



Grand Challenges Canada™
Grands Défis Canada^{MC}

FAQ

Saving Brains: Identify early life interventions that promote the fulfillment of human capital

As of December 8, 2011

This document addresses questions received by Grand Challenges Canada with respect to the Saving Brains – *Identify early life interventions that promote the fulfillment of human capital* Request for Proposals announced May 2011. This is the final FAQ document that will be posted prior to the full proposal deadline of December 12, 2011 (11:59 PM ET).

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Eligibility

1. Who is eligible to submit a full proposal?

A. The Canadian Institutes of Health Research conducted the peer review of proposals at the letter of intent stage. Applicants whose letters of intent were ranked highly by the peer review committee were invited to submit full proposals in September 2011. Full proposal submissions from uninvited applicants will not be considered.

2. What institutions are eligible to apply?

A. Applicant institutions must be:

- Individual non-profit organizations, for-profit companies, or other recognized institutions that can successfully execute the activities in their respective technical area.
- Based in a low- or middle-income country, as defined by World Bank classification.
- Capable of administering the grants. This implies that the institution has the authority to enter into a grant agreement with Grand Challenges Canada, and can receive and administer the funds.

Application

3. *Should any letters of support, if available, be included in the full proposal?*

- A. Any pertinent support information should be referred to in the main body of proposal. Applicants may submit the letters of support as separate documents, but should not assume that they will be read by the review committee.

4. *Is there a particular format that needs to be followed when describing the Technical Approach in the full proposal?*

- A. As long as the Project Framework Table and a narrative detailing the technical approach are included, applicants may choose to present the information in any order that they deem the most logical.

5. *What is meant by “the cooperating agency in your country” referred to in Appendix C: Institutional Questionnaire?*

- A. The cooperating agency is the governmental agency / department that must be advised of, or must approve, any new funding that enters the country. This may not apply to all applicants.

6. *Should reviewer comments on the letters of intent be addressed in full proposals?*

- A. A document containing the reviewer comments was sent to each applicant. The top section was a summary of the peer review committee discussion, which reflected comments the committee collectively thought were important to raise for the applicant. The bottom section consisted of comments submitted prior to the committee discussion by reviewers, which represented their individual opinions. Applicants are advised to use the document as guidance for the type of information that is important to include or address in the full proposal. It is not necessary to address the comments separately.

7. *What is the page limit for the proposal?*

- A. The proposal should be no more than 20 pages single-spaced, excluding contact information, table of contents, appendices, citations and institutional questionnaire. Please see the Full Proposal Form Instructions, which was distributed prior to the Ottawa workshop, for full instructions.

Core Outcomes Metrics

8. *Should the full proposal incorporate core outcomes metrics?*

- A. Full proposals are expected to include plans to measures of the **core outcomes concepts** in order to address the “Willingness to Collaborate” evaluation criterion (Section 4.5 of Request for Proposals). The list of core outcomes concepts – a product of discussions at the Core Outcomes Metrics Workshop and the input collected electronically in the first half of November – were distributed on November 18, 2011. Further details will be resumed after funding decisions are made.

9. How should the list of core outcomes concepts be interpreted?

- A. A measure of the ten **core outcomes concepts** (Participant Demographic, Assessment of Environment in Which Individual is Raised, Socio-economic Status, Relevant Medical History, Physical Growth/Body Composition, General Intelligence, Memory, Behavioural and Emotional Problems, Fine Motor Skills, and Educational Attainment) must be included in every proposal. The **recommended metrics** are those recommended by applicants to measure each concept and may be useful starting points for applicants who are starting from scratch. It is not required that the recommended metrics are incorporated into the full proposal if other measures of the core outcomes concepts are deemed more suitable by the applicant. The discussion on core outcomes metrics will be continued following the funding decision.

10. Are assessment tools not included in the list of recommended core outcomes metrics discouraged for use in the proposed project?

- A. Applicants are welcome to incorporate assessment tools not included in the list of recommended core outcomes metrics if they appropriately address any of the core outcomes concepts, or help assess the hypothesized mechanism of action of the proposed intervention’s effect on brain development.

11. Will proposed projects in areas where no appropriately validated testing instruments exist be at a disadvantage?

- A. The projects will not be disadvantaged in the review process, as test validation prior to the commencement of projects is not one of the evaluation criteria (Section 4.4 of Request for Proposals). However, applicants are advised to provide a plan, and to allot an appropriate amount of time and resources, for adaptation and validation of appropriate instruments in their full proposals.

12. Will there be extra support provided for studies incorporating neuroimaging techniques?

- A. Grand Challenges Canada is in the process of pursuing mechanisms to support neuroimaging techniques in the program. If sufficient interest exists in the projects selected, extra support for funding, technical expertise, training and analysis can be anticipated. It is important that applicants interested in incorporating any of the techniques budget necessary time and resources, both personnel and financial, in their full proposals. Use of the technique(s) should be scientifically justified based on the proposed conceptual framework.

Timeline

13. When are the anticipated and the latest possible project start dates?

- A. The issuing of grants will begin upon signing of the grant agreements (estimated for May 2012). All grantees should plan to commence their projects at this time. However, if circumstances exist in which the success of a project would be enhanced provided a delayed start date, they should be raised with the Program Officer at the time of grant negotiations. The latest project start date Grand Challenges Canada will permit, if justified, is August 2012.

14. When should the ethics and regulatory approvals for the research activities being conducted be obtained?

- A. Funding decisions will be conveyed to applicants in early March 2012. Successful applicants should begin seeking ethics approvals in advance of commencing the regulated activities, and as soon as possible. Any timing concerns that may delay the start of the project should be raised to the Program Officer early in the grant negotiation process.

15. At what date should the ages of the study participants be estimated?

- A. Age of the study participants should be calculated for time of assessment (between May 2012 and April 2014). This information should be reported in the full proposal.

16. What is the timeframe for completing the proposed project?

- A. Applicants must work within the time constraints set by the length of grant, which is up to 2 years (Section 2.2 of the Request for Proposals). Please ensure an appropriate amount of resources are requested to ensure the completion of the proposed objectives and activities within this timeframe.

Budget

17. Should applicants budget for the attendance at Grand Challenges Canada meetings?

- A. Yes. Two members from each research team are invited to participate in bi-annual Grand Challenges Canada meetings during the two-year granting window. The first meeting will take place in Ottawa in December 2012; the remaining three will likely take place outside of Canada. Please include a budget line for the cost of attending the meetings in the full application for \$5000 per person per meeting, which will cover airfare, accommodation, registration and meals.

18. Should the benefits or social benefit costs mandated by country governments on salaries be included in the budget?

- A. Yes. The benefits are considered an allowable cost, under the Personnel category. Please see Section 4.6 of Request for Proposals.

19. What is the maximum indirect cost allowed?

- A. Indirect costs cannot exceed 13% of all direct costs. Please note that the reference to 15% in the Request for Proposals is erroneous.

20. Does the maximum indirect rate apply to both the primary applicant institution and subcontracted institutions?

- A. Yes. For any subcontracted institution, the maximum indirect costs can be no more than 13% of direct costs, and the overall amount of the grant going to indirect costs, regardless of the receiving institution(s), cannot exceed 13% of the total direct costs.

21. What is the maximum value of funding request allowed?

- A. The total fund available to support a portfolio of responses from this request for proposal is \$10 million CAD. There is no upper limit placed on the size of the budget, though they should be commensurate to the proposed objectives and activities. Please note that value for effort is an evaluation criteria (see Section 4.4 of the Request for Proposals).

22. If multiple projects from the same applicant institution are granted, should their budgets be combined?

- A. In cases that multiple projects from the same institution and principal investigator(s) are selected for funding, it is possible that the applicant will be asked to consolidate the budget. Your Program Officer will explicitly request this, if needed, early in the grant negotiation process.

23. If other institutions are involved in carrying out some of the project activities, where should salaries and other costs related to those activities be budgeted?

- A. The cost of activities (including salaries, research costs, etc) at collaborating institutions should be listed as a subgrant/subcontract. If funded, it is expected that the grantee and subgrantee execute an agreement with similar conditions as the Grand Challenges Canada/grantee agreement.

24. Should the costs budgeted under subcontract/subgrants be broken down into the various categories?

- A. It is not necessary to split subcontract costs down by categories. However, an explanation as to what the subcontract budget covers should be provided in the budget notes.

25. Do funds for subgrantees need to go through the grantee institution?

- A. No. Grand Challenges Canada is able to transfer funds directly to subgrantees upon authorization of the grantee institution in circumstances where this will reduce services fees and loss due to currency exchange.