several Canadian research communities have indicated they are poised to develop their own long range plans, an approach that has served the physics and astronomy research communities very well over the past 20-plus years. This type of planning exercise would also be a critical element in the development of a Big Science roadmap for Canada.
- Explore improvements to the Major Sciences Initiatives Fund that provide the flexibility required to best support a wide range of national research facilities. This includes exploring with the federal government and other funding agencies the most appropriate support mechanism for regional facilities and regional platforms, which currently falls outside the mandate of this fund.
- Examine the interest and feasibility of a proposal to increase the support provided under the Infrastructure Operating Fund, currently fixed as a 30 percent allocation of CFI contribution to a project's capital costs.
- Continue to monitor the emergence, and deepen our understanding, of institutional core facilities and their business and operational models, and to share good practices we encounter and work with relevant stakeholders and other funding agencies on sharing good practices and identifying potential mechanisms to support these facilities.

APPENDIX 1: LIST OF ASSOCIATIONS AND STAKEHOLDER GROUP MEETINGS

Formal written submissions

- Acadia University
- Bishop's University
- Government of Alberta Economic Development and Trade, Research Capacity Planning, Innovation System Engagement
- Association pour la recherche au collégial (ARC)
- Canadian Association of Physicists
- Canadian Association of Research Libraries
- Canadian Research Knowledge Network
- Cape Breton University
- Carleton University
- Cégep de Victoriaville
- Collège Shawinigan
- Compute Canada
- Concordia University
- Council Committee for Research, Scholarly and Artistic Work, University of Saskatchewan
- Dalhousie University
- Faculty of Medicine, Memorial University of Newfoundland
- Gouvernement du Québec (Ministère de l'Économie, de l'Innovation et de l'Exportation)
- HealthCareCAN
- Lawson Health Research Institute
- McGill University
- McMaster University
- Memorial University
- Mount Allison University
- Nipissing University
- OCAD University
- Polytechnics Canada
- Queen's University
- The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids)
- SickKids Research Institute
- St. Francis Xavier University
- University of British Columbia
- University Health Network
- University of Northern British Columbia
- Université de Montréal
- Université de Sherbrooke
- University of Alberta
- University of Calgary
- University of Guelph
- University of Manitoba
- University of Ottawa
- University of Saskatchewan
- University of Toronto
- University of Victoria
- University of Waterloo
- UOIT (University of Ontario Institute of Technology)
- UQAM (Université du Québec à Montréal)
- York University

Meetings/Roundtables/Teleconferences

Provincial Government agencies:

- Government of Alberta (Alberta Economic Development and Trade)
- Government of British Columbia (BCKDF)
- Government of Newfoundland (Research Development Corporation)
- Government of Nova Scotia
- Government of Ontario (Ministry of Research and Innovation)
- Innovation Saskatchewan
- Nova Scotia Research and Innovation Trust (Nova Scotia Research and Innovation Trust)
- Province de Québec (Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (MSSS), Ministère de l'Économie, de l'Innovation et de l'Exportations (MEIE), Ministère de l'Éducation, de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche (MESR))
- New Brunswick Jobs/ Council on Research and Innovation
- New Brunswick Health Research Foundation
- New Brunswick Innovation Fund
- Research Manitoba

Institutions, Associations and Stakeholder Organizations:

- ADARUQ (Association des administratrices et des administrateurs de recherche universitaire du Québec)
- Association of Atlantic Universities (Cape Breton University, Acadia University, St. Francis Xavier University, Dalhousie University, Mount Saint Vincent University, Saint Mary's University, Université Ste-Anne)
- Brock University
- CARA (Canadian Association of Research Administrators) East Regional Meeting
- CARA Ontario Regional meeting
- CARA National Executive
- CARA West Regional Meeting (including the Small Institutions special interest group)
- Council of Chairs of Canadian Earth Science Departments (Lakehead University, McMaster University, University of British Columbia, Mount Royal University, University of Saskatchewan, Carleton University, University of Regina, Université Laval, University of Victoria, University of Manitoba, University of Windsor, Memorial University of Newfoundland, University of British Columbia-Okanagan, Saint Mary's University, McGill University, University of Toronto, Acadia University, Simon Fraser University)
- Alliance of Canadian Comprehensive Research Universities (ACCRU) - (University of Lethbridge, University of Prince Edward Island, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Athabasca University, Université de Moncton, University of Regina, Wilfred Laurier University, Cape Breton University, Université du Québec en Outaouais, University of

Winnipeg, St. Francis Xavier University, Mount Saint Vincent University, Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, Saint Mary's University, OCAD University, Mount Allison University, Trent University, Université du Québec, University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT))
- St. Thomas University
- U15 VPRs (Université Laval, McMaster University, University of Alberta, University of Calgary, University of Toronto, University of Saskatchewan, Western University, University of Waterloo, University of Manitoba, University of Ottawa)
- Réseau de l'Université du Québec, doyens de la recherche (Siège social Université du Québec, Université du Québec à Rimouski, Université du Québec en Outaouais, École nationale d'administration publique (ENAP), l'École de technologie supérieure (ETS), Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue, Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, Université du Québec à Montréal, Université du Québec à Chicoutimi)
- Université du Québec en Outaouais

Townhall meetings (participating institutions and organizations)

- Calgary, AB - University of Calgary, SAIT (Southern Alberta Institute of Technology), University of Alberta
- Edmonton, AB - University of Alberta, NAIT (Northern Alberta Institute of Technology), Concordia University College of Alberta, University of Alberta
- Fredericton, NB - New Brunswick Council on Research and Innovation, AceNET, New Brunswick Social Policy Research Network, University of New Brunswick, Heart and Stroke Foundation - New Brunswick, New Brunswick Regional Development Corporation, ACOA-New Brunswick (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency), Université de Moncton, New Brunswick Community College, New Brunswick Innovation Foundation, Springboard Atlantic, New Brunswick Health Research Foundation
- Halifax, NS – Dalhousie University, IWK Health, Saint Mary's University, Cape Breton University, Mount Allison University, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD), Acadia University, Nova Scotia Community College, ACOA, Science Atlantic, AceNET, Government of Nova Scotia
- London, ON - Western University, University of Windsor, McMaster University, Compute Canada
- Montreal, QC – McGill University, Compute Canada, Concordia University, Canadian Research Knowledge Network (CRKN), Université de Montréal, Université de Sherbrooke, Institut de recherche cliniques de Montréal (IRCM), Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal (CHUM), École Polytechnique de Montréal, Université du Québec à Montréal UQAM), Calcul Canada/Quebec
- Ottawa, ON - University of Ottawa, The Ottawa Hospital, Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO), McMaster University – CMC, Queen's University – High Performance

Computing Virtual Laboratory (HPCVL), Compute Canada, CANARIE, Federation of the Humanities and Social Sciences, INTEL, HealthCareCAN

- Quebec, QC – Université Laval, Institut national de recherche scientifique (INRS), Université du Québec-siège social
- Saskatoon, SK – University of Saskatchewan
- Regina, SK – University of Regina
- St. John's, NL – Memorial University of Newfoundland, College of the North Atlantic, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
- Toronto, ON - University of Toronto, Ryerson University, York University, OCAD University, Seneca College, Durham College, University Health Network (UHN), Sunnybrook Hospital, The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids), St. Michael's Hospital, Mount Sinai Hospital , Compute Canada, Ontario Institute for Cancer Research, Carleton University, Queen's University, Ministry of Research and Innovation (ON)
- Vancouver, BC – University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, TRIUMF, Donald College, British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT), Providence Health Care, Western Economic Diversification, Compute Canada
- Victoria, BC – University of Victoria, British Colombia Knowledge Development Fund (BCKDF), Royal Roads University, Compute Canada
- Waterloo, ON - University of Waterloo, University of Guelph, Perimeter Institute, Fanshawe College, McMaster University, Compute Canada
- Winnipeg, MB - University of Manitoba, University of Winnipeg, Research Manitoba

Research builds communities
La recherche au service des collectivités

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