



## Policy on Gender Equality, Environmental Sustainability, and Human Rights and Inclusion

Grand Challenges Canada is dedicated to supporting **Bold Ideas with Big Impact**<sup>®</sup> in global health. The bold ideas we support integrate science and technology, social and business innovation. The coordinated application of these domains is what Grand Challenges Canada calls **Integrated Innovation**<sup>®</sup>. This approach does not discount the singular benefits of each of these types of innovation alone, but rather highlights the powerful synergies that can be realized by aligning all three to address a single challenge. Moreover, the approach – and in particular the integration of social innovation – recognizes that development interventions operate within existing social, cultural, economic, environmental, institutional and political structures in any community, country or region. Due consideration of such factors has, since its inception, been fundamental to Grand Challenges Canada’s ability to enable meaningful and responsible health and social impact through its support of integrated innovations.

The primary aims of innovations supported by Grand Challenges Canada may or may not *directly* address the critical and interrelated development aims of gender equality, environmental sustainability, and human rights and inclusion. Nonetheless, they may present opportunities to further these aims and, therefore, this policy makes explicit Grand Challenges Canada’s implicit commitments to working with the innovators we fund, to do so where feasible and appropriate.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This policy is grounded in the following three principles<sup>1</sup>:

1. *A focus on gender equality in the innovation space will support the achievement of development results.* Innovators funded by Grand Challenges Canada should strive to protect and promote gender equality throughout the development and/or implementation of their innovation(s).
2. *Sustainable development is about meeting the needs of today without compromising the needs of future generations.* To the extent reasonably possible, foreseeable negative environmental impacts of Grand Challenges Canada-funded innovations should be minimized and positive environmental impacts enhanced.
3. *Achieving poverty reduction and sustainable development results depends on ensuring respect for human rights and the inclusion of marginalized voices in the development process.* Innovators funded by Grand Challenges Canada must integrate and apply in the design and

---

<sup>1</sup> Taken and/or modified from Government of Canada, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD), cross-cutting themes for development programming (2015)

implementation of their innovation(s) the human rights principles of: equality and non-discrimination; participation and inclusion; and, transparency and accountability<sup>2</sup>.

## OBJECTIVE

Grand Challenges Canada recognizes the importance of integrating gender equality, environmental sustainability, and human rights and inclusion considerations into the innovations it supports. The objective of this policy is to encourage innovators seeking and/or utilizing funding from Grand Challenges Canada to consider and, where necessary and appropriate, take action regarding the following:

### A. Gender Equality

Grand Challenges Canada believes that supporting gender equality and the rights of women and girls is an important objective in and of itself, as well as a critical development objective, and therefore aims to contribute to achievement of equality between persons of all genders<sup>3</sup>. Grand Challenges Canada's baseline is to do no harm. Innovators funded or under review for funding by Grand Challenges Canada must consider how the design, implementation and evaluation of their innovation could promote – or hinder – gender equality objectives, and must take actions towards realizing gender equality opportunities within the funding period. In addition, Grand Challenges Canada is committed to advance gender equality in the leadership and governance of innovation, and to that end, strives to source and promote support systems to ensure equal access to progressive levels of financing for all genders and diversity in governance structures. Gender equality objectives include, but are not limited to<sup>4</sup>:

- i. *Advance women's equal participation and support women and girls in the realization of their full human rights:* Grand Challenges Canada seeks to support processes and innovations that actively engage and empower women and their communities to further women's equal participation and status in their societies.
- ii. *Reduce gender inequalities around the access to and control over the resources and benefits of development:* Innovators should strive to understand and mitigate gender gaps in the contexts in which they operate, to work towards the achievement of gender equality and other, broader goals of development.

### B. Environmental Sustainability

Grand Challenges Canada is, in part, funded by the Government of Canada through Global Affairs Canada and aligns with its efforts in supporting environmental sustainability in developing

---

<sup>2</sup> Canada's Policy for Civil Society Partnerships for International Assistance – A Feminist Approach. [http://international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues\\_development-enjeux\\_developpement/priorities-priorites/civil\\_policy-politique\\_civile.aspx?lang=eng](http://international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/priorities-priorites/civil_policy-politique_civile.aspx?lang=eng)

<sup>3</sup> For more on Grand Challenges Canada's approach to supporting gender equality, see the Gender Equality Portal on our website at <http://www.grandchallenges.ca/funding-opportunities/gender/>

<sup>4</sup> Modified from Global Affairs Canada, Policy on Gender Equality, available at [http://international.gc.ca/world-monde/funding-financement/policy-politique.aspx?lang=eng&\\_ga=2.258653251.89311587.1526311710-1103050279.1526311710](http://international.gc.ca/world-monde/funding-financement/policy-politique.aspx?lang=eng&_ga=2.258653251.89311587.1526311710-1103050279.1526311710)

countries<sup>5</sup>, and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA) 2012<sup>6</sup>. The reasonably foreseeable environmental impacts of innovations funded or under review for funding by Grand Challenges Canada must be considered at the planning stage and, where applicable, monitored and evaluated throughout implementation. Efforts should be made to identify and minimize negative impacts and enhance positive impacts, if any, on the environment(s) in which the innovation is deployed.

### *C. Human Rights and Inclusion*

Grand Challenges Canada is committed to furthering the integration of, and enabling conditions for, promoting the human rights principles of equality, non-discrimination, participation, inclusion, transparency, and accountability from proposal development through implementation. Grand Challenges Canada works with innovators to strengthen their focus on these key human rights principles in the design of the innovation(s) and in the systems and processes used in the implementation of the innovation(s) in the specific context in which they are working. More specifically, innovators who have submitted a proposal or are implementing an innovation must consider how the innovation will, at a minimum, 'do no harm' with respect to the human rights of project stakeholders and beneficiaries. In the design and implementation of the innovation(s), the innovator must take into consideration how the innovation will:

1. Identify ways in which the innovation can *support poverty reduction* in the local population, particularly for women and girls;
2. *Ensure equality and non-discrimination*, including on the basis of gender, for project stakeholders and beneficiaries;
3. *Foster the participation and inclusion* of more marginalized stakeholders and beneficiaries among the local population, with an emphasis on women and girls; and
4. *Promote transparency and accountability* among stakeholders and beneficiaries of the innovation and its intended impact.

## **REQUIREMENTS**

All Grand Challenges Canada innovators are subject to the terms of this policy.

Innovators seeking or in receipt of \$500,000 CAD or more in funding may be subject to more thorough engagement and/or oversight, to ensure due attention and compliance. Likewise, some proposals seeking lesser amounts (e.g., proof-of-concept proposals identified in consultation with experts as having high environmental risk or significant gender equality considerations) may also be subject to more significant engagement. In all such cases, innovators will be required to complete and submit for internal and/or expert review an initial gender equality, environmental sustainability, and human rights and inclusion assessment, as part of the application for funding.

Additional specific obligations, if any, for innovators under this policy will vary depending on the results of the reviews, which in turn will depend on the particulars of the innovation(s) being funded (or considered for funding) and may include, for example, a requirement to:

---

<sup>5</sup> [http://international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues\\_development-enjeux\\_developpement/environmental\\_protection-protection\\_environment/sustainability-viabilite.aspx?lang=eng&\\_ga=2.254603969.89311587.1526311710-1103050279.1526311710](http://international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/environmental_protection-protection_environment/sustainability-viabilite.aspx?lang=eng&_ga=2.254603969.89311587.1526311710-1103050279.1526311710)

<sup>6</sup> <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-15.21/index.html>

- Meet relevant commitments built into funding agreements (e.g., inclusion of a milestone for the completion of a gender analysis and strategy)
- Integrate relevant metrics into the measurement and evaluation framework
- Undergo a formal environmental assessment.

Illustrative examples are shown below.

#### *A. Gender Equality*

Innovators may be asked to address the extent to which: gender inequities and variable status influence the achievement of the overall results of the initiative and/or uptake of the innovation; persons of certain genders may be made worse off by the innovation (e.g., lose access to or control over an existing resource); and/or, may be excluded from the benefits of the innovation. Description of specific gender equality results (e.g., increased participation in decision-making, reduced inequities in access to and control over the benefits of the innovation) and related indicators may be warranted. Critical reviews of proposals by external advisors with expertise in gender equality can provide the basis for the development and inclusion of such indicators. In some cases, the development of a gender analysis<sup>7</sup> and/or gender equality strategy would be required. When a project is assessed at the outset as having a low gender equality score, our objective will be to work with the innovator, providing resources where necessary, to move the project to a higher gender equality score by the close of Grand Challenges Canada's funding.

#### *B. Environmental Sustainability*

Innovators may initially be asked to describe: potential environmental impacts of the innovation and/or its implementation, their nature, magnitude and probability; plans to enhance positive impacts or mitigate negative ones; strategy and metrics to monitor environmental impacts. Critical reviews of proposals by external advisors with expertise in environmental sustainability can provide the basis for the inclusion and measurement of metrics of environmental impact, as well as project milestones for the development and implementation of environmental monitoring plans, and/or other future environmental due diligence requirements. Projects with negligible environmental impacts may proceed without further analysis, while those with higher potential environmental impacts will require further review and analysis, as well as potential mitigation measures or an environmental assessment in accordance with CEEA 2012.

#### *C. Human Rights and Inclusion (HRAI)*

Innovators may be asked to answer a set of questions about their innovation(s) to demonstrate the extent to which the proposed innovation has been designed with consideration for human rights and inclusion principles, and with the intent of addressing inequalities and reducing poverty, where applicable. An HRAI 'screen' will be applied to each proposal to determine if an adequate situational analysis has been undertaken by the innovator that assesses the political, social, economic, cultural situation of the local population vis-a-vis their basic human rights. GCC

---

<sup>7</sup> Gender analysis provides information that recognizes that gender, and its relationship with race, ethnicity, culture, class, age, disability and/or other status, is important in understanding the different patterns of involvement, behaviour and activities that women and men have in economic, social and legal structures. Source: Global Affairs Canada, available at: [http://international.gc.ca/world-monde/funding-financement/gender\\_analysis-analyse\\_comparative.aspx?lang=eng&\\_ga=2.48405487.89311587.1526311710-1103050279.1526311710](http://international.gc.ca/world-monde/funding-financement/gender_analysis-analyse_comparative.aspx?lang=eng&_ga=2.48405487.89311587.1526311710-1103050279.1526311710)

will also consider whether the innovation has been designed to maximize the potential for reducing poverty and discrimination, promoting equality, inclusion and empowerment, and upholding accountability and transparency through its implementation. In the design and implementation of their innovations, innovators must take into particular consideration the socio-economic and cultural status of women and girls, and how the innovation can, at a minimum, ensure the rights of women and girls are not undermined, and where possible, their socio-economic status and basic human rights improved by the innovation.

Last updated: June 28, 2018