"They (the Research Councils) should be setting up field offices across the country where there are practitioners of knowledge, who speak language. Nests where children and adults and community members can go; where they are funding people who live the way of life of the ancestral peoples of this land. That is our research."

Mkomose (Dr Andrew Judge) of Shingwauk Kinoomaage Gamig
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Introduction

Indigenous Institutes (IIs) are formally recognized as a pillar of Ontario’s post-secondary education system. The Individual IIs share a mission to be the first-choice institutions for “Indigenous students seeking academically rigorous post-secondary education and applied training grounded in Indigenous ways of knowing and being.”

Alongside providing education to students, post-secondary institutions play a distinct role in conducting research. IIs are uniquely positioned, as Indigenous owned and operated institutions, to conduct research that responds to and prioritizes the needs and interests of their First Nation communities.

Robust research programs incur substantial operational costs and have high resource requirements. The majority of funding to support such expenses is provided by the Government of Canada through three Research Councils: the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. Funds are allocated through a highly competitive process, with demanding barriers to eligibility and entry. This allocation process pits institutions against each other, often leaving smaller institutions at a disadvantage. This is especially true for IIs which are doubly disadvantaged given that they have less capacity and resources than other, more established institutions, not because they are inherently less capable or deserving, but because they are burdened by persisting colonial biases that disenfranchise Indigenous ways of knowing and delegitimize their place in Canada’s publicly funded research ecosystem. With that said, all Research Councils (RCs) have publicly committed to providing a more inclusive and respectful research environment for Indigenous participation. In light of these changes, the Systems Guide to Research Council Funding in Canada aims to support IIs in navigating the federal research system, the RCs, their funding programs, and their recent efforts to support Indigenous Research capacity.

The first section of this document provides context for why Indigenous Research by IIs is an essential investment in the future of Canada and its relationship with First Nation, Inuit, and Métis peoples. Drawing from domestic and international trends related to Indigenous rights, such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Indigenous Research is shown to be a fundamental pillar in advancing reconciliation, Indigenous rights, and self-determination. Furthermore, Indigenous participation and leadership within the research ecosystem is integral to developing effective, evidence-based solutions to the systemic health and socioeconomic inequalities that impact Indigenous peoples, and is critical to elevating Canada’s capacity for innovation.

The three RCs, and other agencies responsible for research funding, are described in context of their unique mandates and decision-making processes. A historic overview of the RCs’ evolving

See glossary for definitions of bolded terms
relationships with Indigenous peoples and Indigenous knowledge systems is provided regarding their attitudes and commitments to supporting Indigenous Research².

A “system map” is presented to describe the interactions, mutual responsibilities between RCs, academic institutions, and individual researchers. The general principles and reasoning underlying the standards of eligibility and Merit Review are discussed and it is shown that, while changes are being made to improve access to funds, there remain barriers regarding Institutional Eligibility that limit IIs’ full participation in research.

Each RC provides funds through multiple programs according to support scholarships and outreach activities in addition to research. Research funding opportunities vary substantially from staple flagship programs to special calls for urgent research in response to emerging needs. The major research grant programs are described in context of the typical value and duration of funding, the research they are intended to support, and their considerations for early-stage career researchers, collaborative projects, and Indigenous Research.

The final section provides a series of considerations, proposed actions, and lines of further inquiry to assist IIs in applying for funding programs, to ensure that their status as post-secondary research institutes is recognized by the RCs, and to foster a stronger relationship between the IIs and the RCs.

² See glossary for definitions of bolded terms
Scope of the Document

This report was prepared with the intention of providing the Indigenous Institutes (IIs) with information to position themselves within Canada’s research landscape as the leading post-secondary institutions for Indigenous Research.

The term research refers to a number of related activities involving testing ideas, collecting and analyzing data, and drawing conclusions. There are a number of terms and distinctions that can be debated and discussed regarding the difference between pure and applied research, program evaluation, and service or the experimental development of commercial products or social services.

In addition, the funding for research involves different streams beyond accounting for the operational expenses of conducting research. Costs which are typically referred to as infrastructure involve the costs needed to simply build and maintain the capacity to perform research e.g. software, databases, libraries and archives, specialized tools such as particle accelerators. Funding agencies also recognize that the knowledge gained through research is of limited use trapped in the Ivory Tower and so programs of knowledge transfer and knowledge mobilization encourage the free exchange of information and insight between institutions, from institutions to industries, and from academics to the public. The Government of Canada also provides opportunities and stipends to support the training and development of future researchers, including but not limited to doctoral scholarships, postdoctoral fellowships, and training programs.

With all of these different factors contributing to the complexity of the research ecosystem, and the relationships between them, it would be easy to create an excess of information that would distract rather than inform.

Four Factors of Research

Research: operating costs of conducting research (e.g. Research assistants/trainee wages, Publication costs, Travel and conference costs, Small equipment, specimens, Computers and software, Honoraria e.g. For Indigenous Elders)

Education: funds a researcher in pursuing research training and experience (e.g. Doctoral Scholarship, Post-Doctoral Fellowships, Mentoring programs, Professional skills training)

Infrastructure: costs associated with building and maintaining the capacity to do research (e.g. Major equipment and facilities, Databases and data centres, Communications infrastructure, Specialized computer software, Technicians to support and maintain infrastructure)

Knowledge Mobilization: Supports activities to share research with the people and communities who will use it (e.g. Conferences, summer schools, Media events, artist exhibitions, festivals, Seminar/speaker series, Translation of texts into other languages, Writing policy briefs, review articles)
In keeping with its stated purpose to serve the Indigenous Institutes, this guide has opted to place the greatest focus in academic research, i.e., the type of research usually associated with post-secondary institutions and is funded by Canada’s research councils. However, this should not be interpreted as purely theoretical research divorced from application. Research Councils increasingly fund a great deal of applied research; in fact, political forces continue to push universities to make their work seemingly more relevant and valuable by encouraging partnerships with the private sector.

The research funding programs that could be considered under this label are those explicitly aimed towards the conduct of research. Opportunities related to infrastructure and knowledge mobilization are described within this guide, however a greater degree of emphasis is placed upon operational research funding. These programs are also those that provide institutes and investigators with the most freedom to propose their own research projects according to their own interests and capabilities, which aligns with the intent of positioning IIs as leaders in Indigenous Research.
1.0 Indigenous Research in Canada

1.1 Why Research and Why Indigenous Research

In its purest form, research represents the pursuit to turn the unknown into the known and to replace uncertainty with understanding. Many dictionary definitions attach various requirements concerning the rigorous and methodological nature of the investigation, but at its core, research is the pursuit of new knowledge. It is distinct from but intimately linked to education, which is the preservation and passing of knowledge to future generations. All human cultures participate in research, gathering information and data and placing them in context to form theories and worldviews that describe the world around them.

However, not all worldviews have been respected or treated equally. Since contact, colonial scholars have shown academic interest in the cultures and beliefs of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, but have dismissed the validity of their knowledge and ways of knowing. As such, research that was conducted with the aim of gathering real world evidence and results was conducted by non-Indigenous researchers, even when the ostensible purpose of the investigation was to benefit Indigenous communities. This has had harmful consequences for many generations of Indigenous peoples and the impacts continue to the present day. This harm has added to a heavy weight of suspicion and apprehension that many Indigenous peoples feel towards, non-Indigenous researchers, and the research system.

Across Canada, and across the world, there has been growing momentum behind efforts to acknowledge, address, and reverse the harmful effects of colonization. There is an increasing desire to redefine the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples to be established on the basis of mutual respect and the recognition of Indigenous rights. Foundational to this endeavour is restoring Indigenous agency and control over research concerning Indigenous cultures, communities, and the issues that affect them.

The following section summarizes the major ideas supporting the case for Indigenous research that is led by, conducted by, and for the benefit of Indigenous peoples. It refers to domestic reports and international instruments regarding reconciliation, decolonization, and Indigenous rights to demonstrate that Indigenous research sovereignty is important for advancing the rights and self-determination of Indigenous peoples, and is also essential to addressing systemic socioeconomic and health inequities, and ensuring the wellbeing and prosperity of Indigenous communities.

1.2 Domestic Recognition

Governments across Canada have made varying commitments to reconciliation. While most have acknowledged, only some have taken concrete action to implement recommendations made in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)’s Final Report and Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report on the National Inquiry on Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls. Both reports build on work started by The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP), which provided a 20-year roadmap for reconciliation. Each of these reports highlight the important role that research plays in reconciliation. In 1999, RCAP examined the issues in the relationships between Indigenous peoples and Canada and mapped out a 20-year journey towards decolonization and reconciliation. RCAP argues that it is essential for Indigenous peoples to reclaim their cultural identity, self-determination, and nationhood as a means to reconciliation, and that this would require considerable capacities in research and education.
RCAP recognizes research as a fundamental part of asserting treaty rights, sovereignty, and self-determination, as well as a tool for Canadians to better understand the relationship between Canada and Indigenous peoples. Recommendations 2.3.30 and 2.5.7 of the final RCAP report noted that the Federal Government supports Indigenous peoples researching Indigenous models for the transition to self-government and economic development. Recommendation 2.5.7 and 3.5.32 also support the founding of Indigenous-controlled education and training institutes and called for the creation of an Indigenous university. RCAP also notes the special role that Indigenous peoples play in research meant to advance Indigenous rights and reconciliation.

The importance of research to preserve heritage and advance reconciliation was also a theme of the 2015 final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which was mandated to document the history and impacts of the Residential School System. The focus on the legacy of residential schools put the role of education, in particular with the purpose of maintaining language and culture, as a central issue. The TRC’s “Calls to Action” (CTA) 62-64 supports efforts to strengthen language and culture in Indigenous students and to educate all Canadians regarding Indigenous histories. Implicit in these statements is the need for research to support the sharing of knowledge and best practices that integrate Indigenous knowledge in classrooms and develop new models and curricula. In addition, the TRC noted that reconciliation will require research and that Indigenous peoples require their own research capability to promote healing. CTA 78 called for specific funding to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation for that very purpose.

The 2019 National Inquiry on Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) investigated and reported on the systemic causes of violence against Indigenous women and girls. This inquiry took an intersectional- and distinctions-based approach to its research and final “Calls to Justice” (CTJ). As a result, the Final Report on the MMIWG National Inquiry does not make blanket recommendations respecting Indigenous Research, but instead reflects an intersectional lens and provides distinctions-based themes to research that it heard from those who participated in the National Inquiry.

The CTJs have several references to research, but three CTJs are particularly relevant to this scope of work. CTJ 16.26 calls for support for post-secondary education and Inuit research autonomy in Inuit Nunangat. The CTJs also call for distinction-based research regarding the unique experiences of specific Indigenous peoples i.e., Métis-led research on Métis experiences (CTJ 17.2), and research led by Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ people related to their own particular experiences (CTJ 18.3).

This approach should not be taken to be exclusionary; instead, it should be understood as a reflection of priorities at the point in time of writing with an acknowledgement that those priorities may shift. Ultimately, as argued within the Final Report, the goal of its recommendations is to transform Canadian society, so it upholds Indigenous rights, including the right to self-determination. In that view, priorities around research may change over time and, if they are rooted in an expression of self-determination, any changes would likely be welcomed as reflecting the spirit and intent of the report.

The reports referenced above are landmark documents in understanding decolonization and reconciliation in Canada. They advance a case for Indigenous Research sovereignty that is based on the inherent and treaty rights of Indigenous peoples to agency in cultural and economic development, and on the importance of research in redefining and rebuilding relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. A different, more tactical, perspective was offered in the final report of Canada’s Fundamental Science Review (CFSR).

Submitted in 2017, the CFSR report contained the findings of a comprehensive review regarding the efficacy of Canada’s research funding agencies
Leaders in lifelong learning

(described in Section 2) at building the nation’s scientific capacity and supporting excellence in fundamental research. Section 5.3 of the report is dedicated to a discussion of Indigenous research and Indigenous participation in the research ecosystem. The report draws attention to the “pressing need for Indigenous research,” citing the persistent gaps in socioeconomic and health outcomes that affect Indigenous peoples within Canada. The CFSR report asserts that Indigenous-supported research addressing the priority issues within communities is essential to developing strong and effective policies to eliminate these gaps. Therefore, the central argument for Indigenous Research sovereignty is that Indigenous peoples are best equipped to determine the agenda and the methods for research that impact their lives and address individual and community needs.

The CFSR report also presents the value of Indigenous Research for Canada as a whole. Broadly speaking, it is a fairly established by a significant number of research studies that diversity and the inclusion of different perspectives, experiences, and worldviews can enable creativity and innovation. As the report states:

“We handcuff ourselves in international competitions and collaborations if our research funding ecosystem fails to capitalize on the talents and energies of large segments of our population —whether it be women who make up more than 50 percent of our citizenry or the 1.5 million Canadians with Indigenous roots.”

Recommendation 5.7 of the CFSR report calls for Canada’s three research granting councils to develop a strategic plan to support the long-term advancement of Indigenous Research and enhance the research capacity of Indigenous communities and the training of Indigenous researchers. CFSR makes explicit reference to recommendations of the TRC to guide this effort.

1.3 International Recognition

Indigenous peoples have engaged in multiple international fora on matters related to multilateral coordination and collaboration. Canada has actively been participating on three broad matters with potential implications on Indigenous peoples and Indigenous research:

• The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which Canada has endorsed.
• The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which has been adopted by Canada.
• World Intellectual Property Organization, which has been considering Issues regarding intellectual property related to traditional knowledge and folklore, of which Canada is a member.

UNDRIP is a global declaration describing the rights of Indigenous peoples, which Canada has committed to bringing into force through domestic law, as have some provinces and territories. As a declaration, it is considered an international standard and, unlike a convention or international treaty, it does not have the force of international law. UNDRIP consolidates a mix of positive and negative rights meant to complement international human rights laws.
While UNDRIP does not directly mention research, it touches on various considerations related to intellectual property and control over knowledge and culture—all of which are essential to research. The most pertinent articles that relate to Indigenous research are summarized below:

- Article 3: Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination, which includes the free pursuit of their economic, social and cultural development.

- Article 5: Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinct political, legal, economic, social and cultural institutions, while retaining their right to participate fully, if they so choose, in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the State.

- Article 11: Indigenous peoples have the right to practice and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artefacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature.

- Article 14: Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own language, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.

- Article 31: Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures.

Many of these articles concern Indigenous peoples’ ability to have autonomy over the preservation and evolution of their societies, economies, and cultures. Ultimately, any activity that exercises such agency will require an element of research to deepen their understanding and inform decisions regarding their social, economic, and cultural practices. However, research capacity and/or support to undertake research is not, in and of itself, considered a right in the Declaration. As a general observation, it is important to note that UNDRIP does not call for States to fund or provide proactive support for specific activities for positive rights.

As the Government of Canada and provincial governments (e.g., British Columbia) move to implement UNDRIP through domestic law, there is an open question on how the interpretation of the Declaration will impact Indigenous Research Sovereignty. Outside of UNDRIP, there are other models and frameworks that put forward articles that approach research in Indigenous contexts.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is considered “a model agreement within the UN for considering the viewpoints of Indigenous peoples.” It contains three provisions of interest to Indigenous Research. Firstly, the CBD refers to the use of genetic resources i.e., “genetic material of actual or potential value” where genetic material is defined as “any material of plant, animal, microbial or other origin containing functional units of heredity.” The aggregated Cultural Knowledge of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people contains a wealth of information regarding Canada’s biodiversity. CBD Articles 8j and 10c speak to an obligation of respect, and protect and preserve this Indigenous knowledge. Article 15 establishes Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) regimes to promote the sharing and commercialization of knowledge related to the use of genetic resources. Guidance regarding the ABS agreement states that “The participation of Indigenous and Local Communities is necessary in instances where traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources is being accessed.”

See glossary for definitions of bolded terms
When taken together, these articles raise questions about the role and evolution of Cultural Knowledge; the adequacy of current intellectual property regimes to encourage both access to and benefit sharing from Indigenous knowledge when Indigenous peoples wish to disclose such knowledge; and protections around how such knowledge may be disclosed for commercialization. These questions all relate to the issue of Indigenous Research sovereignty – i.e., who “owns”, can create and build, and should benefit from Indigenous knowledge. While there are broad principles in place, it is still a matter of exploration as to how these articles interact with intellectual property regimes and whether there are appropriate institutional structures in place to support full implementation. Notwithstanding, a key theme within the CBD is a clear recognition of unique Indigenous knowledge systems and protecting Indigenous interests in respect to those knowledge systems.

As a CBD signatory, Canada is also a party to the Nagoya Protocol on ABS\(^1\), which outlines that States should “take legislative, administrative or policy measures as appropriate” to ensure that the “benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources held by Indigenous and local communities” are shared with those communities “in a fair and equitable way… based on mutually agreed terms.” Additionally, the protocol calls for States to “take measures, as appropriate, with the aim of ensuring that traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources is held by Indigenous and local communities is accessed with the prior and informed consent or approval and involvement of these Indigenous and local communities.”

Canada’s implementation of these protocols prompts consideration of the relationships between intellectual property (IP) law, the exercise of community self-determination over their Cultural Knowledge, and the role of Indigenous Institutions in preserving that knowledge through education and research. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) is grappling with such questions through the creation of an international legal instrument respecting intellectual property, genetic resources, Traditional Knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions. As a member, the findings of the WIPO regarding these issues may have important implications for research, the role of Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous people in such research, and the distinctions between Indigenous content versus non-Indigenous content. WIPO directly links its work to UNDRIP and, therefore, it has a rights-based component to its endeavors.

## 1.4 Why Indigenous Institutes

The international and domestic policy instruments, and their articles and recommendations, have been presented and interpreted to advance a case for Indigenous Research and Indigenous Research sovereignty. The central propositions of this position can be summarized as follows:

1. Research is an essential activity through which Indigenous peoples can exercise their rights to pursue, preserve, develop, revitalize, and strengthen their social, cultural, and economic practices, institutions and traditional knowledge.

2. Research is an essential activity for Indigenous peoples to assert their inherent and treaty rights, nationhood, and self-determination, and supports the transition to self-government and fuels economic development.

3. Research is an essential activity to advance decolonization and reconciliation, through providing means to educate Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples on the history and contributions of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples.

4. Research is an essential activity for Indigenous peoples to protect their interests and intellectual property and ensure that their communities benefit from the potential practical and commercial applications of their Traditional Knowledges.

5. Research is an essential activity for Indigenous peoples to develop evidence-based, and culturally
and community appropriate policies that address systemic inequities and improve Indigenous peoples’ quality of life and well-being.

As Indigenous centres of learning, teaching, and research, Indigenous Institutes (IIs) are uniquely positioned to respond to the assertions listed above. As educators, IIs are already engaged in the preservation, continuation, and exploration of the Cultural Knowledge, languages, and customs of their Nations. As Indigenous researchers with strong connections to their communities, II faculty understand the needs and priorities of Indigenous peoples, and can develop research projects to deliver direct benefits to their communities. As the connection point between the Traditional Knowledge Keepers and prospective knowledge users, IIs are perfectly placed to engage in research and knowledge mobilization while respecting and protecting the roots and cultural importance of that very knowledge.

The Indigenous Institute Act of 2017 recognizes IIs as a distinct, but equal, pillar of Ontario’s post-secondary education landscape. The Act represents the beginning of an opportunity for IIs to (finally) gain recognition and entry into Canada’s research landscape, and access critical funds to support the Indigenous research they are best equipped to lead.

\(^5\) See glossary for definitions of bolded terms
2.0 Research Councils

2.1 Research and the Tri-Councils

The Federal Government of Canada (GoC) considers the funding of research as an investment in the prosperity and welfare of Canada and its people. The ongoing pursuit of new knowledge and understanding is central to supporting the workforce for the years to come, ensuring Canada’s economic and technological competitiveness, and improving the health, safety, and quality of life for all people in Canada.

Although the GoC does provide research support to private industry through programs such as the Scientific Research and Experimental Development tax program\(^\text{12}\), it also supports basic research, research undertaken for the advancement of knowledge without any regard for any specific practical or commercial application\(^\text{13}\). The conduct of basic research is largely the domain of academic institutions, such as universities, colleges, and other Post-secondary Institutions (PSIs). In principle, the nature of academia is not bound to the need to turn knowledge into profits and, therefore, PSIs are more aligned with the nature of basic research.

In Canada, the majority of source of public funding for basic research is allocated by three research councils (RCs):

- Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC)
- Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)
- Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR).

Collectively, these organizations are often referred to as Tri-Agencies or Tri-Councils. As implied by their respective names, each RC has a distinct mandate and jurisdiction for research pertaining to a specific subject matter. As agencies tasked with the spending of public funds, they are responsible for ensuring that funds are invested in a manner that delivers demonstrable value to people in Canada. To fulfill this mission, the RCs undertake several key functions:

- Determine which research projects will receive funding by evaluation of their potential value.
- Ensure all public funds are utilized responsibly and appropriately documented.
- Regulating the ethical conduct and academic integrity of publicly funded research.
- Support the work of highly qualified scholars, and the training of research students and Early Career Researchers (ECR).
- Promote and inform the public on research findings and noteworthy work being performed in Canada.

The RCs are funded directly by parliament and fall within the jurisdiction of two federal ministries. Both SSHRC and NSERC report to Innovation, Science, and Economic Development, Canada (ISED), while CIHR reports through Health Canada (see Appendix 1).

In addition to the three RCs, there are other federally funded agencies working to support research in Canada, The Canadian Foundation for Innovation (CFI) is an independent, non-profit organization founded in 1997. Although CFI provides funding through grant programs, as the RCs do, the mandate of the CFI is focused on funding the infrastructure needed to support research, rather than the research programs themselves. CFI grants are awarded to institutions rather than investigators, and can be used for costs such as: computer hardware and software, laboratories and equipment, and databases and communications.
equipment. CFI funding is typically capped at 40% of a project's eligible infrastructure costs, with the institution responsible for securing the remainder from alternative sources.\textsuperscript{14}

As previously discussed, the majority of basic research conducted in Canada is administered through academic institutions. However, provincial and federal governments do perform their own research directly in public research institutions and laboratories. The largest and most significant of these organizations is the National Research Council (NRC). Instead of providing funding to support external researchers, the NRC maintains a number of qualified investigators and scientists at dedicated research centres across the country. The NRC conducts most of its research with partners in industry and academia, providing these collaborators with access to equipment, facilities, calibration services, lab specimens, expertise, and advice. Since 2013, the NRC has principally operated as a Research and Technology Organization (RTO).

Research Council Mandates

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{CIHR}
    \begin{itemize}
      \item Health sciences i.e. research to improve the health and wellness of Canadians.
      \item Biology of humans and illnesses.
      \item Treatment and diagnostics.
      \item Healthcare service and delivery
      \item Population health
    \end{itemize}
  \item \textbf{SSHRC}
    \begin{itemize}
      \item Social sciences and humanities i.e. the study of people, groups and societies and how the behave and express themselves
      \item Education
      \item Language and linguistics
      \item Cultural studies
      \item Psychology
    \end{itemize}
  \item \textbf{NSERC}
    \begin{itemize}
      \item Natural Sciences and Engineering (a.k.a STEM)
      \item Physics, chemistry, biology
      \item Environmental sciences
      \item Botany/Ecology
      \item Infrastructure engineering
      \item Applied technology
      \item Computer sciences
    \end{itemize}
\end{itemize}

\textit{Although a given research project may fall into the intersections of each RCs mandates, the Councils maintain guidelines to determine which RC is most suitable to fund that research, especially with regards to health research. A project may receive funding from more than one RC but this is relatively rare.}
The role of an RTO is to provide an intermediate research space between universities and industry to bridge the gap between basic and applied research, and accelerate new technologies in leaping from lab bench to market. While the three RCs are separate and distinct corporations, in recent years there has been movement towards more collaboration and alignment across the agencies, and greater harmonization across their policies and processes. In 2018, the Canada Research Coordination Committee (CRCC) was created to facilitate more effective collaboration between the RCs and the CFI and ensure their collaborative efforts are aligned with the Federal Government’s research priorities. One research priority being to advance reconciliation and grow Indigenous Research capacity.

As a result, the Tri-Councils have established several joint committees to develop unified policies as well as administer collaborative programs. Key examples include the Inter-agency Panel on Research Ethics and the Panel on Responsible Conduct of Research, who develop the standards to regulate researchers. The Tri-Council Institutional Programs Secretariat is responsible for managing the Research Support Fund and the Canada Research Chairs program, which are joint funding initiatives.

The organizations discussed above represent the major players within federally funded research, of which the three RCs are the major sources of grants to fund research and researchers. A key aspect that underlies their ability to work together and avoid potential conflicts, is strict adherence to their respective focus areas with set procedures to manage any perceived overlap.

2.2 SSHRC

The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) was created by an act of parliament, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Act, in 1977, making it the oldest of the three RCs. Its mandate as stated in the original act, and remains upon their website is:

- promote and support post-secondary-based research and training in the social sciences and humanities; and
- advise the Minister of ISED on matters relating to social sciences and humanities research.

From a functional perspective, SSHRC can be considered to consist of two parts: a corporation that performs the administrative business of delivering its various programs and services; and a number of committees of scholars and experts who provide advice and direction on several matters. A clear example of this distinction lies in the separate, but overlapping, leadership structures that governs each function. There is a President who acts as Chief Executive Officer and oversees the day-to-day functions of the corporation via an Executive Team. However, SSHRC is nominally governed by the eponymous Council whose duties are to advise the Minister (as stated in the mandate) and provide advice and strategic direction to the President.

Membership of the Council is determined via federal appointment, typically drawn from high-ranking scholars from both academia and industry (see Appendix 2). These appointments are voluntary and last for a term of up to three years. The President is an ex officio member of the Council and its members elect one of their number to serve as Vice President and Chair of the Council. The Council meets at least twice a year, while a subset of its membership also forms the Executive Committee that is in charge of exercising the powers of the Council between these meetings.

At present, the Council has 14 members (of a maximum of 18) including the Chair. Of these, the only current member with a background in Indigenous Research is Dr. Carmen L. Robinson who holds a Canada Research Chair in North American Indigenous Visual and Material Culture at Carleton University.

In addition, the delivery of SSHRC programs is monitored by the Programs Committee and the
effectiveness and efficiency of SSHRC’s operations are validated by a federally appointed and Independent Auditing Committee. Other working groups and advisory committees may be formed as needed, and the Merit Review process (described in Chapter 3) also requires the voluntary participation of qualified experts to form adjudication committees to evaluate the quality and significance of research proposals.

2.3 NSERC

The Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) was founded in 1978, ostensibly as a spin-off from the National Research Council (NRC) who has previously been responsible for supporting university-based research in natural sciences.

The mandate of NSERC is almost a mirror to that of SSHRC, but with the necessary changes to reflect its domain of natural sciences as opposed to social sciences. NSERC’s mandate is to:

- promote and assist research in the natural sciences and engineering, other than the health sciences; and
- advise the Minister of ISED in respect of such matters relating to such research that the Minister may refer to the Council for its consideration.

NSERC’s organization structure also resembles that of SSHRC with a Council, appointed by the Minister, that advises the President/CEO, and who is responsible for the operations of the corporation (see Appendix 2). The President of NSERC is also advised by an Independent Audit Committee regarding the efficacy of its programs, risk management, and quality controls. Unlike SSHRC, NSERC separates the duties of its program committee into a standing Committee on Discovery Research (named for NSERC’s primary research funding program) and a Committee on Research Partnerships. These two committees recruit scientists and engineers to serve on the selection committees who perform the Merit Review process.

2.4 CIHR

The Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR) was created by an act of parliament in 2000, over 20 years after NSERC and SSHRC were established. As such its governance structure differs from the other two RCs. It is also unique as it reports to the Minister of Health as opposed to ISED, as is the case with NSERC and SSHRC (see Appendix 1).

Having been founded in the 21st Century, the organizational structure of CIHR reflects a more progressive approach to research that is more focused on bringing researchers, doctors, patients, and funders together, as well as facilitating more engagement with stakeholders from the public and private sectors. The most unique element of CIHR is that it is composed of 13 independent Institutes. These Institutes are not “bricks-and-mortar” establishments but are entirely virtual networks of experts and practitioners within a given field. These member networks are:

- Institute of Aging
- Institute of Cancer Research
- Institute of Circulatory and Respiratory Health
- Institute of Gender and Health
- Institute of Genetics
- Institute of Health Services and Policy Research
- Institute of Human Development, Child and Youth Health
- Institute of Indigenous Peoples’ Health
- Institute of Infection and Immunity
- Institute of Musculoskeletal Health and Arthritis
- Institute of Neurosciences, Mental Health and Addiction
- Institute of Nutrition, Metabolism and Diabetes
- Institute of Population and Public Health

As stated in the preamble of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research Act, these institutions were created in recognition of the “... multi-factorial nature of health problems and opportunities, the involvement and recognition of, and respect for, health researchers from all research disciplines, and the cooperation of
a wide range of partners from all relevant sectors, the provinces and other countries...”. The institutional structure represents a design for collaboration, aimed at enabling researchers to work together without constraints of geography or the siloes of academic disciplines.'

CIHR explain their purpose as follows: “CIHR’s mandate is to excel, according to internationally accepted standards of scientific excellence, in the creation of new knowledge and its translation into improved health for Canadians, more effective health services and products and a strengthened Canadian health care system.”

The familiar pattern of a central, accountable Executive working with a committee of scholars and subject matter experts is present within CIHR, albeit in a more decentralized manner. Each Institute is led by its Scientific Director who determines the priorities for its own research initiatives and engagement activities based on advice and direction from an Institute Advisory Board.

Although each Institute has a degree of autonomy, their efforts are still integrated with each other and the larger CIHR corporation. The Scientific Directors all serve on the Science Council, together with the President of CIHR and members of the executive team. The position of President maintains a similar role at CIHR as in SSHRC and NSERC, serving as CEO and managing the day-to-day operations of the corporation. The strategic direction of CIHR is set by its Governing Council, who are supported in their work by a number of standing committees covering matters such as finance, ethics, and the oversight of stem cell research. As with all of the RCs, the performance of CIHR is monitored by an Audit Committee.

In the context of Indigenous Research, the Institute of Indigenous Peoples’ Health (IIPH) is of particular relevance. The IIPH describes its mission as the following:

“IIPH will play a lead role in developing research capacity in the First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities, and will support partnerships and alliances between Indigenous communities and health research groups at the local, regional, national and international levels. IIPH supports health research that respects indigenous values, beliefs and cultures, while generating new knowledge to improve the health and wellbeing of Indigenous Peoples.”

The current Scientific Director of the IIPH is Dr. Carrie Bourassa, who had accepted another four-year term as director in January 2021. Dr. Bourassa currently directs the IIPH from the University of Saskatchewan, where she serves as a Professor in the Department of Community Health & Epidemiology. Prior to this she spent over 15 years as a professor in the Department of Indigenous Health, Education and Social Work at the First Nations University of Canada. The Institutional Advisory board of IIPH is composed of First Nations, Inuit, Métis, and non-Indigenous members representing both a variety of academic disciplines and Cultural Knowledge (see Appendix 2).

IIPH collaborates with other health institutes on three major initiatives: Pathways to Health Equity for Aboriginal Peoples which seeks to address persistent health disparities that affect Indigenous communities; Network Environments for Indigenous Health Research which aims to establish several research centres across Canada to engage Indigenous communities in capacity building, collaborative research, and knowledge sharing; and the Indigenous Healthy Life Trajectories Initiative, an Indigenous-specific branch of the Healthy Life Trajectories Initiative which takes a long-term, developmental approach to studying non-communicable diseases and mental health issues. IIPH also funds a variety of other research projects focused on the health and wellness of First Nation, Inuit, and Métis communities, addressing topics such as food security in Canada’s North, and how Traditional Indigenous Knowledge and “western” research can collaborate and integrate to produce new treatments and beneficial outcomes for Indigenous peoples.
3.0 Indigenous Research in the Research System

As described in Section 1 of this guide, there is increasing recognition of the pivotal role research plays in advancing the rights of Indigenous peoples, building a path towards reconciliation, and ensuring the future health and economic equity of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities. As a result of this, and in the context of domestic and international movements regarding Indigenous rights and decolonization, there is a growing need for Indigenous Research by Indigenous peoples.

Research is an expensive undertaking and federal research funding, as directed by the RCs described above, is intimately linked to Canada’s mainstream academic institutions. Some of the reasons for this dependency are outlined in the opening of this section. Ultimately, the post-secondary educational environment and the transactional requirements needed to obtain research funding present a number of barriers that hinder the active participation of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.

An overview of some of these barriers is given in both the final report of Canada’s Fundamental Science Review (CSRF) and in the Tri-Council’s strategic plan on Indigenous Research31.

One category of challenges stems from epistemological bias that is persistent in academia, and stems from the legacy of colonialism. As a result of this bias, academic institutions and funders tend to devalue the knowledge held and created by Indigenous ways of knowing, unless this knowledge has been validated by western ways of knowing. Within western academia, Indigenous cultures, ways of knowing, and worldviews have historically been characterized as being “unscientific.” This epistemological bias has had a deterrent effect on Indigenous students and researchers who find academia unwelcoming and/or hostile to their culture and their communities. Some reports have stated that some Indigenous students and researchers feel “torn apart” by their expectations of the school, the standard academic career path, and the Traditional teachings of their culture.

This epistemological bias also affects the evaluation of Indigenous Research proposals as peer-review panels lack sufficient understanding, familiarity, and respect for Indigenous models and frameworks for understanding, sense-making, and theory building.

There are also several barriers to access stemming from the eligibility and evaluation criteria that define which researchers and research Institutions receive funding. These are discussed in detail in Section 3. However, a key aspect of this system is that it is heavily biased towards larger universities and researchers with an established history of research publications and previous grant awards. This poses additional roadblocks for smaller and newly recognized institutes (such as the Indigenous Institutes) looking to access research grants.

Indigenous Institutes (IIs) face additional challenges that are by-products of continued colonial bias. IIs have lower funding levels and fewer staff than many non-Indigenous Post-secondary Institutions, which inhibits building of the administrative and operational infrastructure needed to conduct extended research programs. Issues with limited capacity and infrastructure that are common in many Indigenous communities can also affect participation in modern research, and these issues include: poor internet connectivity, costs of travel from remote locations to partner institutions, language barriers, etc.
Throughout colonization, Indigenous peoples in Canada have experienced exploitation, discrimination, and violence in the name of research, often without gaining direct benefit to their communities. As a result of this history, there is a lack of respect for and trust in non-Indigenous researchers looking to engage with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples and communities. This poor relationship between Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous research entities is another factor that suppresses Indigenous participation in academia. All of these factors are compounded by the systemic lack of representation of Indigenous peoples in academia, and combined, have established a vicious cycle that may be impossible to break without a concerted demand for change from governments, academics, and Indigenous peoples and their allies. As previously established, much of this demand has been bolstered by a greater movement(s) towards decolonization and reconciliation, and by responses to interventions such at the TRC, UNDRIP, and the CFSR. The three RCs, both individually and collectively, have been taking steps to cultivate a more respectful and culturally safe research landscape for Indigenous peoples. They have also been increasing their support for greater Indigenous Research training and capacity-building. In the next subsection, we provide an overview of the actions and initiatives taken by the RCs regarding Indigenous Research and their efforts to redefine the relationship between Indigenous communities and researchers at-large. In Section 4, Specific changes regarding eligibility criteria and peer-review are described, in the context of describing the Research Council Funding System.

3.1 Redefining the Relationship

A reasonable starting point for understanding the RCs’ relationship to Indigenous research is to consider their current Definitions of Terms.

In the Definitions of Terms, as used in their grant programs, SSHRC defines Indigenous Research as:

“Research in any field or discipline that is conducted by, grounded in or engaged with First Nations, Inuit, Métis or other Indigenous nations, communities, societies or individuals, and their wisdom, cultures, experiences or knowledge systems, as expressed in their dynamic forms, past and present. Indigenous research can embrace the intellectual, physical, emotional and/or spiritual dimensions of knowledge in creative and interconnected relationships with people, places and the natural environment. . . ”

CIHR offers a similar definition:

“Indigenous Health Research (IHR) can be defined by any field or discipline related to health and/or wellness that is conducted by, grounded in, or engaged with, First Nations, Inuit or Métis communities, societies or individuals and their wisdom, cultures, experiences or knowledge systems, as expressed in their dynamic forms, past and present.

Indigenous health and wellness research embraces the intellectual, physical, emotional and/or spiritual dimensions of knowledge in creative and interconnected relationships with people, places and the natural environment. Such research is based on the right to respectful engagement and equitable opportunities; it honours culture, language, history, and traditions. . . ”

These two RCs provide similar functional definitions and also take care to reference interconnectivity, emotional, and spiritual elements of knowledge, which is not typically associated with the philosophy and approach underpinning colonial standards of academic rigor. This suggests a willingness to embrace and integrate Indigenous worldviews, which are often characterized as emphasizing a more holistic and interrelated epistemology within the practice of research.
Text accompanying both definitions state that any researcher conducting Indigenous Research is committed to “respectful relationships with Indigenous Peoples and communities.”

SSHRC’s definition goes on to state (emphasis added):

“This understanding of Indigenous research reaffirms SSHRC’s support of research by and with Indigenous peoples. Research by and with Indigenous peoples and communities emphasizes and values their existing strengths, assets and knowledge systems.”

The use of the terms “by and with Indigenous peoples” demonstrates the core theme underneath SSHRC’s efforts attempts to redefine the relationship between Indigenous communities and research by shifting from a historic context of research done “to” (and supposedly “for”) Indigenous peoples to a future of research done by Indigenous peoples.

3.1.1 NSERC

It is noteworthy that NSERC has not published any definition of Indigenous Research of its own. In fact, references to Indigenous peoples on NSERC’s website are in the context of stories, grant programs, and policies regarding the promotion of science, funding, and scholarships for students, and policies regarding diversity and inclusion.

In the CFSR report, as part of a broad summary of changes that RCs had made to improve relationships with Indigenous peoples, the panel noted: “. . .NSERC continues to focus efforts on encouraging more Indigenous researchers to enter STEM fields, but the pipeline is small, and Indigenous representation in STEM disciplines is very thin.”

This appears to remain the case; NSERC’s approach to Indigenous Research, therefore, could be largely classified as “pipeline development.” NSERC offers several means of supporting both Indigenous students and the promotion of STEM fields in Indigenous communities. One example is the NSERC Indigenous Student Ambassadors program which provides funds for Indigenous students and postdoctoral scientists to engage with First Nation, Inuit, or Métis communities. Such activities would include participating in science outreach events or visiting schools to share the experiences of a scientific career from an Indigenous lens. Several NSERC scholarships, including its Undergraduate Research Awards and Doctoral Studentships, also allow Institutions to nominate self-identified Indigenous students beyond their allocated quota.

As with most federal agencies, the three RCs are taking action to increase equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) within their operations. This includes providing incentives and guidance within the grant programs to increase the representation of certain demographic groups. Indigenous peoples are one of these equity-seeking groups, together with women, people with disabilities, people of racialized groups, and members of 2SLGBTQIA+ communities. NSERC manages the Tri-Councils’ Dimensions program, which is designed to increase EDI in the post-secondary sector. The program invites Institutions to endorse and commit to a charter of principles that inform EDI objectives and actions. Principle 5 of the charter states:

“To contribute to reconciliation, research with, by or impacting Indigenous Peoples must align with the research policies and best practices identified through ongoing engagement with First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples and their organizations.”

The Dimensions program and NSERC’s own grant policies and incentives address the participation of Indigenous peoples in Post-secondary Institutions and the natural sciences, respectively. However, this raises the question of whether or not any program of research conducted by a person of Indigenous heritage can be considered Indigenous Research? It is an open question on whether or not researchers in STEM fields, or other the disciplines covered by NSERC, would even consider themselves to be conducting Indigenous Research as established and discussed within this guide.
NSERC maintains a publicly accessible database containing records of their competitions, and the researchers and projects that have received funding in previous years. A scan of the titles and abstracts of projects that can be reasonably considered as “Indigenous-related” highlights some interesting patterns. Many NSERC-funded research projects that refer to First Nations, Inuit, or Métis peoples only mention them in an indirect manner, or in other words, as communities affected by or intended to be the eventual beneficiaries of the subject being researched.

3.1.2 SSHRC

SSHRC is unique amongst the three RCs as it is the only council to have been directly referenced in the Final Reports of RCAP and TRC.

Recommendation 1.7.1b of RCAP called for SSHRC to convene an Indigenous advisory board to provide guidance on a project intended to promote and publish a history of Indigenous peoples in Canada. The report went on to recommend that SSHRC builds partnerships with Indigenous communities and Knowledge Keepers, governments and educators, and Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars to ensure support for the Indigenous history project.

SSHRC was also named in TRC Call to Action 65. Specifically, SSHRC was called to establish a multi-year research fund, in collaboration with Indigenous communities and Post-secondary Institutions, to advance widespread understanding of reconciliation.

In 2002, SSHRC’s Governing Council advised the corporation to make Indigenous Research a priority area during a major revision of its strategic research programs. Following this, SSHRC launched a public dialogue to discuss and gather input on the matter of research on, by, and for Indigenous peoples. In subsequent statements, SSHRC would claim this as a starting point for their “commitment to supporting Indigenous research.” The initial dialogue included: a call for briefs, of which they received over 50, significant online discussion fora, and Canada’s first roundtable on Indigenous Research.

A synthesis of this Dialogue on Research and Aboriginal Peoples was presented to the Council in 2003. The paper reported key themes and ideas emerging from this engagement, and many of these takeaways are still relevant to the discussion of Indigenous Research today. Such themes and ideas included a focus on research led by Indigenous community organizations; research and mobilization of Indigenous knowledge systems; Indigenous participation in peer-review committees; and opportunities for Indigenous peoples to establish their own research and ethical protocols that match the unique aspects of their communities and culture. While this report was a summary of dialogue and not a policy document, it did suggest two broad strategic directions for policy consideration:

- The recommendation to approach the topic of Indigenous Research through an equity lens and actively work towards equitable treatment of Indigenous researchers and their Cultural Knowledge systems; and
- The recommendation for Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers and communities to commit to the joint exploration of the rich subject matter and research opportunities associated with Indigenous Research.

It is interesting to note that the original advice of the Governing Council, came after SSHRC received an unsolicited brief from the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, now known as the First Nations University of Canada. The brief observed that, following RCAP and other investigations, a sea-change in Indigenous Research was beginning to take place, empowered by the “need to shift the research paradigm from one in which outsiders seek solutions to ‘the Indian problem’ to one in which Indigenous peoples conduct research and facilitate solutions themselves.” In this example one can see the beginnings of the “by us and with us” sentiment, and the important role an Indigenous Post-secondary Institution played in...
prompting SSHRC to act, and this effort should not be overlooked.

Between 2004 and 2009, SSHRC continued the work of the Dialogue on Research and Aboriginal Peoples by offering a pilot funding program, the Aboriginal Research Pilot Program (ARPP), for Indigenous Research. The decision to launch the program arose from acknowledgement that although the number of Indigenous researchers in universities was increasing, they were under-represented in research funding. The program provided Development Grants ($25,000 for one year) and full Research Grants ($250,000 over three years) to promote research by Indigenous communities to address issues that were relevant to that community, and to facilitate the access of universities and researchers to Indigenous knowledge systems. The opportunity was open to universities, colleges, and Indigenous organizations, but each proposal required the participation of both an Indigenous community and an academic institution. The latter was likely required to meet requirements of Institutional Eligibility at the time.

A unique experiment within the pilot program was the use of a two-stage peer-review process to evaluate the proposed projects. Both stages were conducted by panels whose majority membership consisted of First Nation, Inuit, and Métis peoples. The first stage of review evaluated the relevance of each proposal in terms of the ARPP’s objectives and the quality of the Applicant’s partnership with the participating community. The second stage considered the proposal’s merit and potential impact, in terms of scholarship and benefits to Indigenous peoples. In an evaluation of the program commissioned by SSHRC in 2008, analysts concluded that this two-stage process was effective in identifying promising research consistent with the program’s aims and in screening out applications that did not align with this vision. The evaluation panel went on to recommend that guidelines and criteria for the peer-review of research proposals be modified to be more flexible and inclusive regarding research partnerships and the types of knowledge and methods considered to be “legitimate.” However, the evaluation panel also identified that the Institutional Eligibility requirement related to non-university-based research organizations and, in particular, to Indigenous Institutions, was a barrier to participation. If an Institution’s proposed project successfully passed the relevance review stage but it did not have an existing Memorandum of Understanding regarding funding from SSHRC, it would have to undergo a review process to establish eligibility. This process was often lengthy, required significant flexibility and adaptation on the part of the Institution and SSHRC, and often led to delays in the commencement of research. The ARPP evaluation panel recommended that SSHRC reflect upon “the conditions of institutional eligibility as they relate to non-university organizations and in particular to Aboriginal organizations, so that mutually appropriate conditions of partnership can more easily be negotiated.” Although progress has ostensibly been made since the days of the ARPP, the issue of institutional eligibility continues to be a barrier for Indigenous (and smaller non-Indigenous) Post-secondary Institutions. Institutional Eligibility is discussed in more detail in Section 4.

In the years following the final ARPP competition, and particularly in response to the TRC Calls to Actions, SSHRC claims to have been conducting ongoing collaboration and dialogue with Indigenous communities. However, the next major landmark in their relationship to Indigenous peoples in context of the conduct and funding of research was the formation of SSHRC’s Indigenous Advisory Circle in 2014. This committee of 15 includes researchers from First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities, together with non-Indigenous researchers selected for their extensive experience in Indigenous Research partnerships, and at least one Algonquin Elder or Knowledge Keeper (given that SSHRC’s offices are located on the unceded territory of the Algonquin). The Circle’s original mandate was to provide advice to SSHRC’s senior management regarding Indigenous-related aspects of research and scholarship programs, however, following the TRC,
advancing SSHRC’s efforts to advance reconciliation was added to its purpose.

The newly established Advisory Circle, and further ongoing engagement with Indigenous communities, demonstrated clear impact in the following year (2015). As part of an integrated strategy on Indigenous Research, SSHRC made significant policy statements regarding Indigenous Research. These statements included Guidelines of the Merit Review of Indigenous Research\(^{43}\), which provides a framework to ensure Indigenous knowledge systems are recognized as valid sources of expertise and scholarship, and can be appropriately accounted for when evaluating the “value” of proposed research and the capability of Indigenous researchers. The core principles of these guidelines are described in the wider context of Merit Review in Section 3.

SSHRC also released a Statement of Principles for Indigenous Research\(^ {44}\) in the same year. This statement reaffirms SSHRC’s commitment to supporting Indigenous Research and emphasizes the role of Indigenous knowledge and perspectives in advancing human knowledge and understanding. Furthermore, by recognizing Indigenous knowledge for its contribution to research, it establishes that support of Indigenous Research is, in fact, also an expression of SSHRC’s commitments to excellence in scholarship.

The phrasing of the statement of principles, quoted below, can be interpreted as a broad set of commitments by SSHRC:

**Statement of Principles for Indigenous Research**

- To guide its implementation of current and future activities related to these objectives, SSHRC will do the following:
  - Recognize Indigenous research as defined under the Definitions of Terms on SSHRC’s website.
  - Respect Indigenous knowledge systems, including ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies, as important avenues for exploring the contours of indigenous knowledge, contributing to interdisciplinary collaboration, and extending the boundaries of knowledge in western disciplines.
  - Affirm the important, holistic and interdisciplinary contributions to human knowledge that are made by Indigenous knowledge systems.
  - Support the talent of Indigenous researchers and students, including through direct and indirect financial support for Indigenous students.
  - Promote and facilitate fair and equitable merit review processes and procedures by including on adjudication committees reviewing Indigenous research proposals Indigenous researchers and/or experts in Indigenous research.
  - Value collaborative and diverse relationships with First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples in Canada, and with indigenous peoples in other parts of the world.
  - Recognize and respect the diverse protocols and processes appropriate to conducting research in Indigenous communities with Indigenous peoples.
  - Accommodate the diversity of Indigenous peoples and identities, each with their particular aspirations and occupying distinct cultural, historical, political and socio-economic spaces.
  - Encourage the participation of elders and Knowledge Keepers through recognition of their research contributions and the observance of knowledge-specific protocols.
  - Ensure that all levels of SSHRC programming includes information, guidance, training and tools that help build awareness and understanding about the importance and value of these principles.
  - Continue to identify important topics, issues and questions relevant to Indigenous research and to which the social sciences and humanities can contribute its knowledge, talent and expertise, through initiatives including Imagining Canada’s Future.\(^ {4}\)
Today, these principles continue to be a guide for SSHRC’s practice regarding Indigenous Research, and helped inform the Tri-Councils’ recent, coordinated efforts in developing an Indigenous research strategy which will be further discussed in this Section.

Starting in 2012, SSHRC began an extended “foresight exercise” in an effort to anticipate the major challenges that Canada would face in the near future. The Imaging Canada’s Future initiative involved a comprehensive series of dialogues with experts in the academic, public, and private sectors, within Canada and world-wide. In 2013, it was revealed that one of the six emergent challenge areas focused on the question: “How are the experiences and aspirations of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada essential to building a successful shared future?”

As part of this initiative in 2016, Knowledge Synthesis Grants (KSG) were launched to provide special funding opportunities for projects related to all six challenge areas. These opportunities were not intended to fund original research but were instead a means of supporting surveys of existing scholarship and thought leadership, and endeavors to identify key themes and knowledge gaps. Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada co-funded KSGs for the Indigenous-related topics, and throughout the process, approved 28 funded surveys that integrated information from multiple disciplines and sectors with Cultural Knowledge and the teachings of Elders. The Imaging Canada’s Future initiative also included opportunities for KSG recipients, together with representatives from government and industry, to meet and share their learnings through a workshop and forum held in 2017.

A summary report, bringing together the results of all 28 synthesis projects and the insights shared at the various fora, was published in 2018. One of six themes that emerged from the Knowledge Synthesis efforts was “Indigenous research: Ethics, knowledge systems and methods.” The report acknowledged efforts to increase the act of research as one performed “with and by” Indigenous peoples, and recognized influential policies in that shift, notably the Tri-Council policies on ethical research involving Indigenous peoples and the development of the OCAP® (ownership, control, access, and possession) framework. The report then produced a summary of key insights and the current state of knowledge as distilled from the KSG projects. Themes presented included: the integration of Indigenous knowledge systems with “western” approaches, epistemologies, and methodologies; the role of technological resources and digital records of Indigenous materials and research data; best practices for ethical research and collaboration with Indigenous communities, among others.

One particularly relevant topic described the gaps between emerging standards of best practice regarding Indigenous research with their implementation in research Institutions and subsequent funding. Despite a large amount of writing and research regarding best practices, some frameworks (such as OCAP©) were found to be inconsistently applied within the process of universities. One observation, suggested to be a symptom of epistemological bias, was that researchers using collaborative, participatory methodologies and employed Indigenous epistemologies were less likely to receive research funding or be published in impactful journals.

On its webpage regarding Indigenous Research, SSHRC makes the claim that it is “committed to supporting and promoting social sciences and humanities research by and with Indigenous peoples, including First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples . . . As an integral part of this commitment, SSHRC works to support the advancement of Indigenous researchers, including Indigenous graduate students and Indigenous postdoctoral researchers working in the social sciences and humanities.” The history of the activities supporting this claim is described in this section, and although progress has been made, there are still lingering barriers affecting the participation of Indigenous Institutes. In fact, it is notable that the list of Indigenous interests that SSHRC states it supports do not mention Indigenous Institutes at all.
3.1.3 CIHR

Founded in 2000, much later than the other two RCs, CIHR was born into a context where the recognition of Indigenous ways of knowing, the integration of Cultural Knowledge with “western” standards of scholarly rigour, and movements supporting Indigenous agency and self-determination had already gained momentum in some academic circles.

From its inception CIHR has devoted special attention to building meaningful, collaborative relationships with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities through its Institute of Indigenous Peoples Health (IIPH), originally called the Institute of Aboriginal Peoples Health (IAPH). Whereas, SSHRC did not establish an Indigenous Advisory Circle until 2014, IIPH has always received Indigenous input regarding its programs and initiatives through its Institute Advisory Board (IAB). CIHR, as a whole, has maintained Indigenous representation on its Governing Council and has encouraged the same in the Advisory boards of all 13 of its Institutes.

Due to this structure, there is some evidence to suggest that CIHR has been ahead of the curve regarding issues of Indigenous Research, relative to the other RCs. For example, CIHR had established its own set of guidelines and standards regarding the ethical conduct of research on Indigenous peoples as early as 2007, predating the Tri-Councils’ corresponding policy by three years. The CIHR Guidelines for Health Research Involving Aboriginal People were, in fact, the foundation for subsequent policies.

In 2014, however, CIHR came under fierce criticism to building meaningful, collaborative relationships with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities following major reforms to its programs and organizational structure, which included a notable reduction to funding for the IIPH.

In 2014, the AFN issued a resolution calling for CIHR to restore full funding to the IIPH. By that time, proportional funding for the IIPH had been reduced and was at 3.3%, compared to 3.7% in 2009, and funding to all Institutes was slashed by 50%. 2014 was also the year that funding for the Network Environments for Aboriginal Health Research (NEAHR), which was a widely celebrated program for building Indigenous Research capacity, was reduced. In addition, CIHR decreased the number of institutional advisory boards from one each to four in total, with the new boards expected to provide oversight to multiple Institutes. This move included the dissolution of IIPH’s IAB.

In response to what they described as “an emerging crisis between CIHR and the Aboriginal Health Community,” Indigenous and non-Indigenous health researchers from numerous Institutions across Canada formed the Aboriginal Health Research Steering Committee (AHRSC). The AHRSC sent an open brief to CIHR in November 2014 that detailed their concerns with CIHR’s recent decisions and their implications for the future of Indigenous Health Research. In the introduction of this brief, the AHRSC opined:

“At a time when many public institutions such as universities, SSHRC and others are struggling to develop mechanisms to reflect a new and respectful relationship with First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples, CIHR seems to be going the other way. It has ended its earlier strong commitment to build capacity in Aboriginal health research; it is eliminating the mechanisms that have previously provided a strong voice for Aboriginal health priorities and perspectives; and it is putting in place new systemic barriers which have the effect of discouraging proposals from the Aboriginal health community in the first instance and subsequently disadvantaging those who have the courage to proceed.” Founded in 2000, much later than the other two RCs, CIHR was born into a context where the recognition of Indigenous ways of knowing, the integration of Cultural Knowledge with “western” standards of scholarly rigour, and movements supporting Indigenous agency and self-determination had already gained momentum in some academic circles.

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In addition to the concerns noted by AFN, the AHRSC also criticized recent changes to CIHR’s adjudication policies, claiming they created and reinforced significant barriers that prevented Indigenous organizations from accessing funding. In particular, they stated that CIHR had taken steps to phase out the Indigenous-specific peer-review of research proposals and had revised the initial screening process to include a greater emphasis on mainstream, colonial metrics of scholarly impact.

It is also interesting to note that the AHRSC did not accuse CIHR of any deliberate malintent towards Indigenous health issues, but rather making decisions without engaging, considering, or learning about possible systemic consequences:

“We are not claiming that the Aboriginal health research field is deliberately being targeted by the measures listed above, at least as far as we know. For the most part, the senior CIHR leadership is making decisions with system-wide application and is not taking the time to understand that it has a diverse constituency. System-wide policy has quite unequal impacts especially when it comes to the Aboriginal health community.”
Perhaps in response to this criticism, CIHR made “Health and wellness for Aboriginal peoples” one of its research priorities in its 2015 strategic plan. In 2016, after extensive dialogue with the AHRSC, CIHR revealed an Action Plan\(^2\) which made specific commitments to action regarding Indigenous Health Research. This commitments state that CIHR will:

6. “Increase its capacity to interact with Indigenous communities in a culturally appropriate manner, through the creation of a dedicated team assigned to work directly with Indigenous peoples, researchers, and communities;

7. Ensure that the Federal Government is made aware that the membership of CIHR’s Governing Council should reflect the diversity of Canada’s Indigenous peoples;

8. Accept the definition of “Indigenous health research” as drafted by the Institute of Aboriginal Peoples’ Health in consultation with Indigenous stakeholders;

9. Develop, in collaboration with the newly appointed Institute Advisory Board on Indigenous Peoples’ Health, performance indicators to validate CIHR investments in Indigenous health research;

10. Increase its investments in Indigenous health research to a minimum of 4.6% (proportional to Canada’s Indigenous population) of CIHR’s annual budget;

11. Seek to grow these investments as research capacity and additional financial resources allow;

12. Continue working with the Reference Group on Indigenous Health Research to implement iterative peer review processes for applications relevant to Indigenous health, so as to ensure better success rates for Indigenous-focused investigator-initiated grant applications;

13. Create, with the advice of the Institute Advisory Board on Indigenous Peoples’ Health, impactful strategic initiatives aimed at improving the health of Indigenous peoples;

14. Hold annual meetings between the President of CIHR and leaders of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), and the Métis National Council (MNC) to discuss Indigenous health research priorities;

15. Work with other federal research councils to develop strategies to strengthen Indigenous research capacity development through training and mentoring along the entire career continuum from undergraduate to postdoctoral levels.”

As part of this work, CIHR reestablished the IAB for the IAPH. In 2018, the Institute was also renamed to the Institute of Indigenous People’s Health, to reflect changes in language that were deemed more respectful and appropriate, and the Network Environments for Indigenous Health Research was launched as a successor to the celebrated NEAHR program.

As of December 2020, CIHR has claimed success in fulfilling commitments 2-4 listed above, with many of the rest being noted as “ongoing.” To summarize some highlights of current progress\(^3\):

- Proportional investment in Indigenous Health Research reached 4.0% for the 2019-2020 fiscal year. CIHR also stated that they would annually report progress towards the 4.6% target to parliament.: CIHR has worked with the other RCs to establish a Tri-Council Reference Group for the Appropriate Review of Indigenous Research, whose membership was confirmed and announced.
- CIHR has been conducting annual meetings with representatives from AFN, ITK and MNC, and seats on the IIPH-IAB have been reserved for representatives of these groups.
- Work on facilitating Tri-Council collaboration to develop an overarching strategy for Indigenous Research across Canada began in 2018, as will be described next.
3.1.4 Tri-Council Strategic Plan 2020

As noted in Section 1, Recommendation 5.7 of the CFSR report called upon all three RCs, and the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) to collaborate in the development of a strategy to ensure long-term support for Indigenous Research. Following its creation in 2017, the Canada Research Coordination Committee (CRCC) reaffirmed the RCs’ commitment to the TRC Calls to Action and launched a new national dialogue with Indigenous communities to co-develop a multidisciplinary strategy to support Indigenous Research and Indigenous Research capacity, consistent with the principles of Truth and Reconciliation. The federal government provided $3.8 million in funding to SSHRC to lead the implementation of this Strengthening Indigenous Research initiative.

As with other national dialogues, the engagement process was a blend of funded research projects and face-to-face engagement events. Between July 2018 and March 2019, 14 regional engagement events took place across Canada. These workshops and roundtables engaged with Indigenous organizations and communities and encouraged participation from a diverse array of Indigenous voices, including Elders, youth, researchers, and business leaders.

In 2018, in parallel to this endeavour, SSHRC created a special funding opportunity, the Indigenous Research Capacity and Reconciliation: Connection Grants. This program provided exceptions to the standard SSHRC rules on eligibility and allowed input from researchers of any discipline (not just social sciences or humanities) if it could inform the development of the strategy. Another unique aspect of this opportunity was that it allowed non-profit Indigenous organizations (with a research mandate) to apply, in addition to Post-secondary Institutions. In fact, a minimum of 51% of the awards were reserved for these applications, and such Institutions had a 85% success rate in their applications. This represented a significant adjustment to previous standards regarding Institutional Eligibility, and Indigenous non-profit organizations are still eligible to apply for some, but not all, SSHRC programs today.

It should be noted that this competition did not fund research per se, but instead encouraged workshops, community gatherings, and other activities to share and gather information within communities. The competition funded 116 projects at up to $50,000. Each recipient was required to produce a position paper to further inform the developing strategy.

The position papers were shared at a national dialogue held in Ottawa in March 2019, which brought together government officials, Tri-Council and CRCC representatives, members of First Nation, Inuit, and Métis communities, and the recipients of the Connection Grants. Topics that emerged through this national dialogue and through synthesis of the other engagements and the position papers rang familiar with those that arose from previous dialogues and other works on Indigenous Research and these included the need to decolonize research; the need for respectful and meaningful relationships; concerns regarding data sovereignty and intellectual property; desire for more Indigenous leadership and decision-making within the Research Funding System; fitness of ethical standards and protocols; and the removal of barriers to funding due to eligibility requirements.

Setting New Directions, the final Tri-Council strategic plan, launched in January 2020, identified four core strategic priorities for building Indigenous Research capacity in Canada between 2019 and 2022. Each direction was described by a number of proposed mechanisms and desired outcomes. These mechanisms are summarized on the next page to set expectations regarding the types of action to observe from the three RCs in the next three years.

Setting New Directions was published in December 2019 and implementation efforts have undoubtedly been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. However, two concrete steps towards delivery on the above commitments do include: the aforementioned establishment of a Reference Group for the Appropriate Review of Indigenous Research (II.A) and a call for
membership in a Tri-Council Indigenous Leadership Circle in Research (IV.E) was issued in October 2020.\textsuperscript{59}

In summary, the three RCs have each undertaken their own journey to rebuild relationships between Indigenous communities and researchers within their respective disciplines. All of the RCs have made a general commitment to supporting Indigenous Research and more specific pledges regarding respectful and inclusive evaluation of Indigenous Research, recognition of the scholarly contributions of Indigenous researchers, and equitable access to federal research funding. However, it remains to be seen what effects the official recognition of Ontario’s Indigenous Institutions may have on the RCs’ considerations and what opportunities may emerge.

\textbf{Setting New Directions to Support Indigenous Research Training in Canada: Tri-Council Strategic Plan}

\textbf{Strategic Directions and Proposed Mechanisms:}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{1. Building Relationships with First Nation, Inuit, and Métis peoples}
    \begin{itemize}
      \item a) Offer funding opportunities to support relationships between researchers and Indigenous communities to collaborate on research projects.
      \item b) Create effective tools and resources to facilitate access between Indigenous groups to connect with researchers involved in Indigenous Research to promote knowledge sharing and collaboration.
    \end{itemize}
  \item \textbf{2. Supporting research priorities of Indigenous peoples}
    \begin{itemize}
      \item a) Revise and review Merit Review criteria to acknowledge the contribution of Indigenous knowledge and to ensure researchers are accountable to their partner communities.
      \item b) Champion and support Indigenous data management by strengthening requirements for community consent, access and ownership of Indigenous data, and safeguard Indigenous intellectual property rights.
      \item c) Strengthen adherence to Indigenous ethics and protocols by respecting the need for engagement and consent, and acknowledging the roles of Elders in mentoring Indigenous Research.
    \end{itemize}
  \item \textbf{3. Create greater funding accessibility to grant agency programs}
    \begin{itemize}
      \item a) Revise eligibility criteria to ensure fair access to funds for Indigenous non-profit organizations.
      \item b) Offer funding opportunities for Indigenous students through increasing scholarship, fellowship, and undergraduate research training opportunities.
      \item c) Create effective tools and resources to simplify and demystify application processes and requirements.
    \end{itemize}
  \item \textbf{4. Championing Indigenous leadership, self-determination, and capacity in research}
    \begin{itemize}
      \item a) Provide funding opportunities for research capacity building in Indigenous communities.
      \item b) Promote the leadership of Indigenous peoples in guiding Indigenous Research and training.
      \item c) Require Indigenous cultural safety training of all federal employees at the RCs.
      \item d) Establish greater Indigenous representation at the RCs to include Indigenous voices in decision-making.
      \item e) Create an Indigenous Leadership Circle to guide the implementation of these strategies.
    \end{itemize}
\end{itemize}
4.0 The Research Council Funding System

4.1 Overview of the System Map

The progress and promotion of publicly funded research in Canada, as with many systems and processes, is maintained by a network of relationships. Although these relationships may seem like a one-way exchange, they are all reciprocal and represent a web of commitments, responsibilities, and expectations that all agents involved make to one another. For example, although a RC provides funds to support a researcher’s activities, it does so with the understanding that the researcher will conduct those activities in a responsible manner and deliver appropriate results.

The key to understanding any system is to understand its purpose, and the central purpose of the Tri-Council Research Funding System can be described as:

“To allocate funds to support research that is deemed to offer the greatest, potential “value” to Canada and its people, and to ensure that such funded research is conducted in a responsible, ethical and productive manner.”

When looking at the publicly funded research system in Canada and how all of the parties and relationships combine to deliver on this purpose, it is helpful to consider three subsystems:

The Research Projects System: Determines which projects are awarded funding, and ensures accountability for the conduct and progress of the project.

The Funding Administration System: Specifies how funds are distributed in a manner that ensures appropriate oversight and regulation of the research.

The Partnership System: Describes how other organizations can become involved in research projects to further support promising research, and facilitate “knowledge and insights” that are converted into tangible outcomes for Canadians.

Two complementary “maps” that illustrate the system as a whole are provided in this Section. The first map, “Journey of a Grant Application,” (Figure 1.) is process driven and describes the major stages a grant application passes through in a competition. This illustrates how each RC validates eligibility, reviews the quality of each application, and comes to a decision on funding. The second map, “General Systems Map,” (Figure 2.) outlines the relationships between researcher/applicant, RC, and Institution. Whereas the process map establishes how the RCs’ review grants according to their criteria, the systems map explains why these criteria exist and how they support the core function of the funding system.

This Section aims to explain, at a high-level, how and why the system works in its current form. This approach is taken to better inform thinking and engagement on how alternative, more inclusive, paths can be found. For example, by understanding the logic for why the current Institutional Eligibility requirements are deemed “necessary,” it will be easier to engage the RCs and suggest other criteria that fulfill the same purpose but are less of a barrier to the participation of IIs. Links to specific policies are provided in the footnotes for readers to easily access further information.
1) Select a Grant Program
- Short-term Research Grants: Preliminary or pilot studies
- Longer-term Research Grants: Full research programs
- Knowledge Mobilization: Knowledge sharing and application (NOT research)

2) Prepare and Submit Application
Varies between councils and programs but generally requires:
- Project Proposal
- Budget
- Applicant Research History
- Letter of Intent (Not needed for all programs; Submitted before application)

3) Administrative Review
RC Staff Check Applications are
- Complete i.e. all requested documents provided
- Formatted in the prescribed manner
- Eligible according to: A. Subject-Matter Eligibility; B. Applicant Eligibility; D. Institutional Eligibility

4) Merit Review
Applications are reviewed by a committee of experts in the relevant subject matter. Typical qualities assessed are:
- Research record of Applicant
- Feasibility of research plan and budget.
- Innovation and importance of research
- Provisions for training and knowledge mobilization.

5) Notification of Decision
Applicants and their Institutions are notified of the RC decision. Awards are announced on RC websites together with:
- * PI and Collaborator names
- * Institution
- * Project title and description.
Entities:
1. Research Project
2. Research Council or RC (e.g. SSHRC)
3. Applicant/Principal Investigator
4. Co-Applicant (Optional)
5. Collaborator (Optional)
6. Institution (e.g. university or college)
7. Partner Organization (Optional)
8. Partnership Arrangement

Possible Barriers to Entry:
A. Subject Matter Eligibility
B. Applicant Eligibility
C. Merit Review
D. Institutional Eligibility.

Relationships:
[1-2] RC agrees to fund Research Project
[1-3] Applicant directs Research Project
[1-4] Co-Applicant contributes to Research Project
[1-5] Collaborator provides support services to Research Project
[1-7] Partner Organization contributes to funding Research Project.
[2-3] RC awards grant to Applicant
[2-6] RC directs funds to Institution
[3-6] Institution administers funds to Applicant and provides oversight to their activities
[3-8][7-8] Applicant and another Organization form a Partnership.
4.2 Research Projects System

This system is focused on selecting and supporting promising Research Projects (noted as “1” in Figure 2) and ensuring accountability and clear direction for that research.

The role of the Research Council (RC) [2] is to determine which projects are the most “worthy” of funding, in accordance with their respective mandates. Each grant program offered by an RC is, essentially, an annual competition in which the RCs invite proposals for projects to fund. These competitions, and their associated application processes, form the basis for the RCs to determine which projects promise the most “value” and allocate funds accordingly. Therefore, if a party wishes to receive RC funds to support their research, they must apply to a suitable grant competition, and in doing so, become Applicants [3].

Applicant is a deliberately vague term that describes a specific role within the system, rather than a given individual or group. Individual researchers, teams, or Institutions can all submit research proposals as Applicants, depending on the specifics of the grant program. The defining element of this role is that, if successful in being awarded the funds, the Applicant is expected to take the primary responsibility and accountability for directing and conducting the proposed Research Project [1-3]. Due to this need for clearly-defined accountability, the majority of grants are awarded to individual researchers, typically deemed as the Principle Investigator (PI). Some grant programs allow Institutions to take on the role of Applicant, however, they are typically required to nominate an individual PI for the project within the application.

If successful in the competition, the RC will award the grant to the Applicant [2-3] and commit to provide funding to support the research [1-2]. However, achieving this success and establishing the subsequent funding arrangement depends on several conditions (noted as letters “A,” “B,” and “C” in Figure 2) that concern both the Applicant and the nature of the proposed research program.

Subject Matter Eligibility [A]:

As discussed in Section 2, each RC operates according to its own mandate and jurisdiction, and they are careful to manage any perceived overlaps in research areas. As such, RCs will only review projects that fall within their mandate e.g., NSERC will only consider proposals on topics of natural sciences and engineering.

Naturally, some areas of research cross the boundaries of these mandates, particularly topics related to health. The RCs have jointly established specific guidelines to aid prospective Applicants in judging which council is most relevant to their research and a number of co-operative programs have been established to support interdisciplinary research. If a Research Project is deemed to be truly interdisciplinary, it may be eligible for support from multiple agencies.

Applicant Eligibility [B]:

The eligibility requirements for Applicants varies considerably depending on the relevant RC and the specific funding opportunity. However, for the research grant programs offered across the three RCs, the criteria exist to ensure that the Applicant has the capacity and experience to perform, direct, and be held accountable for the conduct of the proposed research activities. These requirements can be summarized as:

- Applicants must be associated with a Post-secondary Institution or non-profit institution. In general, this entity must be a recognized, “eligible” Institution or have applied for eligibility.
- Research grant funding is aimed at supporting research activities, and therefore, cannot be used to cover salaries. Therefore, Applicants must be employed, and their salaries paid by their affiliated institutions.
- Applicants, and nominated PIs, must be authorized to direct their own, independent research activities and not require the approval of another researcher.
- If Applicants are employed outside of their affiliated Institution, they must demonstrate their research...
activities are unrelated to their activities associated with their employment.

- Federal government employees are ineligible for RC research funding.

Additional criteria can apply depending on the Applicant’s background and history with the RCs. For example, some funding envelopes are targeted at Early Career Researchers (ECR), which typically refers to an investigator who has not held an independent-research position or tenured faculty position for more than five years or have had their careers significantly delayed for health or family reasons. Also, in some circumstances if an Applicant is currently receiving funding through a specific program, they may be ineligible for other similar funds.

In receiving funds, the applicant agrees to abide by all ethical and financial standards governing the conduct of the research. These require the Applicant to provide regular statements and reports regarding their activities and use of funds. Failure to submit such reports can affect one's standing within the RC and result in being ineligible for further awards.

It is interesting to note that the RCs do not directly require Applicants to possess qualifications such as PhDs, although NSERC does require a faculty position. The key factor regarding applicant eligibility is independence, that is the ability to make all decisions regarding the intellectual direction of the project or the conduct of research activities. However, independence is typically judged on the basis of the Applicant’s position and financial dependence. For example, a researcher whose salary is conditional on obtaining grant funds or is paid through another researcher’s grant funds (i.e., a research assistant) is not considered to be independent. Essentially, the Applicant is expected to be in a position that mandates the conduct of research and provides a stable salary (e.g., NSERC specifies salary sources should be “guaranteed for three years”). Although not explicit, the most typical appointments of this kind are faculty appointments within universities and colleges or lead researcher positions within non-profit organizations, and those Institutions typically require qualifications such as PhDs or MScs. This represents another aspect of the research system where notions of eligibility and qualification are strongly associated with “mainstream” academic standards. RCs are open to alternative qualifications, but do not necessarily know what form those might take, so take a case-by-case approach. This point is well-represented in CIHR’s guidelines for eligibility of Nominated Principal Applicants:

“Traditionally recognized academic positions are sufficient evidence of independence (i.e. professor, associate professor, assistant professor and professor emeritus).

Individuals who do not hold traditional academic appointments should be asked to substantiate that their research activities are not under the approval, direction or supervision of another individual.”

Special Considerations for Indigenous Research: Applicant Eligibility

In general, the RCs do not require Applicants to self-identify as Indigenous to propose Indigenous Research projects. For most programs, any eligible researcher can pursue Indigenous Research provided they approach their activities in the right way and in the spirit of a genuine, collaborative relationship with the communities with which they are working. To ensure that appropriate conduct takes place, rigorous standards of ethics and Merit Reviews have also been established (more details on this discussed below).

For example, CIHR has confirmed “Health and Wellness of Indigenous Peoples” as one of its research priorities in its strategic plan. The CIHR Institute of Indigenous Peoples’ Health, in collaboration with other CIHR institutes,
Merit Review [C]:

At their core, grant competitions are the means by which RCs gather and evaluate the “value” of prospective Research Projects to determine those most suitable to be funded. Values is, of course, a subjective term but in this context, research that provides value is that which is expected to be in Canada’s interests, either through eventual application or by increasing Canada’s profile in the international scholarly community. All submitted projects are assessed through peer-review by volunteer subject matter experts.

The Merit Review process is the primary method that RCs use to determine which research is funded and to justify their decisions regarding the allocation of public money. These standards can best be summarized by SSHRC’s Principles of Merit Review, whose major sentiments are echoed in CIHR’s and NSERC’s methods and guidelines for peer-reviewers.

Principles for SSHRC Merit Review

*Transparency:* Publish the criteria for assessing proposals, as well as details of the review process, defining how the assessment process will operate and be managed, before Applicants submit proposals.

*Due diligence and appropriateness:* Use a Merit Review process that is appropriate to the type of proposed research and in proportion with the investment and complexity of the work.

*Managing interests:* Ask all participants to declare interests when carrying out review activities, so that any conflicts can be identified and managed.

*Confidentiality:* Treat proposals in confidence and ask those who advise us to do the same.

*Expert assessment:* Use appropriate expert reviewers to assess the individual merit of all proposals against the published criteria.

*Separation of duties:* Separate the Merit Review of proposals against the assessment criteria from the making of funding decisions. Those acting as reviewers will not also be responsible for authorizing the funding decision, responsibility for which lies with SSHRC.

*No parallel assessment:* Avoid assessing the merit of the same proposal more than once.
The standards and procedures for the Merit Review process varies between RCs and grant programs. However, there are some common elements which include the following:

**Predefined Scoring Criteria**

Reviewers score each application on the basis of set criteria such as: the Applicant’s research history and demonstrable expertise in the field; the creativity and innovation of the proposed research and the clarity of its objectives and supporting literature; feasibility of the research, budget and suggested timelines; and record of training and mentoring future researchers. Many of these scoring guides include recommendations to account for diversity, inclusion, and gender, and Indigenous identity is included as part of these considerations.

**Evaluation by Committee**

To ensure that proposals are judged in the most robust and impartial manner, proposals are assigned to specially convened panels of relevant subject matter experts. These committees are convened according to specific guidelines meant to ensure that a diversity of voices are included in their composition across gender identities, early career and established researchers, Canadian and international experts, and more. Committee members review assigned proposals individually and assign initial scores before the committee meets to discuss and determine a new score or rank order by consensus. Some programs include an external evaluation, where a relevant expert who is not a member of the committee, reviews the application and provides their evaluation to the committee to consider in their adjudication.

As previously mentioned, the RCs are taking steps to improve and include Indigenous peoples and knowledge systems in their programs. However, they are also unsure of how to proceed and are seeking input and advice from Indigenous groups on next steps. For example, in October 2020, the three RCs announced the formation of the Tri-agency Reference Group for the Appropriate Review of Indigenous Research as part of the implementation of the Tri-Council 2018 Strategic Plan. This reference group will provide advice to support the development of new guidelines and procedures to appropriately evaluate and review research by, and with, researchers and partners within First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities.

Finally, a major component of all peer-review scoring schemes is assessing that the Applicant has the requisite capability and expertise to deliver the proposed research. Reviewers make this determination based on information that the Applicant provides with their application, essentially a curriculum vitae or resume outlining their research career. Reviewers then evaluate the Applicant based on numerous factors including, but not limited to: record of research accomplishments, reputation and influence in their discipline, the quality and quantity of their research output, and contribution to knowledge mobilization and training. As in the case of Applicant eligibility, specific requirements (e.g., PhDs) are not explicitly mandated, but the evaluation process will likely be biased towards “mainstream and standard” metrics of academic success such as the number of impacts of peer-reviewed publications, previous grant awards, conference invitations, and academic qualifications. Reliance on these metrics as indicators of academic performance, like one’s Impact Factor, is debated within academia as a whole and is especially contested by Indigenous researchers.

Even attempts such as SSHRC’s Guidelines for the Merit Review of Indigenous Research, do not appear to wholly address this issue. In evaluating Applicant qualification, SSHRC’s guidelines emphasize that reviews consider that Indigenous researchers may have had different life experiences and so different paths to academia, but does not provide guidance on how an Applicant’s diverse experiences can be formally included in their assessment. For example, they would ask a reviewer to understand that a postdoctoral researcher from a First Nations, Inuit, or Métis background may have received their doctorate at a later age than most non-Indigenous researchers or may have taken an extended leave of absence during their PhD program and so may not have
published as many papers as expected. However, there is no advice regarding how to assess the research skills, specifically the Indigenous Research skills, of an Applicant who may not have a PhD but has extensive experience community-driven research and expertise in Indigenous knowledge systems. While the absence of specifics may not be malicious, it is likely to be intentional. RCs and their reviewers simply do not know enough to propose alternative standards and rely on the evaluation of their Indigenous peer-review panel and colleagues to make determinations case-by-case. It is likely that providing some framework for guidance on these issues is a desired outcome from the work of the Tri-agency Reference Group for the Appropriate Review of Indigenous Research mentioned above.

Special Considerations for Indigenous Research:Merit Review

As part of their stated strategy to promote and support Indigenous Research, SSHRC has issued additional guidelines that supplement their manual for Adjudication Committee Members. These Guidelines for the Merit Review of Indigenous Research provide guidance to ensure that Indigenous ways of knowing are recognized for their valuable contributions to scholarship and to encourage appropriate thoughtfulness and sensitivity with Indigenous Research.

These guidelines support the ethical requirements for Indigenous Research (TCPS2 Chapter 9 - discussed later in this Section) by providing reviewers with guidance in evaluation proposals related to Indigenous Research.

The document states that SSHRC will ensure that proposals relevant to Indigenous Research are reviewed by external assessors (Indigenous or non-Indigenous) that have expertise in such research, and that adjudication committees have members well-versed in Indigenous and community research approaches, depending on the number of relevant applications.

Further guidelines are also provided for scoring Indigenous Research proposals by accounting for factors such as:

- **Recognizing Cultural Knowledge**: Reviewers must recognize that oral traditions, interviews, storytelling, and traditional teaching with Elders are valid forms of supporting scholarship and appropriate approaches to conducting research as part of the planned methodology.

- **Community Involvement**: Applicants proposing Indigenous Research projects must demonstrate and account for how they will build strong relationships with Indigenous communities, and this engagement should be reflected in project budget and timelines. Project plans should demonstrate how the proposed research will address the needs of the community, the benefits it will deliver, and how the research output will be made available and used by Indigenous peoples.

- **Supporting Indigenous Scholars**: Indigenous students and early-stage academics should be given doctoral and postdoctoral training opportunities related to Indigenous Research projects, where appropriate. Reviewers should be aware that careers of Indigenous researchers may differ from those expected in the fields, with many starting their academic path later in life, and that this should be accounted for when considering the Applicant’s record. As such, the consideration of the Applicant’s expertise should also consider their lived experiences.

CIHR issues guidelines for reviews in its Peer Review Manuals. The Peer Review Manual for the Project Grants program, CIHR’s investigator-initiated research program, specifically addresses considerations of Indigenous
Health Research (IHR). It states that research proposals that meet the ethical requirements for conducting research with Indigenous peoples, may be reviewed by a specific Indigenous Health Research (IHR) committee. When convened, the members of this committee will have lived experiences related to IHR. This committee will review proposals according to additional criteria to ensure that Indigenous ways of knowing and sharing are respected and acknowledged. When considering the potential impacts and innovation of the proposal, the IHR will evaluate if the research is relevant to the priorities of First Nations, Inuit, and/or Métis peoples, and has the potential to produce positive outcomes from the perspectives of Indigenous participants. Each research proposal is expected to describe planned engagement with the relevant community as it pertains to the research, and must demonstrate compliance with any additional ethical guidelines issued by the partnering Indigenous community or organization.

For NSERC, Indigenous identity is recognized as a consideration within a broad Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) framework aimed at increasing the participation of groups that are often under-represented in the natural sciences, including women, visible minorities, Indigenous peoples, people with diverse gender identities, and people with disabilities. However, such D&I considerations are only explicitly included as part of the merit evaluation for specific grant programs. NSERC does not appear to have provided any guidance on including and acknowledging Cultural Knowledge as part of an Applicant’s expertise or as knowledge supporting a proposal.

Applying as a Team

Teams of researchers can also apply for research funding, and some grant programs encourage this to foster collaboration between institutions and disciplines. However, even in these cases, it is required that team members specify their roles in the following terms.

APPLICANT:
As described above, this person takes primary responsibility for the direction and financial management of the project. CIHR refers to this role as the Nominated Principal Applicant.

CO-APPLICANTS [4]:
The Co-applicant is expected to make significant contributions to the intellectual direction of the project and share responsibility for conducting research, which may or may not include some of the financial responsibilities associated with received funds. In most cases, the co-applicant must meet the same eligibility criteria as the primary applicant.

The CIHR uses the term Principal Applicant to describe this role and uses the term Co-applicant to refer to the position that SSHRC and NSERC may refer to as a Collaborator as follows.

COLLABORATORS [5]:
Collaborators make significant contributions to the progress and conduct of the research activities but are not expected to take responsibility for its direction. CIHR distinguishes collaborators from co-applicants as those who provide specific support services to the research, such as access to specialized equipment or services, as opposed to sharing in responsibility over the entire research.

Discussion of the various roles in a research team, and their expected contributions, prompts discussion of the role of Elders and Knowledge Keepers in Indigenous Research. The RCs’ efforts towards integrating Indigenous knowledge as an alternative, but equivalent, form of academic scholarship includes recognition of Elders and their teachings as a significant contribution to research. There is some ambiguity on how and
if these contributions should be made official in the Application in terms of the roles above. As previously noted, certain CIHR grants, specifically those associated with an Indigenous Health Initiative, require the participation of an Elder, but does not specify their role except to say that they cannot act as the Nominated Principal Applicant (PI). Both SSHRC and CIHR state that the participation of Elders in the research is to be encouraged and that compensation for their time and contributions is an eligible use of grant funds, depending on circumstances. However, only the 2018 Indigenous Research Capacity and Reconciliation—Connection Grants made specific reference to Elders within the team structure: “Indigenous Elders are recognized and respected in terms of their contribution of knowledge assets to the project and may participate as co-applicants or collaborators depending on their institution or organization affiliation.” It is possible that this policy applies to SSHRC’s current programs if not stated explicitly. The absence of an explicit statement on this may be because RCs do not want the participation of Elders to be considered mandatory, as opposed to strongly encouraged. Each of these roles require a certain level of commitment to the project and RCs are aware that the capacity and desire for Elders to participate will vary greatly depending on the individual, and they respect that Elders have existing responsibilities to their communities. The relevant ethical requirements in TCPS2 Chapter 9 specifies: “Community advice should also be sought to determine appropriate recognition for the unique advisory role fulfilled by these persons.” This supports the idea that RCs feel that appropriate recognition, whether official or unofficial as part of the Application, is best determined by the perspectives and protocols of Indigenous communities.

4.3 Funding Administration System

As described in the above section, funds are awarded to Applicants to conduct the proposed research activities. However, RCs do not administer money directly to the personal accounts of these researchers. Instead, funds are directed to Institutions [6] who are then responsible for administering the money to the Applicants [3-6]. The key rationale behind bringing Institutions into the research projects system is because RCs require Institutions to provide oversight over the activities of researchers. In accepting the funding, Applicants agree to conduct their research according to specific standards such as ethical requirements and fiscal responsibilities. It is for these reasons that “Affiliation with an eligible institution” is a prime condition for Applicant eligibility, as noted above.

To administer funds to its researchers, an Institution must be deemed eligible to receive and administer funds from the RCs, and ultimately be deemed to have the capacity to provide oversight for research activities. In other words, for an Applicant to receive funds their activities must be monitored and regulated by their Institutions; and for an Institution to administer those funds it must have been reviewed and approved by a RC.

Institutional Eligibility [D]

NSERC, SSHRC, CIHR have harmonized their requirements of Institutional Eligibility to a large degree. Although there are some differences and nuances that vary between the RCs, the general criteria can be summarized as follows:

- The Institution or organization must be financially viable and secure.
- The Institution must have a research or knowledge translation mandate.
- The Institution or organization must have established suitable policies, regulations, and administrative systems to ensure the funds are used appropriately and that research activities
are conducted according to the RC’s ethical and financial standards.

- A suitable representative for the Institution must sign the Agreement on the Administration of Agency Grants and Awards by Research Institutions.

The document specified in this final point, the Agreement on the Administration of Agency Grants and Awards by Research Institutions (The Agreement), is essentially a contract that explicitly defines the responsibilities of the RC and the Institution in entering the relationship shown in 2-6. At the core of the relationship between RCs and Institutions is the responsibility of Institutions to ensure that research is conducted according to well-defined standards. The Agreement is the document which specifies which Tri-Council policies define these standards and makes clear the expected processes and procedures expected of the Institution to ensure compliance.

A notable example of this content concerns the ethical requirements of research. Section 4.3 of The Agreement explicitly specifies the relevant policies concerning ethical research involving humans (i.e., TCPS 2 2018). It further requires that the Institution creates suitable policy controls to ensure researchers comply with the standard, which must include the establishment of a Research Ethics Board that must review and approve any project before research involving human subjects can commence. Furthermore, The Agreement also specifies that the Institution ensures that researchers and research students are fully informed and educated on these ethical requirements. As such, an “ethics training” course is often a mandatory requirement for students in humanities and social sciences departments in Canadian universities and colleges. Policies regarding the ethical aspects of research involving humans is of particular relevance to Indigenous Research, as shall be expanded upon later in this section.

To be considered for eligibility, an Institution must first apply to the RC via a letter, signed by a suitable representative, e.g., principal/president, which contains a formal request for review and a statement asserting that the Institution is willing to sign The Agreement and comply with the policies and procedures it describes. This letter must also be accompanied by documents to support the case for eligibility such as: financial records and a financial risk assessment; a description of the Institution’s governance structure and research capacity; and statements attesting to the existence of policies and controls required to meet ethical and financial standards.

The Institution applies for eligibility to a specific RC, though they may also request a joint review to be considered for eligibility at any of the other RCs. The documents contained in the application would then be shared with the RCs as requested and a joint response provided at the end of the review.

While the RCs have aligned on a common approach to eligibility, some agencies do make additional requirements. NSERC imposes the most stringent criteria as they will only grant eligibility to Canadian universities or colleges that confer degrees or diplomas in the natural sciences. NSERC also makes a greater degree of distinction between universities and colleges, with college faculty only eligible for certain grant programs such as the College-Community Innovation (CCI) program.

SSHRC does not apply any additional criteria for eligibility than the general requirements described above. However, they do consider several distinct levels of eligibility to allow for more nuance in their approach and allow for non-profit organizations to receive funding.

Only Post-secondary Institutions who meet all criteria are eligible for full eligibility allowing access to all grant programs and to hold any number of grants.

Non-profit organizations may be provisionally eligible to administer funds for research conducted as part of a Formal Partnership (see below) with another organization, if they meet all criteria. They are restricted to holding a single grant at a time and must reapply for eligibility once the grant term has expired. Non-profit
organizations may also be eligible to administer funds without a Formal Partnership, but only for outreach and knowledge sharing activities under SSHRC’s Connection program, i.e., non-research funding.

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**Special Considerations for Indigenous Research: Institutional Eligibility**

In response to Call to Action 65 of the Truth and Reconciliation Final Report, SSHRC is seeking ways to support Indigenous non-profit researchers in accessing funds. As such, SSHRC defines a special level of eligibility for non-profit organizations that self-identify as Indigenous. This level of eligibility allows the organization to administer multiple research grants as part of multiple Formal Partnerships and/or Connection grants for a period of five years. This differs from the provisional eligibility that can be accessed by any non-profit organization, which only allows for a single grant.

In applying for eligibility as an Indigenous non-profit, the Institution does not need to supply the same level of information regarding its governance and research history (section 2 of the Institutional Eligibility Requirements). Instead, the Institution only needs to submit:

- A short history of the organization
- A research statement that includes, as applicable:
  - A description of current research;
  - The number of staff conducting research and describes their current projects;
  - Copies of published research results in any format (e.g., community newspaper articles, pamphlets, web materials, journal articles); and
  - The most recent copies of the organization’s annual reports, policies, strategies or research plans, if available.

The implied objective of these modified requirements is to reduce the barrier to eligibility for Indigenous non-profits and allow less established and less “academically-focused” organizations to access funding for their research. However, the organization is still required to meet the same ethical and financial requirements according to The Agreement.

With that said, it is important to make two key observations:

The first is that, in terms of research funding, Indigenous non-profits can only access funding through SSHRC’s Partnership and Connection program meaning that the organization must enter into a Formal Partnership with another organization. This may introduce some ambiguity regarding the independence and leadership of the research.

Secondly, it is interesting to note the distinction between Indigenous non-profits and Post-secondary Institutions (PSIs). This begs the question regarding the positioning of Indigenous Post-secondary Institutions (IPSIs) such as the IIIs. The only IPSIs appearing on SSHRC’s list of eligible institutions are the Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning and the First Nations Technical Institute, who are both listed as Indigenous non-profit organizations.
rather than colleges. It is clear that SSHRC, or any of the other RCs, have yet to recognize IIs as both Indigenous organizations and PSIs.

In February 2021, CIHR updated their eligibility criteria to allow Applicants affiliated with a Indigenous non-governmental organization with a research or knowledge translation mandate. However, it is implied that such organizations will still need to meet Institutional Eligibility requirements to receive funds.

At time of writing, the inclusion of Indigenous non-profits as eligible Institutions has yet to be fully implemented in standard grant programs (besides the 2018 Special Indigenous Reconciliation Grants) and so the number of Indigenous non-profits that have received funding, and the nature of those funded projects, is to be seen.

Figure 3: Distribution of Institutions Eligible for Tri-Council Funding

Breakdown of eligible institutions. The names of eligible institutions were compiled from lists on the SSHRC, NSERC, CIHR websites. Each Institution was classified by their Institutional type. The conduct of research and access to funds is still heavily biased towards universities and colleges, despite some progress being made to allow Indigenous non-profit research organizations to apply to certain funding opportunities.
Special Considerations for Indigenous Research: Ethics

In accepting funding from a RC, the Applicant and the Institution agree to conduct all of their research activities in an appropriate and responsible manner, in compliance with all applicable RC policies. Central to the issue of responsible research is the matter of ethics. Research by its nature involves uncertainty and risk. Ethical conduct of research involves the continual effort to reduce risk and protect and respect the physical, mental, and spiritual wellbeing of all of those involved in the process.

The RCs have created the Interagency Panel on Research Ethics that develops, interprets and implements policy regarding the ethics of research involving human participants. The current standards are described in Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS 2) and all Applicants must provide information regarding their plans for compliance to be assessed as part of the research proposal. In fact, as stated previously, Institutional ethics boards have a responsibility to review all research proposals involving human participants before they are submitted to the RC.

In recognition of the history, and often exploitative nature of past relationships between researchers, research institutions, and Indigenous peoples. Chapter 9 of TCPS 2 includes specific guidelines regarding the conduct of research involving Indigenous peoples. These guidelines were developed by a consortium of over 40 representatives of First Nation, Inuit, and Métis communities, researchers, and ethics experts, and incorporated feedback from two years of public consultation.

The guidelines described in TCPS 2 can be broken down into four themes:

**Community Engagement:**

- Community Engagement is required whenever any “research is likely to affect the wellbeing of Indigenous communities.”
- Engagement can be summarized as working to build respectful, reciprocal, and meaningful relationships within the community.
- The form and extent of this engagement will depend according to the needs of the research and the specific community.
- It is the responsibility of the researchers to begin to build these relationships and determine appropriate approaches before the planning stage.
- Researchers are also required to document their engagement activities for review by their Institution’s Research Ethics Board (REB) and any review process required by the community.

**Recognition of Complex Authority Structures:**

- Engagement of community leaders is required regarding any research conducted on lands under the jurisdiction of First Nations, Inuit, or Métis authority.
- Engagement with community leaders must respect the diversity and complexity of Indigenous leadership structures, which extends beyond formal leadership, by building relationships with Elders, representative groups, service providers or other communities of interest as appropriate.
- Researchers must take responsibility to learn and account for the diversity of interests within the various groups.
- REBs must be informed of these various interests in order to facilitate the review of the research.
Collaboration and Reciprocal Benefits:

- Research must be developed and conducted to be relevant to the priorities of the participating community.
- The planned outcomes of the research must be considered valuable from the perspective of the community.
- Where possible, the research program should also aim to deliver direct benefits to the community such as contributing to training and education, supporting local businesses, and sharing data and results.
- Where deemed appropriate, researchers should consider a collaborative and participatory approach to research, including data collection and interpretation.

Transparent Research Agreements:

- When a community and researchers have entered into an arrangement to conduct a research program, the terms, conditions, and responsibilities of all parties should be documented in a research agreement before research commences.
- Research agreements must be made in accordance with the community’s own standards or research conduct (e.g., OCAP or Six Nations Ethics Protocol) where applicable.
- For collaborative research, research agreements must specify arrangements related to rights of intellectual property, licensing arrangements, and ownership and access to data, as needed.

4.4 The Partnership System

Several funding programs offered by RCs are explicitly aimed at encouraging collaboration between Post-secondary Institutions (PSIs) and peers within the public and private sectors and across disciplines. These grants represent the recognition of the interdisciplinary nature of research and the need to bring different perspectives and forms of expertise together to accelerate progress.

The role of a Partner Organization is to actively participate and support the activities of the Research Project. The partner organization is required to make cash and/or in-kind contributions to the research, although the amount of these contributions depends on the partnership grant program, and the exact nature of the research.

Organizations from the other Canadian or International (PSIs), the public, private, and non-profit sectors are all eligible to be Partner Organizations. However, Applicants must be affiliated with an eligible Institution to submit the proposal on behalf of the partnership. For NSERC’s Alliance programs, this must be a faculty member at an eligible university and an administrator for an eligible college for the College-Community Innovation program. SSHRC does allow Indigenous non-profits to become eligible to administer Partnership and Partnership Development grants, as previously noted.

The number of Partner Organizations may be restricted according to the specific funding opportunity but, in general, there are few restrictions on the operating details of the Partnership. Therefore, the role each organization is expected to serve in conducting the research should be made explicit in the formation of the Partnership. This includes specifying which organizations will be contributing funding to the project and how the expertise of each organization is necessary to deliver the expected outcomes. Providing further information regarding governance structures, agreements concerning intellectual property and conflict resolution, and strategic plans will also help support the case for the Partnership in the application process.
4.5 Conclusion

In preparing their 2020 Strategy Plan on strengthening Indigenous research capacity, the Tri-councils engaged with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis researchers, scholars, knowledge keepers, and community members. One theme that emerged in this engagement was that the Research Funding System was overly complex, and that the current eligibility requirements and standards of Merit Review present barriers to the full participation of Indigenous peoples conducting Indigenous Research. More so, these barriers hindered Indigenous Institutes (IIs) who were not fully consulted during this specific engagement.

It is clear that RCs are attempting to make some progress on these issues. In particular, both SSHRC and CIHR have introduced changes to recognize and value Indigenous Cultural Knowledge in their Merit Review procedures for project proposals and to consider the lived experiences of Indigenous researchers as part of their evaluation of Applicants. SSHRC and CIHR have also made commitments to ensuring that Indigenous Research proposals are reviewed by appropriate experts with direct experience, knowledge, and expertise in the appropriate conduct of Indigenous Research. Specific ethical policies regarding research involving First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples have been developed, and detailed plans for complying with these standards are mandatory for all Indigenous Research projects. The convening of the Reference Group for the Appropriate Review of Indigenous Research is also an indicator of continued engagement with Indigenous peoples to make the Merit Review and adjudication of Indigenous Research more inclusive and culturally appropriate.

However, other elements concerning eligibility may prove more difficult to address.

The requirements for Institutional Eligibility represent, perhaps, the greatest barrier for younger institutions and IIs seeking to establish themselves within the Tri-Council Research Funding System. Established policies, review boards, and a number of qualified staff are required to adequately monitor research activities across multiple disciplines are all needed to operate a research program. This presents a significant challenge for an Institution in terms of resources, administration, and capacity. Some RCs seem willing to accept alternative requirements in certain conditions, or on a case-by-case basis, and this may become more common in the future. However, in the short-term, the implied solution for Institutions that wish to conduct research but may lack the required regulatory infrastructure, is to build relationships with already eligible Institutions.

As stated by SSHRC: “Organizations unable to satisfy all the criteria for institutional eligibility can continue to participate in SSHRC-funded projects by making arrangements with an eligible institution.”

SSHRC does not specify the nature of such an arrangement or even that a formal agreement is in place, only that the Institutions confirm that:

- The eligible institution agrees to submit and, if successful, administer the grant according to SSHRC policies.
- The eligible institution agrees to allow the Research Project to be reviewed by its Research Ethics Board, in cases where the research involves human participants (if applicable).
- The ineligible institution agrees that the eligible institution will manage funds according to its own policies, including institutional policies related to compensation and procurement, as well as reimbursement of other project-related expenses.”
This may present a viable path for some IIs to gain access to RC funding for their research.

For those who have not yet met the necessary requirements for institutional Eligibility, CIHR offers a less defined but more flexible pathway.

“Institutions and organizations that cannot fully comply with these requirements are not deemed eligible to administer the funds through a CIHR account but may still be permitted to administer the funds under special terms and conditions, as determined by CIHR, following an eligibility review.”

The description of CIHR Project Grants program also states:

“Organizations identified as the Institution Paid may be required to undergo a financial and eligibility review, if they have not already done so, in order to administer the grant funds. They may be required to sign a funding agreement with CIHR. If necessary, a successful applicant may choose to have their funds administered by a CIHR eligible institution.

Funds will not be released to the Institution Paid of a successful applicant unless they have been approved to administer funding.

If your Institution Paid is not currently eligible to receive funding from CIHR, please contact the Contact Centre\(^{101}\) to enquire about the process.”

All in all, SSHRC and CIHR seem willing to make individual exceptions and special arrangements to allow Institutions to administer funds if deemed possible within the circumstances. They encourage interested Applicants to reach out and contact them for support.\(^{102}\)
5.0 Research Grant Programs

5.1 Types of Funding Programs

The primary mechanism that the Research Councils (RCs) use to support research in Canada, in accordance with their respective mandates, is the provision of funds in the form of grants and awards.

The funding, conduct, and oversight of research projects is sustained by a system of transactions and obligations between RCs, researchers, and Institutions. A more complete explanation of how these groups interact to apply for, award, and administer these grants was covered in Section 3. The following section provides an overview of the major RC programs, with the aim of describing the major opportunities that exist for research funding.

The purpose of this section is to highlight the RCs’ most common and stable programs, the opportunities most relevant to conducting independent Indigenous Research, and the types of projects these programs are designed to support. An exhaustive list of all grants and awards is beyond the scope of this review as are detailed application instructions. However, as in the previous section, links to application details are provided in the footnotes. Also, a few illustrative examples of past recipients of these programs, and their projects and their Institutions, are provided in the Appendix of this guide.

One common issue when discussing such funding programs is the variety of terms used by the RCs and different Institutions to describe the distinct types of grants and awards. In the broadest terms, such programs can be sorted into three categories:

**Research Grants:** Funds are intended to fund the direct and indirect costs of conducting extended investigations and projects to advance or deepen knowledge, or develop new applications based on current understanding.

**Outreach Grants:** Used to support the sharing of knowledge between researchers in different disciplines or sectors, and the transfer of knowledge from pure researchers to those who are positioned to effectively use that knowledge to deliver positive outcomes.

**Scholarships:** Funding to support and train the next generation of researchers, these programs include awards for exceptional undergraduates, and stipends for doctoral students and early-stage researchers, in addition to other training and mentoring opportunities.

An additional dimension to consider concerns funding opportunities aimed at developing and strengthening collaboration between researchers at Post-secondary Institutions and those in private, public, and non-profit organizations. Implicit in these Partnership Grant programs, is that RCs are trying to break through the isolated Ivory Tower assumptions regarding academia and make research more directly related to the needs of people in Canada. This is promoted through grant programs that seek to foster connections between
Knowledge Mobilization

“The reciprocal and complementary flow and uptake of research knowledge between researchers, knowledge brokers and knowledge users—both within and beyond academia—in such a way that may benefit users and create positive impacts within Canada and/or internationally, and, ultimately, has the potential to enhance the profile, reach and impact of social sciences and humanities research. Knowledge mobilization initiatives must address at least one of the following, as appropriate, depending on research area and project objectives, context, and target audience:

Within academia:
- informs, advances and/or improves:
  - research agendas;
  - theory; and/or
  - Methods.

Beyond academia:
- informs:
  - public debate;
  - policies; and/or
  - practice;
- enhances/improves services; and/or
- informs the decisions and/or processes of people in business, government, the media, practitioner communities and civil society.”

The definition above comes from SSHRC who make most reference to the term. SSHRC has a stream of grants, the Connections Program, aimed at these activities and it is a factor in their peer-review process. CIHR uses the term Knowledge Translation that it defines as:

“A dynamic and iterative process that includes synthesis, dissemination, exchange and ethically-sound application of knowledge to improve the health of Canadians, provide more effective health services and products and strengthen the health care system.

This process takes place within a complex system of interactions between researchers and knowledge users which may vary in intensity, complexity and level of engagement depending on the nature of the research and the findings as well as the needs of the particular knowledge user.”

Researchers and industry and between researchers and communities. Variations of these collaborative programs include funding for research and knowledge mobilization/outreach activities, and often include a training component as part of the funding requirements. Although it varies depending on the project, most of these programs require the Partner Organization to provide partial funding for the project.

Examples of such programs include NSERC’s Alliance Program, SSHRC’s Partnership Grants and Partnership Development Grants, and the College-Community Innovation program. Although CIHR encourages collaboration and teams to apply for their competitions, they do not offer any specific funding opportunities for Applicant partnerships.

Technically, scholarships would not be considered research funding as the money awarded is designed to provide for the living expenses (effectively salaries) for exceptional students and postdoctoral scholars and other Early Career Researchers (ECRs). Although the proposed research project is a factor in the application, these programs do not provide funds to support independent research. As such, both in this and the following section of this report, priority is given to the discussion of research grants.
5.2 SSHRC Programs

SSHRC divides its funding opportunities into three programs which correspond to the three categories discussed above. The Talent program includes doctoral studentships and fellowships for postdoctoral researchers; the Connection program provides funds for outreach and knowledge mobilization activities; and the Insight program represents SSHRC’s flagship program for distributing individual, team, and partnership research grants.

The objectives of the Insight program are “to support and foster excellence in social sciences and humanities research intended to deepen, widen and increase our collective understanding of individuals and societies, as well as to inform the search for solutions to societal challenges.” Although different and more specialized opportunities may arise in different years, the Insight program includes two consistent competitions for individuals or teams of researchers.

Insight Development Grants are designed to support research in its initial stages such as pilot programs, case studies or critical review of existing research. These short-term grants (up to 2 years) support the development of new research questions, research methodologies, and theoretical approaches. The spirit of this program is to encourage exploration and pushing the boundaries of standard research. The funding is divided into two streams, with 50% of funds going to support the work of ECRs.

Insight Grants are intended to provide stable and ample funding to support long-term projects that are expected to make significant impacts to the fields of social science and the humanities. Funds are awarded for up to five years and are split into two envelopes depending on the scale of funds needed: Stream A provides annual awards of $7000-$100,000 and Stream B considers funding requests of $100,001 - $400,000. However, this opportunity does not have a dedicated envelope to support ECRs.

As the Insight program is explicitly targeted towards ground-breaking research projects whose primary activities include developing curricula, program evaluation, creating databases, organizing conferences or other collaborative events are not eligible for this program. Such activities are supported through the Connections program in the spirit of knowledge mobilization.

Connection Grants fund projects aimed at projects to improve knowledge sharing and access i.e. knowledge mobilization and public engagement in the social sciences. Therefore, it is less suited to research projects, per se, and more suited towards networking, information exchanges, etc. The program has two streams: the Events Stream (with a value ranging from $7000-$25,000) intended to fund specific events such as workshops, conferences, collaborative design events and the Outreach Stream (with a value ranging from $7000-$50,000) that funds ongoing activities to engage the broader public with the social sciences and humanities. The Outreach Stream can include a wider variety of activities including but not limited to: adapting/translating texts for different audiences, preparing policy briefs or media articles, and preparing media events or speaker series. It is important to note that Connection Grants may not be used to fund the full costs of any event or outreach activity, and applicants must be able to support the work via other cash or in-kind contributions. The value of this contribution must be equivalent to at least 50% of the total value requested from SSHRC.

The Connection program also includes ten grant opportunities specifically aimed at the development and adoption of research data management processes. This Research Data Management Capacity Building Initiative states that, in assessing the value and potential, the Merit Review will consider the project’s alignment with several key objectives including: “(to) share and develop knowledge and skills related to the responsible ownership, control, access and possession of data used or created in the context of Indigenous research (e.g., the application of OCAP® principles).”
It is also worth noting that the 2018 Special Indigenous Research Capacity and Reconciliation Grants were categorized under the Connections program.

SSHRC annually offers funding opportunities specifically intended for research Partnerships\textsuperscript{110}. Partnership programs can align with the objectives of the Insight and the Connections program and can, therefore, be used to support pure research or a blend of research and knowledge mobilization activities.

These grant opportunities are tied to SSHRC’s specific definition of “Formal Partnerships,”\textsuperscript{111} which are agreements between an applicant, a post-secondary institution, and one or more partner organizations. Given the requirement that Applicants are affiliated with an eligible Institution, in most cases the PSI will be their host institution, but this is not strictly required. As noted in the previous Section, Partner Organizations are expected to provide additional funding through cash or in-kind contributions.

In a similar vein to Insight Development Grants, Partnership\textsuperscript{112} Development Grants are designed to support the research in its early stages. In this context, this refers to activities conducted by newly established Partnerships; new projects by existing Partnerships that differ significantly from their current or previous work; or developing and experimenting with new approaches to collaborative research and related activities with the aim to establish new and scalable best practices for future Partnerships. Partnership Development Grants are valued between $75,000 and $200,000 over one to three years.

Partnerships Grants\textsuperscript{113} help develop and maintain large team collaborations, working on long-term projects of high significance in the social sciences. As such, the value of the awards is substantial and commensurate with this is a more rigorous two-stage adjudication process. When Applicants apply for a Partnership Grant, they are evaluated at Stage 1 on the basis of a submitted Letter of Intent. If successful, Applicants are awarded $20,000 to help write, revise, and submit a full proposal for consideration in Stage 2. Applicants who are approved at Stage 2 then have access to the full funding: Up to $500,000 per year, over four to seven years, up to a total of $2,500,000. Although this is not a training-based program, SSHRC does explicitly state that plans for the training, mentoring, and employability of students and ECRs are important factors considered in the Merit Review of this competition. The Partnerships Grant program is one example where the Applicant must be an eligible Canadian Institution, rather than an individual researcher. However, the Institution must specify the Project Director in their application.

Implicit in the RCs’ encouragement of Partnership arrangements is the desire to bridge the gap between research and practice, and to deliver tangible results faster. This includes the ability to mobilize researchers and experts to address the more immediate needs of Partner Organizations. Partnerships Engage Grants\textsuperscript{114} provide a burst of funding ($7000-$25,000 for one year) to conduct research aimed at informing timely decision-making within a partner organization. Unlike Partnership Development or Partnership Grants, this opportunity only allows a single Partner Organization within the agreement, and that partner cannot be another PSI\textsuperscript{115}.

As stated in Section 3, a consistent requirement of research funding is the involvement of an eligible Institution to administer the funds. All of the grant programs mentioned above include this requirement. However, the Connection, Partnership Development, and Partnership Grants opportunities allow Indigenous non-profits’ special eligibility status to administer several of these awards.

In the description of each opportunity listed above, SSHRC states that “SSHRC welcomes applications involving Indigenous research . . .” and that such proposals will be subject to their Guidelines for the Merit Review of Indigenous Research.

Despite not being offered since 2017 it is worth mentioning SSHRC’s Institutional Grants\textsuperscript{116} program as it was an opportunity that would have been well-suited to the needs of the IIs. In this program, blocks of funds
were provided to universities who then awarded it to their researchers. Essentially, Applicants would submit research proposals to their Institution rather than SSHRC. The Institution would then determine and award grants based on their own evaluation committees and processes. Although the value of the grants were not very high (maximum $7000) the fact that institutions were able to determine, for themselves, where grant funds could be directed, and which projects were worthy of funding, gives this program a sense of independence that the others do not. Institutional Grants also had additional funds that were available to smaller Institutions, and this made them even more relevant to the small, but growing, IIs.

5.3 NSERC Programs

As noted in the discussion regarding Institutional Eligibility, NSERC policies present substantial barriers to accessing funding for research within the STEM disciplines. In particular, compared to the other RCs, they maintain a strong distinction between universities and colleges. Colleges wishing to conduct research in the natural sciences and engineering fields are only eligible for a small subset of funding opportunities, almost all of which are Institutional Grants (awarded to the Institution rather than the researcher) and funded through the College and Community Innovation Program (CCI), which is a Tri-Council initiative.

With respect to this distinction between colleges and universities, it is interesting to consider the possible implications of the Indigenous Institutes Act of 2017. Although it is a provincial law and does not have national jurisdiction, it does set a precedent regarding the status of Indigenous Post-secondary Institutes (IPSIs) being separate and distinct from both universities and colleges.

NSERC’s longest and largest funding program is the Discovery program which is their primary stream of research grants. In a similar spirit to SSHRC’s Insights, the Discovery program is intended to fund ongoing research with long-term goals, rather than more immediate projects. As such, the typical span of a Discovery Grant is five years, and the value of the grants varies depending on the proposed project. The average grant value for established researchers was $41,032 per year in 2020, and $29,001 for ECRs.

Although Discovery Grants are awarded based on the proposed program of research, recipients are not bound to those activities and are free to change courses and pursue new interests, provided they remain within NSERC’s mandate.

In addition to the standard funding stream, the Discovery program also includes a range of supplements, which provide additional awards to Discovery grant recipients as deemed appropriate on the basis of the research program.

- **Discovery Accelerator Supplement**: Provides additional funds to high-caliber, renowned researchers and/or especially innovative or creative projects to accelerate the research, e.g. by funding new equipment. This provides an additional annual award of $120,000 over three years.
- **Discovery Launch Supplement**: A one-time payment of $12,500 to support ECRs.
- **Discovery Northern Research Supplement**: Provides support (in the range of $10,000 to $25,000 per year) in recognition of the additional expense and other contingencies associated with conducting research in Canada’s North.
- **DND/NSERC Supplement**: Offered in partnership with the Department of National Defence (DND), this program provides additional funding to researchers developing non-weapon-based technologies that could be applied to National Defence or security. The value of this award is also $120,000 across three years.

Neither the Accelerator nor Launch supplements require additional steps to apply for; the scale of the intended research and the research record of the Applicant is considered as appropriate during the standard
adjudication process. The DND/NSERC supplement requires an Applicant to indicate their interest in being considered for the award and provide a written justification of how their proposed research aligns with DND’s stated target areas. The Northern Research supplement also requires a similar indication of interest together with supporting information concerning the proposed research and its location in Northern Canada, expenses, and budget.

Discovery Development Grants is a sister program to Discovery Grants and provides up to $30,000 over two years to help build research capacity at small universities. NSERC defines small universities as those that have received less than an average of $5 million in annual funding from the Council.

The grants and supplements above describe funds for investigator-initiated research. Discovery Frontier Grants are bi-annual competitions that invite proposals for research based on a chosen theme. For example, the theme of the 2017 competition was Biodiversity and Adaptation of Biosystems and, in 2019, the theme was Antimicrobial Resistance in the Environment.

NSERC also has a program of funds aimed at encouraging collaboration between academics and researchers and knowledge-users in the private, public, and non-profit sectors, called the Alliance Program. Only eligible university faculty may apply as Applicants; college faculty may only apply as Co-applicants if they meet the standard eligibility requirements. The project must involve at least one Partner Organization who can share funding costs via cash contributions, however additional Partners are not required to provide such contributions and instead support the research activities in other ways. Alliance Grants are intended to support research of varying scale, duration, and ambition; therefore, the value of these grants can range from $20,000 to $1 million per year for one to five years. The major factor in the amount of money that can be requested from NSERC depends on the number, size, and capacity of the Partner Organizations.

Idea to Innovation Grants are another partnership program and the only opportunity that faculty from eligible colleges can apply to as Applicants i.e., as independent researchers not Institutions. As implied by the name, the objective of this funding is to take promising ideas, originating in university and college laboratories, and accelerate their application and commercialization in Canadian companies. Funding is provided in four phases, ranging from researching an initial market assessment to partnership with a Canadian company capable of manufacturing and distributing the final product. Given the commercial focus of this stream, additional documentation, regarding plans to protect the commercial value and intellectual property of the product, is required.

Unlike SSHRC, there are no NSERC research programs that make explicit reference to Indigenous Research or any other ethical or demographic considerations that apply to researchers identified as First Nation, Inuit, or Métis. Indigenous identity is a consideration as part of a larger Diversity and Inclusivity initiative. As stated in the description of the Discovery program:

“Applicants are expected to increase the inclusion and advancement of under-represented and disadvantaged groups in the natural sciences and engineering, as one means to enhance excellence in research and training.”

NSERC’s approach, at least in the short-term, appears to be aimed at addressing the prominent demographic bias present in the natural sciences more broadly. Alongside Indigenous peoples, women, people of different gender identities, Black people, and other peoples of colour are all under-represented in STEM fields, and NSERC appears to be taking a broader strategy to redress this inequity.

NSERC’s only Indigenous-specific award is the Indigenous Student Ambassadors Grant. Technically an Outreach Grant, this grant provides funds for Indigenous students to promote engagement in the natural sciences in First Nation, Inuit, and/or Métis communities. Such activities would include participating in science outreach events and visiting schools and
communities to share the experiences of a scientific career from an Indigenous lens. In addition, NSERC does also note that, with regards to doctoral scholarships and undergraduate research awards, Institutions may submit applications on behalf of qualified, self-identified Indigenous candidates in excess of their allocated quota. This is suggestive of a “pipeline development” strategy, where the RC is attempting to increase the number of Indigenous peoples entering and training for research careers in the STEM fields.

5.4 CIHR Programs

Given the unique, decentralized Institute-based structure of CIHR\textsuperscript{125} a large number of their grant competitions are associated with their Institutes priority initiatives. These programs can be considered within the Targeted Initiative category. There is no fixed schedule for these competitions and their value, subject matter, and objectives can vary based on the sponsor Institute. Despite this, these Targeted Initiative funds do appear in three general classes:

- **Catalyst Grants:** One-year seed funding to help researchers gain momentum in new research activities.
- **Team Grants:** Funds long-term and ambitious projects involving the participation of multidisciplinary, multi-institutional, or multi-national teams.
- **Operating Grants:** Are more general or standard research grants, typically allowing funding for up to five years.

In covering major funding programs offered by SSHRC and NSERC, the focus has been on investigator-initiated opportunities such as the Insights and Discovery Programs. This is because these programs are generally considered the standard or normal approach to award funding. Also, at time of writing, neither SSHRC nor NSERC have announced competitions relevant to Indigenous Research.

However, as previously mentioned, CIHR has demonstrated a strong commitment to Indigenous Health Research through its Institute of Indigenous Peoples Health (IIPH). The IIPH provides research grants through the major collaborative Initiatives described in Section 2 (e.g., Network Environments for Indigenous Health Research) and for other research dedicated to addressing priority issues affecting First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities.

To provide a concrete example of such a Targeted Initiative, in November 2020, CIHR launched the **Team Grant: Diabetes Prevention and Treatment in Indigenous Communities: Resilience and Wellness** competition\textsuperscript{126}. This opportunity is one of several funding opportunities for diabetes research since 2018 that coincides with the 100th anniversary of the discovery of insulin by Canadian scientists F.G. Banting and J.J.R MacLeod\textsuperscript{127}. The goals of this specific competition are to fund Indigenous-led research aimed at reversing the increasing trend of diabetes and related diseases among First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. More precisely, the desire is to define and integrate models of resilience and wellness into diabetes prevention and treatment approaches. Funding for these grants is supplied by the CIHR Institute of Nutrition, Metabolism and Diabetes (INMD), IIPH, and several other CIHR Institutes, and is sufficient to provide four awards of $400,000 per year over five years.

As with SSHRC Partnership Grants, CIHR Team grants such as the example above, often use a two-stage adjudication process. Applicants submit a Letter of Intent in the first stage and can request up to $35,000 additional funding in the form of a development grant to further the formal proposal. In the context of research involving Indigenous peoples, it is expected that some of these development funds will then be used to address costs of engaging and building relationships with the community, Elders, and knowledge users in a culturally informed way.

Another interesting example of a Targeted Initiative relevant to Indigenous Research concerns the topic of
Indigenous Gender and Wellness\textsuperscript{128}. In broad terms, this Initiative recognizes the negative impacts of colonization on Indigenous concepts of gender, and also that the effects of gender on wellness have been often ignored and are not well understood. Therefore, this research wishes to address the questions: “What if we paid closer attention to gender in all its forms? Could we improve wellness among Indigenous Peoples?” What makes this example interesting is its evolution. First, it began with travel awards (up to $5000) to support the active participation of Indigenous peoples at an Idea Fair and Learning Circle, held in June 2019, to share perspectives, ideas and goals regarding Indigenous Gender and Wellness. A second phase of Development grants (up to $75,000 for one year) to develop plans and relationships for community-based projects built on ideas from the Idea Fair. Now, the third phase launches in 2021 as a Team Grant\textsuperscript{129} opportunity to fund 14 teams, with awards of $166,667 per year for up to 3 years, to implement Indigenous-led, community projects that will improve Indigenous health and wellness using a gender-based approach.

These two examples were offered to provide some illustration of the type of Targeted Initiatives that are relevant to Indigenous Research. A key aspect of these and similar programs is the priority given to providing space for Indigenous leadership of these research programs. In both of these cases, Indigenous identity is a factor of consideration for eligibility as described in the discussion of Applicant Eligibility in Section 3.

CIHR runs two Project Grant competition calls, in the Fall and Spring of each fiscal year. There is no typical value range associated with these grants or fixed number of awards available. Instead, each competition call has a fixed total budget ($325 million for Spring 2021) and the number and value of grants allocated depends on the requirements of research as determined by the requested budget and the recommendations of the peer-reviewers. CIHR has stated that it will not consider any single project that requests funding in excess of $13.75 million.

In addition to the standard Project Grants, additional supplementary funds are available for exceptional applications that propose research in specific key areas. These specific priority areas are announced with each competition call. To provide a relevant example, Research in First Nations, Inuit, or Métis health was an identified priority in the competitions of Spring 2018 and Fall 2020. In 2018, the funds were awarded to Dr Garry Shen of the University of Manitoba and Ms. Wendy Mousseau (a Traditional Parenting Worker/Elder) for research regarding the health impacts of breastfeeding in First Nations women. The decision from 2020 has yet to be announced.

In the Fall 2020 competition, CIHR had made changes to the Project Grant competition regarding Indigenous Research. As mentioned previously, they have made it possible for individuals associated with a non-governmental Indigenous organization to apply as Nominated Principal Applicants. Although, this is dependent on whether that organization passes a review for Institutional Eligibility or has an arrangement with an eligible Institution to administer funds. The updates also made a commitment that 4.6% of the competition budget will be reserved for applications to be reviewed by the Indigenous Health Research Committee (see discussion of Merit Review of Indigenous Research in Section 4.2).
This chart shows total sums paid by each of the three RC for all grants related to Indigenous interests and topics* in each fiscal year. This includes funding for scholarships, research projects, and knowledge mobilization and engagement activities.

It is clear that spending on Indigenous-related projects has steadily increased for both CIHR and SSHRC, whereas NSERC has not demonstrated any significant pattern in the last five years.

*The NSERC and CIHR award history databases do not provide a method of accurately isolating “Indigenous” projects. Instead, we used a proxy to estimate the number and funding to Indigenous project by compiling the results of database searches for the terms: “Indigenous”, “First Nation”, “Inuit”, “Metis” in the project titles, summaries, and applicant supplied keywords. The French terms “Premiere Nation” and “Autochtone” were also included. Projects that were unrelated, such as those that used the term “Indigenous” to describe native plant species or intrinsic properties of a material were removed. There may be some cases remaining that are not directly pertinent to this topic, e.g., studies Indigenous groups in foreign countries, but examination seemed to indicate these were in the minority.237
5.5 Tri-Council Funding Programs

In recent years, the three RCs have been increasingly working together by: coordinating shared policies for research standards; harmonizing and streamlining application processes and eligibility requirements; and forming partnerships to jointly fund programs to encourage and support ambitious and/or multi-disciplinary research programs.

Perhaps, the most well-known of these joint initiatives is the Canada Research Chairs (CRC) program. This program represents an investment of almost $300 million dollars per year to attract and keep the most promising researchers and scholars within Canadian universities.

CRCs are awarded on the basis of nominations rather than direct applications from researchers. Certain Canadian PSIs are allocated a set number of CRCs and nominate exceptional researchers based on its strategic objectives and capabilities. There are two tiers of CRC:

- **Tier 1**: For well-established and renowned researchers, who typically hold (or will hold) the equivalent of a full professorship. Valued at $200,000 per year for a seven-year term, and renewable after each term.
- **Tier 2**: For exceptional but still emerging scholars, who typically hold (or will hold) the equivalent of an assistant or associate professorship. Valued at $100,000 per year for a five-year term, and renewable once after seven years.

Despite being a Tri-Council program, each CRC is entirely funded by an individual RC in accordance with its mandate. The number of CRCs in a given research area is determined based on the value of research grants the Institute has received from the relevant RC. For example, the number of social science chairs that an Institution is allocated depends on the proportion of SSHRC’s total research funding directed to that Institution over the previous three years. The number of CRCs allocated to an Institution is recalculated on a bi-annual basis.

To be eligible to be allocated these CRC awards, the Institution must have received at least $100,000 in total research funding from the three RCs in the last three years and also be a degree-granting Institution. However, a clear consequence of distributing awards on the basis of previous grant funds is that it biases the allocation of CRCs to already successful universities in a reinforcing “the rich get richer” sense. For example, as of 2018 approximately 65% of Chairs are associated with 12 universities, all members of the U15. As a way to correct this bias, the CRC program also reserves 137 special CRCs for Institutions that have received one percent or less of the total grant funding paid out by the RCs in the previous three years.

The CRC program collects self-identification data from all nominees as part of their efforts to openly monitor and measure their progress towards their equity and diversity targets. According to their December 2020 program statistics from a total of 1,932 chairholders, 62 (3.2%) self-identified as Indigenous. Their current target is to reach 4.9% of self-identified Indigenous CRCs by 2029. Of those Indigenous chairholders, 72.6% identified as women and the majority perform research in the social sciences. However, the number of chairholders whose research interests include Indigenous Research is approximately 100.

The **New Frontiers in Research fund** is a high-value, five-year program started in 2018. The program aims to encourage out of the box thinking by prompting researchers to develop ambitious, innovative, multi-disciplinary project ideas. There are three streams of funding:

- **Exploration**: encourages high-risk, high-reward and interdisciplinary research. Provides up to $125,000 per year.
- **Transformation**: large-scale (between $2 million to $4 million per year) support for Canada to take leadership in research that has the potential to
have ground-breaking and transformative impacts on the world.

- **International**: supports Canadian researchers to participate and lead in major international research collaborations. Provides up to $10 million over four years.

The **College and Community Innovation** program is a Tri-Council collaborative funding scheme but it is managed by NSERC. This program enables colleges to collaborate with community organizations and local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The focus is on applied research, technology transfer, and facilitating commercialization. This scheme is somewhat unique as it is the only program explicitly intended for colleges and not universities. It can be considered a Partnership program as Applicant Institutions are required to form a collaborative arrangement with a local SME or community group, that is expected to make cash contributions to the funding costs.

There are nine funding opportunities associated with this program:

- **Engage**: Supports short-term research to specific challenges within the Partner company. Up to $25,000 for six months.
- **Connect**: Funds the necessary engagement, travel, and networking to build the partnerships needed for the College and Community Innovation (CCI) program.
- **Applied Research Development (ARD)**: Supports longer term applied research projects in collaboration with a private-sector partner.
- **Applied Research Tools and Instruments (ARTI)**: Supports the purchase of equipment to aid research in collaboration with local SMEs
- **College & Community Social Innovation Fund (CCSIF)**: Aimed at community collaboration and addressing the social/health needs of the community.
- **Industrial Research Chairs for Colleges**: Supports developing new research capacity to meet local or regional socio-economic needs. Chairholders are expected to conduct a program of applied research with partner companies.
- **Innovation Enhancement Grants**: Designed to support establishing a research capacity, and aimed at multi-company collaborations.
- **Innovation Links Grants**: To develop research links between companies, colleges, and universities with an aim to commercialize existing research ideas.
- **Technology Access Grants**: Funds the operations of research centres that address local research needs.

The CCI Grants are Institutional Grants, and as such, they are awarded to the Institution and not an individual. Therefore, it is assumed that the Applicant will be a senior administrator of the college.

As NSERC is managing the operation of this program on behalf of the Tri-Councils, applications must be submitted to NSERC. However, the proposed applied research can belong within the health, natural or social sciences or be interdisciplinary in nature. The only limitation regarding subject matter of the proposed activities is Institutional Eligibility. A college must be eligible to administer funds for the RC that matches their research interest e.g., an applied health research project will require the college to be eligible at CIHR.

The final category of RC grant programs to discuss are **Knowledge Synthesis Grants** (KSGs). Like SSHRC’s Connections program, these awards are not intended to support original research but rather to fund major literature surveys and knowledge sharing reviews. They ask researchers to perform a wide scan of all scholarship and thought-leadership in a given topic, and distill this down into key insights to inform actions and identify gaps for future research priorities.
As such, KSGs are examples of Targeted Initiatives, as they are always focused on a particular theme. KSGs were mentioned briefly in context of SSHRC’s Imagining Canada’s Future initiative, and the 2016 competition focused on the contributions of Indigenous knowledge systems and experiences in Canada. The Imagining Canada’s Future program is still running and calls for KSG competitions focused on one of the 16 current Challenge Areas. However, this is not the only origin of KSGs, both SSHRC and CIHR release KSG competitions at irregular intervals in response to a need for a rapid review and synthesis of available knowledge. For example, CIHR created urgent KSGs to quickly gather and understand available knowledge to inform actions regarding the Covid-19 pandemic\textsuperscript{137,138}. A RC may also start a KSG competition in response to the needs of a Partner Organization or ministry. For example, in December 2020, SSHRC partnered with Infrastructure Canada for a KSG focused on synthesizing research on mobility and public transit\textsuperscript{139}.

5.6 Research Funding Beyond the Research Councils

The three RCs represent the major sources of federal funding for independent research within Canada. However, other Federal Ministries, provincial governments, non-profit organizations, and private companies may also offer opportunities to fund researchers and their activities.

5.6.1 The Government of Ontario

Ontario’s Ministry of Colleges and Universities provides several opportunities for research funding through the Ontario Research Fund (ORF). The programs most relevant to conducting independent research are the Research Excellence and Early Researcher funds. However, at time of writing, the Ministry is not currently accepting applications for this fund due to impacts from the Covid-19 pandemic, and it is described here for reference\textsuperscript{140} regarding future opportunities.

The \textbf{ORF – Research Excellence} (ORF-RE) fund is an Institutional Grant to support eligible Ontario’s research Institutions in covering the operational and administrative costs of their programs.

The program will support up to one third of the total costs of the proposed project, with the remainder expected to be supplied by the Institution or other sources. There are tiers of funding available:

- \textbf{Tier 1:} Provides funds between $200,000 to $1 million.
- \textbf{Tier 2:} Provides funding from over $1 million to $4 million.

The fund provides up to one-third of the total value of a project, with the remaining two-thirds coming from a combination of private sector and institutional contributions.

The \textbf{ORF-Early Researcher Fund} supports ECRs, working at publicly funded Institutions in Ontario, in building their research team and capacity. Based on guidelines from the 2019 competition, early researchers can be taken to mean those who have obtained their doctoral degree within ten years of the current year and have started their academic career within five years. Applicants must also have a faculty position, or an equivalent position associated with independent research, at an eligible Institution.

In general, \textbf{Institutional Eligibility} for the ORF requires being an Ontario-based, non-profit, research institution. This is specifically stated to include:

- Publicly assisted universities,
- Colleges of applied arts and technology, and
- Research hospitals and their non-profit affiliates.

Other Ontario not-for-profit research organizations may be deemed eligible at the discretion of the Ontario Research Fund Advisory Board (ORFAB). It is noteworthy that this list does not include references to Indigenous Institutes despite their recognition as an equal pillar
of post-secondary education in the province. ORFAB will consider Institutions for eligibility provided they are not an agency of federal, provincial or territorial government (which includes departments, departmental corporations, crown-corporations or their subsidiaries) and can demonstrate the capacity to do research.

5.6.2 MITACS

Mitacs (which originally stood for Mathematics of Information Technology and Complex Systems) is a non-profit organization that provides funds to support research internships for promising students and ECRs. The work of Mitacs is consistent with the recurring theme of bridging the divide between academia and industry and in increasing access to trained researchers for those in other sectors. Mitacs’ grant programs bring together students, their academic supervisors, and Partner Organizations to develop and conduct research projects. These projects are intended to have significant economic and social impact to the work of the sponsoring organization, while providing training and experience in “real-world” and market relevant research for the student.

Mitacs offers six funding programs:

- **Accelerate**: Funds short-term research internships for students and postdoctoral scholars.
- **Elevate**: Postdoctoral fellowships providing a stipend, professional training and research and leadership experience in a non-academic environment.
- **Globalink**: International exchange internships allowing Canadian students to gain research experience at universities in partner countries, and vice versa.
- **Canadian Science Policy Fellowship**: 12-month opportunity for recent PhD graduates to work within governments to support the development of evidence-based policy.
- **Entrepreneur International**: Provides travel costs for Canadian entrepreneurs, in university-affiliated incubators, to explore opportunities in international markets and incubators world-wide.
- **Business Strategy Internship**: Four-month internship for students to conduct strategic analyses or develop initiatives to boost a Partner Organization’s competitiveness.

The most relevant of the above programs is Mitacs’ flagship Accelerate program, which is open to postdoctoral scholars, graduates, undergraduates, and students at Canadian colleges. This program does not run competitions as RC grants do, and students or businesses can apply at any time. The standard program operates its internships in units of four-month durations, however, an intern can participate in several units to allow for longer research projects. The maximum number of internships a student can do depends on their academic status, e.g., a college student can participate in three internships, a PhD student can do eight and a postdoctoral student can participate in up to nine. The minimum funding for each unit is $15,000, which allows $10,000 as a salary/stipend for the student and $5,000 for operating expenses. As with RC Partnership programs, the Partner Organization is expected to provide cash contributions of a minimum of $7,500 per unit. Funding models can vary depending on the number of internships the Partner Organization and Institution are willing to commit to, with the share of partner contribution to the total cost reducing with taking on more internships.

Between December 2020 and February 2021, Mitacs launched a new opportunity that reduced the mandated cash contributions for Indigenous businesses or businesses wishing to provide internships for Indigenous students. To qualify, the Partner Organization could be a private company that was 50% owned by an individual who self-identifies as Indigenous or a non-profit whose governing board is at least 50% composed of Indigenous people. Eligible organizations would have been required to contribute only 25% of the project costs to fund the internship. This scheme was introduced in recognition of the additional pressures faced by Indigenous businesses during the Covid-19
pandemic and was available for a limited time only. However, it is possible that Mitacs could make similar considerations for Indigenous organizations permanent in the future to evidence their commitment to working with Indigenous peoples.

Eligible Partner Organizations can include for-profit and non-profit organizations, however, due to the program’s focus on commercial and market relevant research, a project with a non-profit partner must demonstrate an intent of economic development or improved productivity. A standard requirement for the Accelerate program is that the applicant spends 50% of their time on-site with the Partner Organization during their internship. However, this requirement has been removed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and it is currently unknown if it will be reinstated in the near future.

Mitacs also works together with NSERC to provide additional funds to the CCI Applied Research Development and College-Community Social Impact Funds. When applying for the CCI-ARD or CCSIF programs a college can request additional support through Mitacs Accelerate Internships as part of the student training elements associated with the CCI program.

5.6.3 Industrial and Technological Benefits

National defence is an expensive endeavour and government spending on procurement contracts associated with defence are often worth tens of millions of dollars. The Industrial and Technological Benefits (ITB) policy provides a means by which large government spending on defence contracts can be leveraged to reinvest in Canada’s economy.

Whenever a company is awarded a major defence procurement (over $100 million), the ITB policy requires that company to invest an equivalent value back into Canada through a range of business activities. When bidding for the initial contract, the company puts forward a proposal called a “value proposition” that describes how they intend to reinvest into the economy. Companies form partnerships with Canadian businesses, non-profit organizations and, even, Post-secondary Institutions to support projects, develop technologies, and fund research.

Bids for defence contracts require a proposal that is judged by three different Federal ministries; the technical and financial aspects are evaluated by the Department of National Defence and the Department of Public Services and Procurement, respectively, and the value proposition is assessed by Industry, Science and Economic Development (ISED) who administer the ITB program. ISED’s review of the value proposition is based on the proposal’s alignment with five priorities:

- Supporting the long-term growth of the Canadian Defence Industry.
- Supporting contractors and suppliers, including SMEs, across Canada.
- Enhancing innovative Research and Development (R&D) in Canada.
- Supporting Canada’s exports and international competitiveness.
- Supporting skills development and training to fill skill gaps in the economy.

With regards to skills development and training, bidders are encouraged to identify opportunities to provide upskilling and reskilling for Canadians with special consideration given to under-represented groups in Canada, including Indigenous peoples.

Investments in R&D have a pronounced bias towards science and engineering, and proposed R&D activities are assessed based on alignment with 16 Key Industrial Capabilities areas of emerging technology anticipated to have significant impacts on national security and Canada’s industries e.g., Artificial Intelligence, Cyber-resilience, ship building, or munitions.

The definition of a PSI, according to ITB’s documentation, is “higher education institution or other organizational entity in Canada that is eligible to receive funding from at least one of the three federal granting
councils.” However, it is not clear if RC eligibility is a requirement for funding or if that is at the discretion of the Contractor Organization. It may affect the features of the ITB policy that encourage Contractors to invest in PSIs e.g., Contractors receive five times credit on cash contributions to PSIs for research funding.

Funding released via the ITB policy is not administered via any grant competition. Instead, access to funds is entirely dependent on building relationships and partnerships with Contractor Organizations within the defence industry. To aid in this, ISED provides the following advice:

- “Be patient! It can take years to build relationships with major firms;
- Determine what industry domain(s) you want to focus on – air, land, marine, cyber;
- Know who the top bidders and contractors are in your target market; visit BuyandSell.gc.ca regularly to keep current of upcoming tenders and industry engagements, and explore the ITB website to better understand the ITB Policy;
- Talk to your Regional Development Agency (RDA) representative and engage with Global Affairs Canada’s Trade Commissioner Service; and,
- Visit the Department of National Defence’s Defence Capabilities Blueprint webpage and browse by Key Industrial Capabilities (KICs) in order to identify projects that fall within your industry domain and match your firm’s capabilities.”

For PSIs specifically it is suggested to:

- “Research Prime Contractors with obligations and determine if their research and development priorities align with your areas of interest;
- Identify the type of R&D activities contractors are looking for, and market your institution as a viable solution and partner;
- Talk to your RDA representative: they can assist you in finding industry partners who require your expertise.”

5.7 Conclusion

This Section provided an overview of the major programs each RC offers for the conduct of independent research. The descriptions above do not cover all available grant programs. However, it is hoped that they provide sufficient context to the types of grant awards, typical award amounts, and the intended objectives of each program to inform IIs’ decisions regarding which opportunities may be of interest.
6.0 Considerations for Indigenous Institutes Moving Forward

As noted in the introductory discussion of scope, the central purpose of this guide is to provide information and context regarding research funding in Canada so that Indigenous Institutes (IIs) can best establish themselves as leaders of Indigenous Research, and access funding to conduct and direct their research programs. This final Section aims to highlight avenues that IIs can further explore to develop a research mandate, identify gaps in capacity, apply for grant funding, and engage with the Research Councils (RCs) as recognized post-secondary research institutions.

Each of the seven IIs is unique in terms of its programming, academic interests, capacity, location, language, and the community it serves. Therefore, each II will be suited to different paths towards accessing research funds. As such, this Section will provide more context regarding the questions below and their practical application for IIs seeking to build their unique research capacities within two broader categories: 1) considerations that may support how IIs internally reflect, organize, and make decisions in pursuit of RC funding, and 2) considerations that may support IIs when externally engaging with the RCs, partners, and other stakeholders within the research ecosystem.

The questions this Section will expand upon include:

- Is there a desire to conduct “academic research”?
- Which subject matters and research topics are of interest?
- What does Indigenous Research leadership look like?
- Who are we willing to collaborate with, and on which terms?
- What is the unique role that IIs can play within Canadian research?

This content was greatly informed and influenced by conversations with representatives of the IIs, who provided input and perspectives regarding research interests and experiences.

6.1 Academic Research

In the introduction of this guide, academic research was introduced as a loose term to describe the projects that were typically funded by RCs. A more precise definition is necessary as not all activities that can be considered research are of interest to the RCs, and it is important to establish if the RCs’ interests align with those of the IIs. Over the past two decades, greater emphasis and expectation has been placed on publicly funded research to deliver results of tangible, practical value. This blurs the, somewhat over-simplistic, lines between basic and applied research. It would not be accurate to state that the RCs support only basic or pure research. However, it is also apparent that not all research activities are considered as eligible for RC funding. For example, research activities that are conducted under contract by a private firm are not an eligible use of funds.

Tri-Council Policy Statement 2 (TCPS2) in setting the context for “ethical” research conduct, provides the following definition of research:

“For the purposes of this Policy, ‘research’ is defined as an undertaking intended to extend knowledge through a disciplined inquiry and/or systematic investigation. The term “disciplined inquiry” refers to an inquiry that is conducted with the expectation that the method, results and conclusions will be able to withstand the scrutiny of the relevant research community. For
example, a study seeking to explore the narratives of teens coping with mental illness would be evaluated by the established standards of studies employing similar methods, technologies and/or theoretical frameworks."

(emphasis added)

Therefore, a core element of the RCs’ concept of research is the need for peer-review to validate and recognize the research results. Although much of academic thought has evolved from a binary definition of correct/incorrect or valid/invalid with respect to research findings, research is still considered to be something more than opinion. Research involves advancing a proposition based on a foundation of reasoning consistent with the discipline and worldview in which it is rooted. In doing so, academic research seeks to advance the knowledge of the academic community, just as Indigenous Research aims to build upon the Cultural Knowledge of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities, and respond to their needs and priorities.

Implicit in the requirement of peer-review is the assumption that the work is of interest and value to a wider community of scholars and knowledge users. This raises another question when considering if proposed research could be considered “academic”: do the research findings have an impact on or are of interest to the wider communities within Canada? Ultimately, the purpose of the RC system is to provide public funding for research that would not be funded by other sectors, in the interests of people in Canada. This explains why purely commercial applications such as market research, user testing, and product development are not directly funded by the IIs given that the profits available from their success primarily serve private firms versus public interest.

For example, in discussions with IIs, program evaluation was suggested as a desirable research project. However, although program evaluation involves many of the same processes and methods of data collection and analysis as research, it is not typically considered as research. In context of this distinction, certain SSHRC grant opportunities such as the Insights Development Grant expressly state that “Projects whose primary objective is curriculum development, preparation of teaching materials, program evaluation, organization of a conference or workshop, digitization of a collection, or creation of a database are not eligible for funding under this funding opportunity.” Other grant opportunities do not set such explicit limitations; however, it is worth noting that only 83 of 20,195 projects in SSHRC’s Insight program (2015-2020) expressly mention program evaluation.

Although, as with many things, it is hard to draw a hard-line between research and evaluation, the distinction is usually stated to be based on intention and audience. Program evaluation is primarily intended to determine if a program is effective in its context; it is less interested in deepening understanding or generalizable insights that can be applied in other situations, as academic research is. The primary audience of a program evaluation is the organization delivering the program or their stakeholders, whereas research is assumed to be shared with a wider community of scholars.

That does not mean research funding cannot be applied to program evaluation, but it does mean the primary objective must have broader appeal. This can be accomplished by considering the research program at a higher level. For example, the results of direct program evaluation may not be of interest, but as evaluation is another discipline biased by colonial definitions of performance, efforts to define and apply culturally appropriate Indigenous evaluation processes and metrics is of wider scholarly interest. The question of how Indigenous knowledge can be applied to develop models for Indigenous evaluation which can be applied in numerous contexts, is a research question with both intellectual and practical impact.

Even RC programs that are more focused on facilitating a partnership with industry for technology and knowledge transfer, and product development, often include a stipulation that projects which “collect data without interpreting underlying mechanisms, are not eligible” indicating some academic research component.
Aside from research, RCs also support knowledge transfer and knowledge mobilization activities. Interests in promoting, sharing, and preserving Indigenous languages were raised by several II representatives, as was a desire to educate people on the truth of Residential Schools and their communities’ experiences of them, as well as sharing their First Nations history. These are activities that could fit within the domain of knowledge mobilization. As mentioned in Section 4.2, SSHRC’s Connection program\textsuperscript{150} is a good example of a scheme to fund knowledge mobilization and 2018’s special Indigenous Capacity and Reconciliation—Connection Grants are a particularly relevant example.

6.2 Research Topics of Interest

To engage in the pursuit of academic research, IIs will need to consider what topics of research hold the most appeal, and which Institute holds the most capacity to conduct those research programs.

Defining research interests in very broad terms has obvious implications for choosing which RC to apply to, which grant programs to review more closely, and which approach to Institutional Eligibility is the most suitable.

From discussions with II administrators regarding their current research interests, the following themes could be identified.

- Mental health and addiction $\rightarrow$ CIHR
- Education and learning $\rightarrow$ SSHRC
- Linguistics and languages $\rightarrow$ SSHRC
- History $\rightarrow$ SSHRC

Note that NSERC is absent from the above. This is for two reasons. First, research directly related to the natural sciences and engineering was not suggested by representatives from the IIs. Second, as noted in Section 3, NSERC sets the highest barrier for Institutional Eligibility as they require eligible Institutions to confer either degrees or diplomas in the natural sciences and engineering fields.

Clear priorities regarding specific research interests and disciplines (e.g. Indigenous Pedagogy) can help define research policies and inform other supporting information needed to apply for Institutional Eligibility\textsuperscript{151}, as well as providing context for discussions with the RCs regarding their policies. From there, some specific examples of research questions or projects would be more refined to the context of these engagements.

High-level suggestions for research questions or ideas should be derived from each II’s experience with their programs and their communities, the experience and interests of their staff, and their Indigenous traditions.

A few suggested considerations:

- What are the needs of your students and your community?
- What are some trends or patterns, positive or negative, that have been observed in the experiences of teaching and learning in your programs?
- What is unique about your programs compared to non-Indigenous Institutions? What are the benefits and limitations and how could you understand them?
- Where do Indigenous and “mainstream” knowledge systems conflict in your programs, or in your community, and where do they complement each other?

For example, one representative of an II described their experience of observing the first classes of a land-based learning program that had been implemented while public schools were adapting to the Covid-19 pandemic. This teaching approach appears to have been well-received by the children in general, however, this person also described the exceptionally positive reaction from two children who had been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders. Although an anecdote at present, this story contains the seed for a research project of great potential value and impact.
“What happens when children diagnosed with ASD are taught using Indigenous land-based educational approaches?”

A simple question such as the one above can be used to frame many further considerations including: understanding the gap between current research capacity and staffing and what would be required for this sort of research, what are suitable methods (either western, Indigenous or both) for addressing this question, what would be the requirement in terms of ethics approval, and how can a grant applicant demonstrate appropriate qualifications for this work. etc?

6.3 Partnering with Other Institutions

This report describes its scope as supporting IIs in becoming leading post-secondary centres for Indigenous Research. In the research community, leadership incorporates elements of control and agency but also reputation. Principal Investigators lead their projects by providing intellectual and operational direction to the project and the team. A university may be considered a leader in a given discipline (e.g., particle physics) due to the reputation it has built for the quality of its work in the field. The themes of reputation and control emerged in discussion with II representatives regarding research. Both elements were considered important and, ultimately, each II will need to define its own stance in context of its research goals and capacity. This is especially important as, unfortunately, current SSHRC policy emphasizes the role of research partnerships in Institutional Eligibility for Indigenous organizations.

In the 2009 evaluation of SSHRC’s Aboriginal Research Pilot Program it was reported that the issue of Institutional Eligibility presented a barrier and source of delay for several participating Indigenous organizations. The document summarized SSHRC’s approach to these cases as “was generally to attempt to support the organization’s attainment of the required conditions, and as a second option to propose that they use or establish a link with a nearby or affiliate organizations that already had institutional eligibility status.”

This description would accurately describe the situation in the present day. As stated in Section 3, the requirement that grants be administered by an eligible Institution is the main mechanism that RCs use to ensure the responsible use of public funds. Essentially, RCs trust the Institution to monitor and vouch for their researcher’s work and hold them accountable for any financial or ethical misconduct. These requirements are seen as providing a fundamentally important assurance within the research system. CIHR and SSHRC have made it clear that they will help and support Institutions to meet the requirements and are willing to allow some organizations to administer individual grants under special circumstances, as judged on a case-by-case basis. However, if Institutions still cannot meet the requirements, the suggested path is to form an agreement with an already eligible Institution.

Full eligibility as a PSI would provide IIs with the most independence and control over their research, but the necessary infrastructure requirements may require substantial time and capital to establish. Establishing an arrangement with another Institution would provide a means to avoid or postpone this issue while, simultaneously, developing research capacity and experience within the II and building a relationship and research history with the RCs. However, will such a relationship allow the II to be considered to be leading the research, either in the eyes of the research community or by its own standards?

SSHRC does allow Indigenous non-profits to administer funds with a greater degree of independence and with more flexible eligibility requirements. Although this is a practical option for IIs it highlights a gap in SSHRC’s eligibility policies and the lack of recognition of Indigenous Post-Secondary Institutes (IPSI) within the RCs’ strategies for Indigenous Research.

There are few specific stipulations for the form of such an administration agreement, besides the II agreeing
to have its research plans reviewed by the partner Institution’s Research Ethics Board (REB) and complying with their administrative policies. Assuming a suitable relationship could be agreed upon, where the partner Institution would cede all intellectual and operational leadership of the project to the II and simply act in an advisory capacity to maintain ethical standards, the partner Institution is still required to submit the application on behalf of the team. If successful, the decision will be announced on the RC’s website with the partner Institution listed as the Recipient Institution. Would an II be comfortable to lead in this circumstance? Are there arrangements or terms for the agreement that could compensate e.g., having II researchers take “pride of place” as authors in any peer-reviewed publications, or emphasizing II branding in news and social media on the project?

In deciding which path to funding is most suitable, each II would be advised to consider the viability of an arrangement with non-Indigenous academic Institutions, which terms could be flexible and which would be non-negotiable, and how to protect their reputation as leaders of the project. What does an appropriate partnership look like? What sort of assurances are needed?

6.4 Other Partnerships

The discussion in 6.3 approached the topic of partnerships with other academic Institutions, motivated by challenges of capacity and eligibility. However, research is a collaborative process and working with organizations in the public, private, and non-profit sectors is actively encouraged by several RC grant programs, e.g., the College and Community Innovation Program - Social Innovation Fund. Non-RC grant programs such as Mitacs, Industrial and Technological Benefits, and regional development grants are also dependent on forming partners in industry or entrepreneurial sectors.

Therefore, a valuable line of inquiry, after considering possible research interests, would be to seek out potential external partners in the public and private sectors.

The seven IIs and the IIC already represent an internal alliance based on common purpose and intent, with plans to further increase collaboration such as through a shared database system. It is possible that the IIs working together could build a mutual research capacity that is greater than could be achieved by IIs working individually. For example, could there be an integrated IIC research ethics board that serves all IIs? Or, through forming an Indigenous non-profit organization, the Institutes could collaboratively apply to SSHRC Partnership grants, with individual IIs joining as Partner Organizations in a Formal Partnership.

Working with Partner Organizations in industry or non-profit sectors is an approach that will increase the direct, practical impact of the proposed research and provide a source of additional funds, while still allowing IIs to act as the lead partners in the arrangement. Therefore, it is worth considering this approach if a suitable partner is available whose mandate is aligned with the IIs' research interests.

6.5 The Role of Indigenous Institutions in Canada’s Research Environment

The Indigenous Institute Act (IIA) formally recognizes the equal status, but distinct and unique nature, of IIs within the post-secondary education system, alongside mainstream universities and colleges. However, there appears to be no recognition of the separate status of IIs within the research landscape and, consequently, no awareness of the valuable and unique contribution that IIs can make as leaders of Indigenous Research.

According to the IIA, IIs are not universities or colleges, but this is a mere matter of nomenclature. IIs are fully-recognized PSIs that provide a high-standard education and are able to confer recognized degrees and
diplomas, in addition to comprehensive skills training. Unfortunately, the definition and terms used by RCs makes explicit reference to “universities and colleges,” leaving a technical gap in their policies that directly affects the recognition and status of IIs. This gap is relevant to future relationships with NSERC and applying to the College-Community Innovation Fund (which is a program that may specifically appeal to IIs). Both SSHRC and CIHR allow Indigenous non-profit organizations to apply for funding, provided they can demonstrate a research mandate. However, this classification can limit access to only certain grant programs e.g., Connection Grants (a non-research based program) and Partnership Grants (which requires working with another Institution). These constraints are neither representative of IIs as having parity with universities and colleges nor reflective of their identity as PSIs.

In addition, TCPS2 requires researchers to develop respectful relationships with Indigenous communities. However, IIs have established, respectful and collaborative relationships with the First Nations they serve and existing knowledge of their governance structures, protocols, traditions, and practices. All of this knowledge, that TCPS2 requires that researchers invest and budget the time and money to develop before conducting their research activities, IIs already possess and so are positioned to begin their projects and direct funds to other uses or simply require less funding overall.

Current trends in Indigenous Research, and in efforts to decolonize and Indigenize post-secondary education, appears to favour the creation of Indigenous Research Centres within universities that have the capital to support them, as well as an established research history, with the RCs’ capacity. Clearly, this puts small and growing institutions, such as the IIs, at a disadvantage with regards to competing for funding. However, this also embeds Indigenous researchers and students within mainstream Institutions, which often present a culturally unwelcoming and inappropriate environment, rather than within Indigenous communities. As Kim Falcigno, of Oshki-Wenjack, described it:

“It’s like they carve out little pieces of these big universities as the ‘special’ indigenous spaces, instead of bringing them together in one place where they can be whole —such as at Ontario’s Indigenous Institutes like Oshki-Wenjack. ”

The reactions to this approach have been mixed with claims of tokenism and other issues affecting the relationship between Indigenous researchers and the universities that host these research centres. IIs do not need “Indigenizing.” They are Indigenous. They are grounded in the cultures, traditions, and ways of knowing of their peoples and communities. They provide a welcoming environment to Indigenous researchers and research conducted at IIs would be embedded in Indigenous knowledge systems. At IIs, the participation of Elders and Knowledge Keepers can easily become a natural and respected part of the research process.

When the RCs recognize the unique role that IIs could play in the research landscape, as the Government of Ontario has for education, Canada’s capacity for Indigenous Research will be greatly enhanced and enriched by IIs’ unique perspective and contribution.

This statement extends beyond the IIC and its seven member IIs. Advancing this position will change the role of every Indigenous governed and operated PSI in Canada e.g., Dechinta, Blue Quills, etc. The IIC could reach out to these other Indigenous Institutes and bring them together in a joint effort to engage the IIs and advance an agenda for Indigenous Institute-led research. In doing so the IIC and its member Institutes would place itself at the lead of a movement for advancing Indigenous Research and Indigenous Research sovereignty.
6.6 Specific Considerations

We conclude our report with a list of considerations that may support IIs’ future dialogue and engagement with the RCs, and propel IIs forward in their pursuit for recognition as centres of excellence and leadership in Indigenous Research.

1) Engaging with Research Councils and Others:

These are intended as practical and strategic considerations for the Indigenous Institute Consortium (IIC), and the Indigenous Institutes (IIs), as they enter dialogue with the Research Councils (RCs) and other affected parties in the research system. This guide has described a range of systemic and practical barriers that limit the participation and agency of IIs in Indigenous Research. The following suggestions are intended to highlight potential areas where IIs can collaborate with the RCs and others to promote mutually beneficial change.

1.1 The IIC should engage with the RCs to raise their awareness of the IIs, the Indigenous Institute Act, and its implications for their policies and position on Indigenous Research.

This engagements should include:

- The IIC guiding Tri-Councils and the Canada Research Coordination Committee (CRCC) to issue a statement that fully recognizes the IIs as a separate, distinct, and legislated pillar of post-secondary education and validates the vital contribution IIs make to research in Canada.
- The IIC working with the RCs to ensure that all policies regarding eligibility requirements for Institutions and Applicants are updated to reflect the status of IIs and are more inclusive of the variety of PSIs.
- As part of this engagement, the IIC and IIs should develop a strong and clear position that Articles 3 and 11(1) of UNDRIP provides for Indigenous control and agency in research as a necessity of Indigenous self-governance and the right to develop and strengthen their Institutions and cultural practices.

The current policies of the research councils refers to PSIs in terms of universities and colleges, but IIs are not umbrellaed under universities or colleges. The IIA recognizes IIs as completely equivalent to universities and colleges in terms of their legal status, their license to confer accredited degrees and diplomas, and their standards of education and research. Recognition of the status of IIs would demonstrate the RCs’ commitment to working with Indigenous organizations to support Indigenous Research.

1.2 The IIs should work with the RCs and the Interagency Advisory Panel on Research Ethics to revise the Tri-Council Policy Statement 2, specifically Chapter 9, to be more inclusive of Indigenous researchers working within their own communities in service of the needs of those communities.

Although TCPS2 Chapter 9 represents a major advancement in ensuring that researchers build respectful and mutually beneficial relationships with Indigenous communities, it is largely targeted at researchers affiliated with external, non-Indigenous institutions wishing to enter communities to conduct research. This framing (re)establishes the dominant paradigm that research is the domain of external experts to be practiced on First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people, instead of respecting the community-led,
community-based approaches that are the foundation of Indigenous Research.

In the wake of recent moves by SSHRC and CIHR to open eligibility to Indigenous non-profit organizations, robust guidelines for community-driven research are becoming more vital as Indigenous community-based organizations begin to apply for research funding. As post-secondary research institutions embedded within, and accountable to, First Nation communities, IIs are uniquely placed to build new frameworks to guide this emerging practise.

1.3 The IIC should work with SSHRC, specifically, to modify its Institutional Eligibility classifications to be inclusive of Indigenous Post-Secondary Institutions (IPSIs) and develop appropriate processes to evaluate their eligibility. For example, the modified criteria for Indigenous not-for-profit organizations should apply to all IIs applying for eligibility, including PSIs. However applications for eligibility from IPSIsmust be reviewed by those familiar with Indigenous Research and epistemologies to appropriately evaluate the qualifications of the Institution’s researchers and ethics board.

SSHRC’s decision to create a separate class of eligibility for Indigenous non-profit organizations was made in response to the RCs’ commitment to “greater accessibility to funding” for Indigenous organizations. However, this approach fails to account for IPSIslike the IIs, who face similar barriers in accessing funding as Indigenous non-profits but are recognized PSIs. In addition, Indigenous non-profits are not eligible to apply for Insight Grants, which is SSHRC’s flagship grant program. This limitation seems contrary to the RCs’ efforts to promote Indigenous leadership in research, which would suggest that Indigenous Research organizations, and IIs specifically, should be able to access the Insight program.

1.4 The IIC should engage with RCs to provide a special funding opportunity that provides funding for 3-5 years with the explicit aim of allowing IIs, and other Indigenous organizations, to build the administrative infrastructure required to meet eligibility requirements and to fund pilot projects in Indigenous Research. This funding envelope would incorporate elements of SSHRC’s now discontinued Aid to Small Universities and Institutional Grants, and should include such provisions as:

- Funding to cover the costs associated with starting a research centre, such as personnel (e.g. research administrator), equipment and supplies costs.
- Funding for IIs to develop and codify policies on research ethics, conduct, financial administration, and data management that are in accordance with Tri-Council policies and their Indigenous worldviews.
- Funding for establishing an institutional Research Ethics Board (REB).
- Partial funding to hire a full-time researcher, perhaps an Early Career Researcher with a background in either mainstream or Indigenous Research, to conduct small-scale research projects.
- Block grants to fund pilot projects as determined by the IIs in response to the priorities of their community.

Preparing an Institution to meet all of the requirements of Institutional Eligibility requires a significant investment of capital, mostly in the form of personnel. For example, establishing a REB requires hiring qualified subject matter experts and administrators to coordinate the logistical needs of ethical review. In purely tactical terms, this is the most proximal barrier to the participation of IIs, and other Indigenous organizations in the research system.

In 2018, SSHRC administered the Indigenous Research Capacity and Reconciliation — Connection Grants. However, despite the name, as these grants only funded the production of a number of research papers they did not directly address the issue of Indigenous Research capacity. A short-term investment to ensure that Indigenous organizations can reach the minimum viable capacity to conduct research should be sufficient to
facilitate IIs’ long-term research programs, as continued success in grant competitions often depends on an Institution’s established research history. These goals are consistent with the aims of SSHRC’s previous Aid to Small Universities and Institutional Grants. These programs are no longer operating, however, in light of the RCs’ commitment to supporting Indigenous Research capacity and the critical contribution of IIs’ to Indigenous Research, a similar support program is needed. In establishing a funding opportunity, such as the one described, the RCs would be directly aligned with the commitment to “Offer funding opportunities to strengthen capacity among Indigenous communities” made in their 2019 Strategic Plan on Indigenous Research.

1.5 In context of the funding opportunity suggested above, or any other alternative funding to boost Indigenous Research capacity, the IIC should draft a budget submission for future years outlining programming that would specifically foster benefits for IIs. Where possible, the IIC and IIs should coordinate with other IPSIs to align on what a Canada-wide program design would look like and could aim to achieve, and calculate a national investment total for the program.

1.6 The IIC should encourage RCs to provide funding for Elders to be provided with full- or part-time positions at IIs, so that they can share their Cultural Knowledge with researchers and the community, and that these vital practices may be preserved. This program would be consistent with the spirit of SSHRC’s Talent Program in supporting the development of highly-trained personnel.

Much of the deepest Cultural Knowledge in Indigenous communities is preserved and maintained by Elders who are deeply immersed in their own cultures. Many Elders continue to speak their traditional first language, have been observing their cultural practices for their entire lives, and have developed their own specialities within those practices, much like academic professors who become established in their own disciplines. These practices are not only important to the Indigenous paradigm of research, they are in fact a form of research.

However, you will not find these Elders or their practices on university campuses but in their communities and on their lands. As community-based centres of learning and research, IIs are the ideal place for Elders to pass on and preserve their teachings. Their ability to do so is limited by the demands of their lives such as their “regular” jobs. By going beyond funding honoraria, providing Elders a living wage and a formal academic position within their own communities, the RCs would demonstrate their recognition of Indigenous ways of knowing and the contribution of Elders to the research endeavour.

1.7 The IIC should engage with NSERC to co-develop a policy for Indigenous Research in the natural sciences. This should include NSERC providing its own definition of Indigenous Research and also guidelines for working on Indigenous lands, including guidelines on the stewardship of plants and animals in accordance with the ethical practices and protocols of the local Indigenous communities. In addition, natural scientists should be encouraged to build relationships and understand the social, political, and cultural landscapes of the lands where they work and the communities that their projects may benefit or impact. There should also be a framework for integrating the Cultural Knowledge of Indigenous communities into scientific research as appropriate, and providing opportunities for students of II to gain experience and training in the projects, providing a path for Indigenous research in the natural sciences.

NSERC has demonstrated less action on the topic of Indigenous Research than the other two RCs, with its efforts focused on simply attempting to increase the number of Indigenous researchers in STEM fields. It is important that, in the context of IIs’ unique role within Indigenous Research, NSERC provides a definition of Indigenous Research that gives IIs a clear mandate for scientific research. This definition will also clarify where
IIs’ expertise in Indigenous methods and knowledge systems can contribute to the sciences, to better inform grant applications, and provide the framework for NSERC to recognize these contributions.

The work of environmental scientists, ecologists, and botanists frequently involve field research on Indigenous lands and there are many examples of such research benefiting from the local and historical knowledge of Elders. This research is likely to increase in frequency and importance as climate change affects environmental conditions across Canada. In addition, engineers frequently work on projects, such as the development of technologies for the treatment of contaminated water, which affects many First Nation communities in Ontario and across Canada.

Unfortunately, many natural sciences are not exposed to the same levels of ethics training as social scientists, and may not be familiar with the guidelines in TCPS Chapter 9 and with the protocols and principles of building relationships with Indigenous communities. Although there are numerous examples of natural scientists collaborating with Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, standard policies issued by NSERC would demonstrate the RCs’ commitment to advancing Indigenous Research in all disciplines.

1.8 Parallel to the engagement concerning policy changes, the IIs should approach individual RCs to begin discussions to find a viable path towards Institutional Eligibility in the present system.

The important work to advance the role of IIs in the research system is likely to extend over several years. Parallel to these efforts, the IIC and its member IIs should reach out to RCs for guidance and clarity regarding eligibility for grant programs in the current system. These efforts should focus on the RCs fulfilling the commitment “to build and strengthen understanding and user-friendliness of granting agency programs, including simplifying language, administration and application processes” made in the 2020 Setting New Directions strategic plan. Certain aspects of the application processes are unclear, especially where Indigenous Research is concerned.

For example, although SSHRC and CIHR commit to Indigenous Research proposals being peer-reviewed by adjudication panels with expertise in Indigenous Research, it is unclear how the panels will review these proposals, how will the evaluation criteria differ from those used in mainstream research? How will the RCs recruit the members of the panels and how will they ensure that enough breadth of knowledge is present to appraise research methods across the diverse epistemologies and practices of First Nation, Inuit, and Métis communities. Outside of faculty positions, what is acceptable proof that a researcher is considered independent for the purposes of becoming an Applicant/Principal Investigator?

Similarly, although the application process and documentation for applying for Institutional Eligibility is clearly documented, there is little information regarding how these applications are reviewed and approved, and how their unique worldviews and contexts of IIs are accounted for.

In seeking clarity on these review processes, particularly relevant questions for IIs include:

• What are alternative, non-academic indicators of research experience in Indigenous contexts? How can these be further developed? How can they be recognized in peer-review panels and how can peer-reviewers be trained to understand their uses?
• What are the requirements or guidelines for acknowledging Elders as Co-applicants or Collaborators?
• Do SSHRC Formal Partnerships administered by Indigenous non-profit organizations still require the participation of a PSI?
• What is acceptable proof of a research mandate?
• What arrangements can be made for eligibility regarding research that does not require ethics approval such as: knowledge synthesis and...
1.9 The IIC should engage with the Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities regarding the future of the Ontario Research Excellence Fund (OREF) and considerations for how IIs may apply as recognized post-secondary research institutions.

The OREF and related programs are Ontario’s main mechanism for supporting investigator-initiated research and research infrastructure in the province. The Government of Ontario (GoO) has officially recognized the unique nature and equal status of IIs as pillars of the post-secondary education system, and have committed to support their growth and development. Therefore, the OREF is an excellent opportunity for IIs to access research funds and for the GoO to demonstrate its commitment to IIs. If the IIs were successful in receiving funds through this process it would set a precedent for funding and help establish a track record in research, which would facilitate IIs success in applying for RC grants.

However, the OREF program is not currently accepting applications and it is unknown if the program has adapted to include IIs since the passing of the Indigenous Institutes Act. Therefore, determining when and if the program will next issue a call of applications, and determining how the research needs of the IIs can be met through this program, would be an important step.

1.10 In engaging with the RCs, the IIC should express an interest to receive and then circulate to IIs an Expression of Interest from the Councils seeking input on their Indigenous programs.

The RCs claim to be committed to action regarding Indigenous inclusion and research capacity. As part of this commitment, they have convened, or are actively convening, numerous advisory boards and committees to gather input from Indigenous researchers, scholars, Elders, and communities. An example is the Tri-Council Leadership Circle, which is currently being recruited. The SSHRC’s Indigenous Advisory Board or CIHR’s Institute of Indigenous People’s Health Institute Advisory Board have already been confirmed, however, membership may be for fixed terms or subject to changes resulting in calls for new members. IIC should attempt to stay aware of these calls as membership of such committees is a direct way to inform the RCs’ decision-makers. The IIC should explore how to leverage their members’ contact networks to aid in this.

The IIs should also provide guidance to the RCs on how to better communicate with IIs, and other Indigenous organizations, to proactively notify them of these opportunities.

2) Avenues for Collaboration:

The potential impacts that may result from ongoing dialogue between IIs and RCs, some of which are outlined in the considerations above, will undoubtedly affect other Indigenous Research organizations across Canada. Therefore, the IIC may wish to consider allying with these organizations to work towards mutually beneficial outcomes. In addition, the seven IIs may also wish to evaluate the potential benefits combining their individual capacities and collaborating for the purposes of Indigenous Research.

2.1 If possible, IIC and IIs should collaborate with other Indigenous Post-Secondary Institutions (IPSIs) across Canada to lead a coalition that will engage with all three RCs, the Canadian Foundation for Innovation, and the Canada Research Coordinating Council to advocate for the recognition of the full
status and unique role that Indigenous-led and operated Institutes have within the research system. Recognition of the critical role of the Indigenous Institutes as centres for Indigenous Research will not only affect the IIC’s members; working with other IPSIs would strengthen efforts and capacity to advance Indigenous Research sovereignty across Canada.

2.2 In support of 2.1, the IIC should lead the development of a comprehensive and proactive strategic plan for Indigenous Research led by IPSIs. This document should build upon and integrate the research vision and mission statements for all IIs within the coalition. It should clearly set out the research priorities and agendas of all collaborating IPSIs and emphasize the pivotal role of Indigenous leadership in Indigenous Research.

This document would reference the work of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) 2018 National Inuit Strategy on Research, which put forward a clear set of priorities and objectives to advance Inuit self-determination in the field of research. Likewise, a National Strategy for Indigenous Research would establish a position that Indigenous Research should be led by Indigenous peoples in Institutions that are operated by First Nation, Inuit, and Métis communities and rooted in their respective cultures. By establishing well-defined objectives, the RCs have goals they can commit to and be held accountable for.

2.3 The IIs wish to consider combining their resources into a more formal collaboration in Indigenous Research. For example, the IIs could establish a non-profit research organization, e.g. The Indigenous Research Centre of Ontario. This Research Hub could then apply for SSHRC eligibility as an Indigenous non-profit organization in a Formal Partnership with the IIs and their First Nation communities.

- Once eligible, this Research Centre could submit an application for a SSHRC partnership grant to establish a number of Partnered Chairs, which would allow the centre to appoint qualified researchers as full-time faculty and would also fund the development of a research program.

- This research centre could be a brick and mortar institution but could also be a virtual institute, like CIHR, and act as the coordinating body for a network of community-based research hubs. The nests could act as places of learning and research where researchers, Knowledge Keepers, and learners can come together to conduct research as First Nations have for generations by practicing their cultures on the lands.

- The formation of an Indigenous governed and operated Research Centre would be a high-profile demonstration of Indigenous Research practices and sovereignty, and may also attract funds from alternative sources, such as the Canada Foundation for Innovation, the Government of Ontario, or philanthropic organizations such as the Trillium Foundation.

The most proximate barrier to the participation of IIs in the research system is the lack of capacity to establish the administrative and policy infrastructure to meet the RCs’ eligibility requirements. The RCs’ current policy recommends that Institutions, seeking grant funding, address their capacity gaps by forming partnerships with mainstream universities and colleges. This approach reinforces a dependence upon non-Indigenous institutions which places IIs at a possible disadvantage in any research agreement. An alternative approach would be for IIs to pool their collective capacities to launch an entirely First Nation-based research partnership.

SSHRC’s requirements of a Formal Partnership necessitates the participation of recognized PSIs. Therefore, this approach would recognize the status of the IIs but not require each Institute to be independently eligible for funding. In addition, this Research Centre could apply for Partnership Grants as a wholly Indigenous endeavour, without the need to involve a mainstream university or college, although they could still do so at their own discretion.
2.4 The IIC should consider establishing a research support office to service all member IIs. This could consist of a single suitably qualified individual at first, acting as a research administrator. The function of this role is to provide support to IIs’ efforts to apply for funding and could also be responsible for administering funds.

Many Institutions have a research support office, or similar, that compiles and maintains information regarding grant programs and notifies staff of when suitable opportunities are available. They typically review and provide feedback on application materials and are responsible for approving all proposals before submission to the RC. The research administrator also has the authority to bind the Institution to any funding agreement, and therefore is considered a necessary role within a research centre. Hiring a suitable research administrator would embed an expert in the RCs’ programs and are able to provide suitable advice on processes and procedures for application.

2.5 The IIC should assign a staff member, e.g. the research administrator recommended above, to update IIs on upcoming and relevant grant opportunities.

Although flagship programs, such as the Insights program, have regular competitions, other funding opportunities may arise in response to local, national, or international factors. For example, in late 2020, a special Knowledge Synthesis competition was announced to review and distill current research regarding the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on Indigenous communities. The Research Administrator would be able to identify emerging opportunities for research funding and forward them to suitable IIs based on topic, recognition, capacity, and resources.

2.6 The IIC and IIs should collaborate to evaluate their capacity and interest in outreach or knowledge mobilization (i.e., not research-focused) activities that qualify for RC funding. For example, SSHRC Connection programs fund events or extended outreach activities for sharing and enriching knowledge between researchers and communities. Example 4 in Appendix 2 of this report provides an example of such an event, and the recipients of the 2018 Indigenous Capacity and Reconciliation grants could provide alternative inspiration. These funds may also align with IIs’ interests in Indigenous language and Reconciliation-based knowledge sharing and awareness building.

An outreach program of sufficient scale can build relationships between: the IIs, the IIC, other IPSIs in Canada, scholars in Indigenous Research methodologies from universities, and Knowledge Keepers from various Indigenous Traditions within Canada. This would help build the connections required to advance the strategies discussed in Recommendations 2.1-2.3 as well as provide opportunities to raise awareness of the IIC and the IIs, within the media and broader Canadian research community.

2.7 Alternatively, the IIC, its member IIs, and collaborating IPSIs could consider bypassing the established Tri-Council framework of research funding, and instead approach Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED) and Health Canada to establish a separate Indigenous Research Council (IRC). This would be founded on the ontological, epistemological, and axiological perspectives of Indigenous communities with a decentralized model of allocating funds that is based on community needs and priorities rather than the competition-based processes used in mainstream research.

A great deal of progress has been made by the RCs and mainstream institutions regarding building equitable partnerships with Indigenous communities and increasing the inclusion and recognition of Indigenous ways of knowing. However, the current Research Funding System is still a product of a western paradigm steeped in the colonial belief that success in a competitive process is a true proxy for determining the merit of a proposed program of research. Instead of working to decolonize the existing system, building
a new system using a wholly Indigenous model would be an alternative approach to establishing Indigenous Research sovereignty.

2.8 The IIs should work with their First Nation governments to develop robust research ethics policies, or revise existing guidelines, that are mandatory for all individuals and Institutions wishing to conduct research within their communities. These policies should include a requirement that recognizes the relevant II as the official research centre of the community and any research project must involve a full and equal partnership with the II’s researchers as committed in a written research partnership agreement.

Article 9.3 of TCPS2 states:

“Where a proposed research project is to be conducted on lands under the jurisdiction of a First Nations, Inuit or Métis authority, researchers shall seek the engagement of leaders of the community, except as provided under Articles 9.5, 9.6 and 9.7.

Research ethics review by the institutional REB (Research Ethics Board) and any responsible community body recognized by the First Nations, Inuit or Métis authority (Articles 9.9 and 9.11) is required in advance of recruiting and seeking and obtaining consent of individuals.”

TCPS Chapter 9 requires that all researchers conducting research in First Nation, Inuit, or Métis communities make genuine efforts to build appropriate relationships with those communities. The policy provides few hard rules for researchers and is best interpreted as a minimal baseline of ethical standards. Instead, recognizing that Indigenous perspectives regarding ethics may be substantially different from mainstream academic ones and may also vary significantly between different Indigenous communities, the policy places the onus on the researcher to learn and respect the ethical customs of each community.

In essence, a researcher is obligated to abide by the requirements of Tri-Council and institutional policies plus any rules made by the appropriate community authorities.

As such, many First Nations have already developed research ethics policies to establish greater control of research conducted within their communities and to ensure that all research is conducted in accordance with their own standards of ethical responsibilities e.g. Six Nations Elected Council - Ethics Committee and the Mi’kmaq Ethics Watch.

From the IIs’ perspective, these ethical policies provide a tactical opportunity to ensure recognition of the IIs within the research community as well as ensure that any research partnerships are favourable and respectful to the participation of IIs. The resulting research agreements should stipulate that an II’s appointed researchers must be able to: contribute to the intellectual direction of the research; be recognized as co-director or co-investigators on any grant application; have their contributions appropriately credited in any research publications; and have the rights to publish and share the research independently.

2.9 The IIC should consider developing and implementing an outreach strategy to raise awareness of its member IIs in the academic and lay communities. This strategy should emphasize the IIs’ status as PSIs and their role as community research centres conducting Indigenous Research by Indigenous peoples. The outreach activities should also be designed to showcase IIs’ strengths by demonstrating the Cultural Knowledge of their Elders and Knowledge Keepers to illustrate what Indigenous Research truly looks like as practised in communities. This approach would highlight the contrast between authentic community-based, First Nations research practices, and the type of activities occurring on mainstream academic campuses.

Leadership is often a matter of perception and academia is a community where reputation is a helpful form of capital. Although formal recognition of IIs from the RCs will be an important step, IIs can already assume the role of community research centres and
begin to position themselves as such in the public consciousness. Applying for SSHRC Connection Grants, perhaps as Indigenous non-profits at first, would also allow such outreach opportunities to be funded as Knowledge Mobilization opportunities.

The considerations above represent a range of possible approaches regarding the engagement and collaboration between the RCs and the IIs. Formal recognition of the status and rights of IIs as the third pillar of post-secondary education is an essential first step to a relationship that will demonstrate the RCs’ commitment to building Indigenous Research capacity and advance the causes of Indigenous Research sovereignty and Reconciliation. These considerations contain some innovative ideas that will challenge the academic research sector, but we are confident that the potential outcomes will strengthen and enrich research in Canada through recognition of the IIs as leaders in Indigenous Research.
7.0 Conclusion

The purpose of a system is what it does, not what it wishes to do. The Research Councils (RCs) and their relationships to Applicants, Institutions, and their eligibility requirements form a system whose central role is to ensure that publicly funded research is of the highest quality and performed to prescribed standards of ethical and financial responsibility. In this sense, this system does work, as it does broadly achieve its objective. However, the right question is never as simple as that. The question is not “what works?” but rather “who does it work for and in which circumstances?”. The RC funding system does work, but it does not work equally for all people. The RC funding system does work, but it could work better.

The RCs’ methods for establishing the eligibility of Institutions and the qualifications of researchers is founded on mainstream “western” models of scholarship. This includes the standard metrics of research performance and quality, the qualifications for conducting research, and even the philosophies that inform the RCs’ ethical standards. These models are based on approaches and philosophies that are distinctly different from the unique knowledge systems of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples and have built upon a long history of disregard for those Indigenous knowledge systems.

The RCs are aware of this and are actively pursuing means of making the research environment more welcoming to Indigenous peoples and integrating Indigenous ways of knowing and being. The process is a gradual one and cautious one. The RCs are taking a careful approach to learn and understand Indigenous knowledge systems and the needs of Indigenous peoples so that they can work towards inclusion without needing to disassemble what currently works about the present system. They are working to engage and collaborate with Indigenous peoples in this process. However, their approach is still fundamentally tied to traditional academic Institutions and inclusion of Indigenous communities through partnerships or through creating Indigenous Research Centres on the campuses of universities. Ultimately, Indigenous epistemologies should not be merely integrated into Western theories but, instead, be foundational to the conduct of Indigenous Research.

Although the inclusion of Indigenous peoples in mainstream academic spaces is a worthwhile effort, it is also important to acknowledge the rights of Indigenous people to their own spaces that are embedded in their cultures and communities. Drawing from the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) the Government of Ontario has recognized the rights of Indigenous peoples to “establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.” In the Indigenous Institutes Act, they acknowledged the unique role that wholly Indigenous-owned and operated Post-secondary Institutions play in exercising this right. In Section 1 of this guide, it was demonstrated that UNDRIP as well as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Justice argue that Indigenous control of research affecting their social, cultural and economic well-being is also a key factor in advancing Indigenous rights. Therefore, there is a unique role for Indigenous Institutes (IIs) in ensuring Indigenous Research sovereignty analogous to their place in the educational system.

The three RCs and the Canada Research Coordination Committee have recently published a new strategic plan for building Indigenous Research capacity, starting a new wave of engagement and policy changes. They have taken some actions towards advancing this plan such as opening Institutional eligibility to Indigenous non-profit organizations and convening Indigenous leadership circles and advisory panels to provide input.
as they review their policies. This presents an excellent opportunity for the Indigenous Institute Consortium (IIC) and its member IIs to engage with the RCs and work towards securing the distinct, but equal role, of Indigenous Institutes in the research system.
8.0 Glossary

Cultural Knowledge: Facts, information, skills and beliefs about the physical, natural, and spiritual worlds; developed by Indigenous Peoples through their unique ways of knowing and being and through a long history of interacting with the land. This knowledge is living and vibrant and still passed on and preserved through the teachings of Elders, knowledge keepers, stories, and practices. As this knowledge is derived from relationships with land and waters, all Cultural Knowledge is unique and specific to each First Nation, Inuit, or Métis community.

We have opted to use the term Cultural Knowledge in this document, rather than “Traditional Knowledge” or similar terms. This for two reasons:

- Because the use of “tradition” can create ambiguity in that it can be used to reflect the norms of mainstream society and not those Indigenous societies e.g. traditional academic practice.
- Because the word “tradition” often implies that something is “of the past” or historic. However, the knowledge of First Nation, Inuit, and Métis Peoples are still being applied and developed in the present. People in these communities are still practicing in the same ways as their ancestors and adapting these ways as the world changes. The same stories are being told, and their meanings evolve. These knowledge systems still live and breath, and this is a vital component of Indigenous Research.

As Mkomose (Dr Andrew Judge) of Shingwauk Kinomaage Gamig explained:

“There is a movement away from the saying Traditional Knowledge and towards Cultural Knowledge. Because Traditional Knowledge points to a time in the past; when “some tradition took place” and it’s stagnant, but that was never ever the case…People mistake tradition for culture, but culture adapts and evolves with the times”

Indigenous Institutes (IIs): Refers to the seven of the Indigenous Institutes in Ontario that govern and comprise the membership of the Indigenous Institutes Consortium. The institutes are:

- Anishinabek Education Institute
- Kenjgewin Teg Educational Institute
- Iohahi:io Akwesasne Adult Education Centre
- Ogwehoweh Skills and Trades Training Centre
- Oshki-Pimache-O-Win Education & Training Institute
- Shingwauk Kinomaage Gamig
- Six Nations Polytechnic

Indigenous Institutes Consortium (IIC): Is an organization that advocates and provides coordination for seven Indigenous Institutes in Ontario to facilitate effective collaboration between these institutes to support the growth, capacity and recognition of the IIs, whilst respecting their autonomy. The IIC functions to support IIs as a first choice among Indigenous students as a viable and sustainable third pillar alongside Ontario’s colleges and universities.

The Indigenous Institutes in Ontario: Nine Indigenous Post-Secondary Institutions that have further been formally recognized by the Government of Ontario through the Indigenous Institutes Act (2017).

This legislation recognizes these Institutes as a pillar of Ontario’s post-secondary education system; distinct from, but equivalent to, the province’s universities and colleges. The Act recognizes that the Indigenous Institutes in Ontario provide the same high standards of education as universities and colleges, including the issuing of accredited certificates, degrees, and diplomas, but is additionally grounded in the Cultural Knowledge and practices of their communities.
Indigenous Post-Secondary Institution (IPSI): A Post-Secondary Institution that is owned and operated by one or more First Nation, Inuit, or Métis communities and is mandated and accountable to those communities.

Indigenous Research: Any research that either directly concerns or may affect the lives, culture, health and wellbeing of a First Nation, Inuit, or Métis community past, present, and future. This expansive definition reflects the true spirit of the expression “nothing about us, without us” whilst upholding Indigenous control of Indigenous education. Examples of such research include, but are not limited to:

- Research regarding the distinct political, legal, economic, social and cultural institutions of Indigenous peoples.
- Research regarding the cultural traditions, customs, languages, and artifacts of an Indigenous community.
- Research seeks to utilize the unique cultural, environmental and scientific knowledge of Indigenous communities. (see below).
- Population research where a significant number of participants identify as Indigenous, regardless of whether Indigenous identity is a variable within the study.
- Research that is conducted upon First Nation, Inuit, or Métis lands.
This definition extends beyond the focus on “welfare” stated by Tri-Council Policy Statement 2 Chapter 9, which could lead to exclusion of some research based on the assumption that it would not cause any direct “harm”.

Indigenous Research Sovereignty: Is a principle that emphasizes the agency and control that First Nation, Inuit, and Métis Peoples have regarding research that concerns their communities or people. This concept supersedes the calls that Indigenous communities “participate” and “collaborate” with researchers. Indigenous Research Sovereignty states that Indigenous communities must govern, manage, and conduct Indigenous Research themselves. Through this framework, an Indigenous community can ensure that all research is conducted according to community priorities, is accountable to the community, and is rooted in Indigenous epistemologies, ontologies, and axiologies.

Post-Secondary Institution (PSI): An educational institution that provides training and educational opportunities beyond a secondary (high school) level. Accredited PSIs may grant:

- Certificates
- Diplomas
- Degrees
- Other qualifications (e.g. micro-credentials)

Systems Map: A diagram that illustrates the key components of a system and how they interact with each other to produce the effects experienced by the people and communities affected. This framework acknowledges that organizations, such as Research Councils, do not function independently. Their desired results, and unintended consequences, emerge from their interactions with, expectations of, and responsibilities to, other stakeholders. This relational perspective is attuned to the world-view of First Nation, Inuit, and Métis Peoples which are often rooted in the importance of relationships.
9.0 Appendix

Appendix 9.1: The Research Council and the Government of Canada

ISED: Innovation Science & Economic Development Canada  
NSERC: Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council  
SSHRC: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council  
CIHR: Canadian Institutes of Health Research  
CFI: Canada Foundation for Innovation  
CRCC: Canada Research Coordination Committee
## Appendix 9.2: Membership of Research Councils and Indigenous Advisory Councils

### 9.2.1 Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position/Affiliation</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Martha Crago (Vice President and Chair)</td>
<td>Vice-Principal (Research and Innovation)</td>
<td>McGill University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ted Hewitt</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>SSHRC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catherine Beaudry</td>
<td>Canada Research Chair in Creation, Development and the Commercialization of Innovation</td>
<td>Polytechnique Montréal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frédéric Bouchard</td>
<td>Dean, Faculty of Arts and Sciences</td>
<td>Université de Montréal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niel Cooke</td>
<td>Vice President Academic</td>
<td>Confederation College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cinthia Duclos</td>
<td>Associate Professor, Faculty of Law</td>
<td>Université Laval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siân Echard</td>
<td>Professor, English Language and Literature</td>
<td>University of British Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen R Grant</td>
<td>Senior Scholar</td>
<td>University of Manitoba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Åsa Kachan</td>
<td>CEO and Chief Librarian</td>
<td>Halifax Public Libraries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normand Labrie</td>
<td>Professor, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education</td>
<td>University of Toronto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claudia Malacrida</td>
<td>Associate Vice-President of Research</td>
<td>University of Lethbridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylor Owen</td>
<td>Beaverbrook Chair in Media Ethics and Communications</td>
<td>McGill University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carmen Robertson</td>
<td>Canada Research Chair in North American Indigenous Visual and Material Culture</td>
<td>Carleton University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anoush F. Terjanian</td>
<td>Assistant Vice-Dean, Partnerships and Research Networks, Faculty of Social Sciences</td>
<td>University of Ottawa</td>
</tr>
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### 9.2.2 SSHRC: Indigenous Advisory Circle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position/Affiliation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chris Andersen</td>
<td>Dean and Professor, Faculty of Native Studies</td>
<td>University of Alberta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jo-ann Archibald - Q’um</td>
<td>Professor Emerita, Department of Educational Studies, Faculty of Education</td>
<td>The University of British Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q’um Xiiem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marie A. Battiste</td>
<td>Professor, Department of Educational Foundations</td>
<td>University of Saskatchewan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cecil Chabot</td>
<td>Adjunct Professor, First Peoples Studies</td>
<td>Concordia University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Decontie</td>
<td>Elder and Sacred Fire Keeper,</td>
<td>Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg Maniwaki, Quebec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cindy Dickson</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Arctic Athabaskan Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen Favell</td>
<td>Lecturer, Educational Administration, Foundations and Psychology, Faculty of Education</td>
<td>University of Manitoba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hadley Friedland</td>
<td>Assistant Professor, Faculty of Law</td>
<td>University of Alberta</td>
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<tr>
<td>Katherine Graham</td>
<td>Professor Emerita, School of Public Policy and Administration</td>
<td>Carleton University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carole Lévesque</td>
<td>Professor, Indigenous Peoples and Knowledge, Centre Urbanisation Culture Société</td>
<td>Institut national de la recherche scientifique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Roy Newhouse</td>
<td>Professor, Indigenous Studies; Chair, Chanie Wenjack School for Indigenous Studies</td>
<td>Trent University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sherry Pictou</td>
<td>Assistant Professor, Department of Women's Studies</td>
<td>Mount Saint Vincent University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean-Paul Restoule</td>
<td>Professor and Chair, Department of Indigenous Education</td>
<td>University of Victoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lorna Wanóst’s’a7 Williams</td>
<td>Professor Emerita, Department of Indigenous Education and Linguistics</td>
<td>University of Victoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominique Bérubé (ex officio)</td>
<td>Vice-President, Research Programs</td>
<td>SSHRC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ex officio)</td>
<td>Director, The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation</td>
<td>University of Manitoba</td>
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### 9.2.3 Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Digvir Jayas (Vice President and Chair)</td>
<td>Vice-President (Research and International)</td>
<td>University of Manitoba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alejandro Adem</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>NSERC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christine Allen</td>
<td>Associate Vice-President and Vice-Provost, Strategic Initiatives</td>
<td>University of Toronto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne Condon</td>
<td>Professor, Department of Computer Science at the University of British Columbia</td>
<td>University of British Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy Deziel</td>
<td>General manager of the National Center for Electrochemistry and Environmental Technologies</td>
<td>Cégep de Shawinigan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen Dodds</td>
<td>Assistant Deputy Minister of the Science and Technology Branch (Retired)</td>
<td>Environment Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anas El-Aneed</td>
<td>Professor of Pharmacy</td>
<td>University of Saskatchewan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeremy Kerr</td>
<td>Professor of Biology</td>
<td>University of Ottawa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophie LaRochelle</td>
<td>Director of the Centre for Optics, Photonics and Lasers</td>
<td>Université Laval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darren Lawless</td>
<td>Assistant Vice-President, Research Innovation Partnerships</td>
<td>McMaster University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misheck Mwaba</td>
<td>President and CEO</td>
<td>Bow Valley College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ishwar K. Puri</td>
<td>Professor of Mechanical Engineering</td>
<td>McMaster University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helge Seetzen</td>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>TandemLaunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Kevin Vessey</td>
<td>Professor of Plant Biology</td>
<td>St Mary’s University</td>
</tr>
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### 9.2.4 Canadian Institutes of Health Research: Governing Council

<table>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Jeanie Shoveller (Vice President and Chair)</td>
<td>Vice-President (Research and International)</td>
<td>IWK Health Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael J. Strong</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>CIHR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brenda Andrews</td>
<td>Charles H. Best Chair of Medical Research</td>
<td>Donnelly Centre for Cellular and Biomolecular Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark S. Dockstator</td>
<td>Former President</td>
<td>First Nations University of Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don Ferguson</td>
<td>Former Deputy Minister of Health</td>
<td>Government of New Brunswick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debbie Fischer</td>
<td>Executive-in-Residence, Rotman School of Management</td>
<td>University of Toronto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominic Giroux</td>
<td>President and CEO</td>
<td>Health Sciences North and the Health Sciences North Research Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diane Gosselin</td>
<td>President and CEO</td>
<td>CQDM (Consortium de recherche biopharmaceutique)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen Lucas (ex officio)</td>
<td>Deputy Minister</td>
<td>Health Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeremy Kerr</td>
<td>Professor of Biology</td>
<td>University of Ottawa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brianne Kent</td>
<td>Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology</td>
<td>Simon Fraser University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Josette-Renée Landry</td>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>Institut du Savoir Montfort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louise Lemieux-Charles</td>
<td>Professor Emeritus, Institute of Health Policy, Management and Evaluation</td>
<td>University of Toronto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amélie Quesnel-Vallée</td>
<td>Professor, Departments of Sociology &amp; Epidemiology</td>
<td>McGill University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Salter</td>
<td>Chief of Research and Senior Scientist, Neurosciences and Mental Health</td>
<td>The Hospital for Sick Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcello Tonelli</td>
<td>Senior Associate Dean, Cumming School of Medicine</td>
<td>University of Calgary</td>
</tr>
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### 9.2.5 CIHR Institute of Indigenous Peoples Health

Scientific Director:
Dr Carrie Bourassa, Professor, Department of Community Health & Epidemiology, University of Saskatchewan

#### Institute Advisory Board:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<th>Affiliation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Debbie Martin (Chair)</td>
<td>Associate Professor, Faculty of Health Professions</td>
<td>Dalhousie University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christopher Mushquash</td>
<td>Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Mental Health and Addiction</td>
<td>Lakehead University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcia Anderson</td>
<td>Executive Director, Indigenous Academic Affairs, Ongomiizwin Indigenous Institute of Health and Healing Rady Faculty of Health Sciences</td>
<td>University of Manitoba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayne Clark</td>
<td>Director, Indigenous Health – Patient Services</td>
<td>Winnipeg Regional Health Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gillian Crozier</td>
<td>Canada Research Chair in Environment, Culture and Values</td>
<td>Laurentian University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pierre S. Haddad</td>
<td>Professor, Department of Pharmacology</td>
<td>Université de Montréal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Hogg</td>
<td>Professor, Faculty of Health Sciences</td>
<td>Simon Fraser University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mabel Lena Horton</td>
<td>Retired Nurse and Health Consultant</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Candice Lys</td>
<td>Founder &amp; Executive Director</td>
<td>FOXY/SMASH Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret Robinson</td>
<td>Assistant Professor, Indigenous Studies Program, Department of Sociology &amp; Social Anthropology</td>
<td>Dalhousie University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elder Mary Wilson</td>
<td>Resident Elder Cultural Specialist</td>
<td>Manitoba Adolescent Treatment Centre and Child and Family Services</td>
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### 9.2.6 Canada Research Coordinating Committee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Alejandro Adem (Chair)</td>
<td>President of NSERC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ted Hewitt</td>
<td>President of SSHRC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael J Strong</td>
<td>President of CIHR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitch Davies</td>
<td>President of NRC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simon Kennedy</td>
<td>Deputy Minister of ISED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen Lucas</td>
<td>Deputy Minister of Health Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roseann O’Reilly Runte</td>
<td>President and CEO of CFI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mona Nemer</td>
<td>Chief Science Advisor</td>
</tr>
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### 9.2.7 Reference Group for the Appropriate Review of Indigenous Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Myrle Ballare</td>
<td>PhD Candidate</td>
<td>University of Manitoba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suzy Basile</td>
<td>Professor, School of Native Studies</td>
<td>Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amber Bedard</td>
<td>Manager, Indigenous Research Support Team</td>
<td>University of Calgary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aimée Craft</td>
<td>Associate Professor, Faculty of Common Law</td>
<td>University of Ottawa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catherine Dussault</td>
<td>PhD Candidate</td>
<td>Université Laval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kimberly Fairman</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Institute for Circumpolar Health Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heather Igloliorte</td>
<td>Concordia University Research Chair in Circumpolar Indigenous Arts</td>
<td>Concordia University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawrence Ignace</td>
<td>Senior Negotiator</td>
<td>Government of Yukon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebekah Jacques</td>
<td>Assistant Professor, Pathology and Laboratory Medicine</td>
<td>Western University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logan MacDonald</td>
<td>Assistant Professor, Fine Arts</td>
<td>University of Waterloo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgina Martin</td>
<td>Adjunct Faculty, Health and Human Services</td>
<td>Vancouver Island University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denise McDonald</td>
<td>Adjunct Professor,. School of Public Health</td>
<td>University of Alberta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lorrilee McGregor</td>
<td>Assistant Professor of Indigenous Health, Northern Ontario School of Medicine</td>
<td>Laurentian &amp; Lakehead Universities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julian Robbins</td>
<td>Research Associate</td>
<td>Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret Robinson</td>
<td>Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology.</td>
<td>Dalhousie University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raven Sinclair</td>
<td>Professor, Faculty of Social Work</td>
<td>University of Regina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suzanne Stewart</td>
<td>Associate Professor of Indigenous healing in Counselling Psychology</td>
<td>University of Toronto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew Wildcat</td>
<td>AST Instructor, Department of Political Science and Faculty of Native Studies</td>
<td>University of Alberta</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 9.3: Examples of Previously Funded Projects in Indigenous Research

These examples are provided to offer more concrete context to the types of Indigenous Research all three Research Councils have funded through some of the major programs discussed in Section 4. Every effort was taken to give examples that aligned with key research themes suggested by representatives of the Indigenous Institutes, given the constraints of the limited information available that was often available.

9.3.1 What Counts: Indigenous Conceptions of Measurement and Evaluation Approaches for Aboriginal Community Program Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Council: SSHRC</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competition Year: 2017</td>
<td>Total Funds Recorded:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant: Linda O’Neil</td>
<td>University of Northern British Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-Applicant: Tina Fraser</td>
<td>University of Northern British Columbia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary:**

- For any new program evaluation, funding is contingent on performance outcomes.
- Recognizes the challenge to evaluate programs intended for Indigenous populations due the lack of measurement strategies to address wellness, including positive mental health, and quality of life in a culturally appropriate and safe manner.
- Proposes preliminary research to seek out program evaluations that have been developed or conducted with Indigenous world views and methodologies as the centered philosophy.
- Aims to understand these philosophies in hopes of facilitating the development of tools for safe program evaluation.
### 9.3.2 Culturally Responsive Pedagogy for Yukon First Nations Learners: A Quantitative Investigation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Council: SSHRC</th>
<th>Grant Program: Insight Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competition Year: 2017</td>
<td>Total Funds Recorded: $78,375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant: Jan M Hare</td>
<td>University of British Columbia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary:**

- National and provincial policies are requiring training in Indigenous education for pre-service teachers.
- There is a need to understand how instructors are teaching and training pre-service teachers in Indigenous education.
- Emerging scholarship suggests that Indigenous education, as a critical area of development in teacher education, needs to be informed by multiple perspectives that include instructors.
- The research being proposed investigates how the dynamics of teacher educator identity mediates the teaching and learning of Indigenous knowledge and pedagogies through Collaborative Inquiry (CI).
- CI provides teacher educators with a systematic structure for examining their own educational practice using research-based techniques.
- The study focuses on how educators train teacher trainees in Indigenous education and what effect their understanding of their own identities may have on how they approach, learn, and teach Indigenous pedagogies.
9.3.3 Northern Oral Language and Writing through Play: A Partnership Supporting Indigenous Children’s Language, Cultural Knowledge and Writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Council: SSHRC</th>
<th>Grant Program: Partnership Grant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competition Year: 2019</td>
<td>Total Funds Recorded: $492,677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant: University of Toronto</td>
<td>Institution: University of Toronto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-Applicants:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelley L Stagg Peterson (Project Director)</td>
<td>Institutions:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Arsenault</td>
<td>University of Toronto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cassie J. Brownell</td>
<td>Aurora College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen D. Hedges</td>
<td>University of Toronto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca Jesson</td>
<td>University of Auckland (New Zealand)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shannon L. King</td>
<td>University of Auckland (New Zealand)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emmanuella Le Pichon</td>
<td>Seven Generations Education Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eva K. Lindgren</td>
<td>University of Toronto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laureen J. McIntyre</td>
<td>Umeå University (Sweden)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda F. McLean</td>
<td>University of Saskatchewan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judith Margaret, Parr</td>
<td>Kwayaciwin Education Resource Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandra Peltier</td>
<td>University of Auckland (New Zealand)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruth W. Sandwell</td>
<td>Wikwemikong Board of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph C. Stouffer</td>
<td>University of Toronto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeffrey W. Wood</td>
<td>Brandon University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Laurentian University</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary:

- Follows from a previous 7 year project focused on the role of play in children’s writing and oral language development in remote, Northern communities.
- This second study aims to incorporate Indigenous language development and revitalization.
- Is interested in finding out how integrating Indigenous knowledge will affect what they are learning about how play affects language development.
- Based on a collaborative action research methodology, which involves the local community research process, and aims to address the local needs and the local questions.
- Strong collaboration with communities and teams

Notes:

- Major partnerships between international universities and Indigenous communities.
- Total value of funding is estimated at $2.5 million.
- Co-Applicant from an Indigenous Post-Secondary Institution (Seven Generations Institute)
- Oski-Wenjack is listed as a community partner
- Project website: https://now-play.org/
9.3.4 Land As Practice Summer Institute: Kaska Dena Language, Law & Life

| Council: SSHRC | Grant Program: Connection Grant |
| Competition Year: 2018 | Total Funds Recorded: $50,000 |
| Applicant: Leanne Simpson | Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning |
| Co-Applicant: | Institutions: |
| Lianne M. Charlie | University of Hawaii at Manoa |
| Glen S. Coulthard | University of British Columbia |
| Kelsey R. Wrightson | Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning |

Summary:

- In keeping with the objectives of the Connection program this proposal is for knowledge mobilization, sharing and exploration rather than original research.
- Funding for a four-week summer institute to explore topics related to Indigenous issues through Lasla Dene land-based practises.
- Topics covered included: Kaska language revitalization, Dene law, Colonialism and Decolonization in the North, Caretaking, Guardianship and Living with the Land, and others.
- Institute was developed in collaboration with the Tu Lidlini Elders Council
- Plan was for four weeks of extensive land-based practise culminating in a national workshop encouraging student publications, policy papers, etc.
- Networking opportunity to build reciprocal relationships between researchers and scholars and the Kaska Dena knowledge holders that may lead to future research collaborations.
- Major focus on the research methodologies based upon, and led by, the land and their possible influence on research in law and other areas.
9.3.5 Tapping the biological and chemical diversity of Canada's plants: An interdisciplinary approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Council: NSERC</th>
<th>Grant Program: Discovery Grant - Individual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competition Year: 2015</td>
<td>Total Funds Recorded: $140,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant: Cory Harris</td>
<td>University of Ottawa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary:

- Plants are vital to ecologies but also important to economies through human usage.
- In Canada, despite unsurpassed boreal and arctic biodiversity, and rich indigenous traditional knowledge, our plants remain surprisingly unexplored and underdeveloped by science.
- Research seldom considers plants through an integrated ecologies and economic perspective.
- Proposed research targets groups of plants that are economically important with rich yet unstudied native biodiversity.
- Planned basic research plant ecology and sustainable resource development combined with applied research to identify promising plant species for development as functional foods, natural health products (NHPs), biopharmaceuticals or pest and biological control agents.
- Multidisciplinary and collaborative approach, using different types of research (laboratory, greenhouse, field and community-based) research and working with industry, government and First Nations and Inuit communities.
- Draws from mainstream biological methods integrated with Indigenous knowledge.
- Aims identify plants for potential development as new products, inform best practices for cultivating and harvesting high-value crops, and improve access to high quality food resources in indigenous communities.

Notes:

- Although several NSERC projects cite Indigenous communities as direct or indirect beneficiaries of the applications of their research (e.g., Infrastructure or water treatment in remote communities), this example was chosen as it is one of the few that actively mentioned a desire to integrate Cultural Knowledge with “western” science.
9.3.6 Starting on a healing path rooted in First Nation cultural and clinical approaches to Opioid Replacement Therapy: Mino-bimaadiziwin after Addiction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Council: CIHR</th>
<th>Grant Program: Catalyst Grant: Indigenous Approaches to Wellness Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competition Year: 2018</td>
<td>Total Funds Recorded: $140,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant: Marion A Maar</td>
<td>Laurentian University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-Applicants:</td>
<td>Institutions:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darrel J Manitowabi</td>
<td>University of Sudbury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breanne G Frid</td>
<td>Laurentian University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheldon W Tobe</td>
<td>Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary:

- Based within Wikwemikong Unceded Territory where there is also an increase in opioid addiction.
- The community has responded by developing cultural healing services to support clients involved in opioid replacement therapy.
- This approach includes land-based programming and traditional Indigenous healing and counseling methods.
- Proposed conducting research with clients, clinical, and traditional providers and Knowledge Keepers to gain a better understanding of how these approaches support wellness after drug addiction.
- Also intended to examine which additional social and justice services are necessary to support wellness.
- Analyzed health information data to contextualize the outcomes from a clinical perspective.
- This research was claimed to be highly relevant for all current models of opioid addiction treatment in First Nations in Canada.

Notes:

- Part of a Targeted Initiative to research Indigenous models of wellness and well-being.
- Catalyst Grant provided seed money to support research activities related to Indigenous approaches to wellness.
- Initiative was to advance Indigenous Ways of Knowing in wellness research methodologies and community-specific Indigenous wellness indicators is done, based on achieving wellness rather than just addressing health inequities or closing a “gap”.


Appendix 9.4: Merit Review Process and Criteria

9.4.1 SSHRC Insight Grants Merit Review Criteria

Scoring Scheme:
5-6 = Very Good to Excellent; 4-.49 = Good - Very Good; 3-3.9 Satisfactory to Good; Below 3 = Unsatisfactory.

Applications must achieve a score of 3.0 or higher to be recommended for funding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria and Components</th>
<th>Guidelines for review of Indigenous Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Challenge (40%): The aim and importance of the endeavour</td>
<td>• Given the emphasis placed on lived experience, both written and oral literature are appropriate forms of knowledge for consideration. Examples of oral literature can include interviews or personal encounters, or traditional teaching with elders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Originality, significance and expected contribution to knowledge;</td>
<td>• Theoretical framework and methodology may be combined. For example, in storytelling, the stories represent in some instances both theory and method, a way of explaining phenomena or illustrating how behaviour or actions contribute to living in a good way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Appropriateness of the literature review;</td>
<td>• Community involvement and the co-creation of knowledge, as appropriate, are considered essential, especially in data interpretation. In this context, the co-creation of knowledge could include interpretative approaches that are jointly developed, reviewed and confirmed by and with community members or their community-delegated organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Appropriateness of the theoretical approach or framework;</td>
<td>• Where appropriate, priority should be given to Indigenous students and postdoctoral researchers when training opportunities are offered. Training offered in the communities should be emphasized to create more opportunity for highly qualified personnel (HQP). For many community members who may not be enrolled in a post-secondary academic program, the opportunity to receive training can contribute to their career development as well as to community building.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Appropriateness of the methods/approach;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria and Components</td>
<td>Guidelines for review of Indigenous Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feasibility (20%): The plan to achieve excellence</td>
<td>• The research should address the needs of each partner, if applicable, and demonstrate how the research meets these identified needs. When relevant, include community needs in the budget requirements to ensure adequate community support in the project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Appropriateness of the proposed timeline, and probability that the objectives will be met;</td>
<td>• The application should demonstrate how outputs will be made available to, and potentially used by, Indigenous peoples and other stakeholders, with community benefits configured into the research outputs. Examples of outreach may include: websites, videos, presentations, artistic or community exhibits, performances, or festivals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Expertise of the applicant or team in relation to the proposed research;</td>
<td>• The availability and nature of organizational or administrative infrastructure varies from community to community. This aspect should be considered in the structuring of the research in ways that acknowledge and maximize the contributions of a community partner organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Appropriateness of the requested budget, justification of proposed costs, and, where applicable, other cash and/or in-kind contributions; and</td>
<td>• Where required by the funding opportunity, the leveraging of cash and/or in-kind support from host institutions and partners can include social capital, an asset that may emphasize social and familial relationships and networks and may affect the cost of research. Furthermore, linguistic capital, the ability to engage in the community with the ancestral language(s) of the community and a national language of Canada, can also be considered as a contribution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Quality and appropriateness of knowledge mobilization plans, including effective dissemination, exchange and engagement with stakeholders within and/or beyond the research community, where applicable</td>
<td>• Expectations about the management and governance of the co-production and outputs of knowledge and related support, during and beyond the award, should be outlined.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria and Components</td>
<td>Guidelines for review of Indigenous Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capability (40%): The expertise to succeed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Quality, quantity and significance of past experience and published and/or creative outputs of the applicant and any co-applicants, relative to their roles in the project and to the stage of their career;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Evidence of past knowledge mobilization activities (e.g., films, performances, commissioned reports, knowledge syntheses, experience in collaboration / other interactions with stakeholders, contributions to public debate and media), and of impacts on professional practice, social services and policies, etc.; and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Quality and quantity of past contributions to the development, training and mentoring of students, postdoctoral researchers and other highly qualified personnel.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The career and academic stages, as well as the rates of research and publication contributions, of applicants and team members need to be reviewed with respect to the following considerations:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Indigenous scholars may have had to start their academic path later in life, or have had interruptions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- For some scholars, there are expectations that they significantly contribute to and engage with their home community.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Community products are recognized as Indigenous scholarly works. For example, reports prepared by and with communities for which researchers have no formal authorship can represent an essential part of their career track record that should be acknowledged.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Applicants’ accountability to their post-secondary community is also important, as demonstrated by Indigenous scholars providing support that could include providing student support, teacher training, committee work and cultural sensitivity training to non-Indigenous scholars; and contributing to the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge systems, language, culture and experiences into their post-secondary institutions, including through the creation of associated programs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- In the Special Circumstances section, reviewers should take into account the degree of difficulty in an applicant’s career as a useful measure of merit, especially where they have succeeded in overcoming career obstacles.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The relevant experience of Indigenous scholars should take into account the life/knowledge journey of individuals.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Collaborators who are considered to have a strong role and community connection should be regarded favourably in the review of Indigenous research. In particular, elders and community-based partners need to be recognized and respected in terms of their contribution of knowledge assets.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Although these guidelines for assessing expertise allow for the fact that many Indigenous scholars may not have taken the “typical” academic path in their careers, they still assume that researchers have obtained or require mainstream qualifications. The guidelines provide no indication of how an Applicant’s training and experience in Cultural Knowledge may be considered in the review process.
9.4.2 CIHR Project Grants Merit Review Criteria

**Scoring Scheme:**
Each application is reviewed by three reviewers and given a single on a scale of 0.0 to 4.9, that reflects all criteria listed below.

Applications with a central focus on Indigenous Research may be reviewed by the Indigenous Health Research (IHR) committee, which considers additional factors to ensure that research is conducted to benefit Indigenous communities and in the spirit of building respectful relationships.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria and Components</th>
<th>IHR Committee Considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concept: Significance and Impact of Research</td>
<td>The proposed research must be relevant to First Nations, Inuit and/or Métis priorities and have the potential to produce valued outcomes from the perspective of First Nations, Inuit and/or Métis participants and Indigenous Peoples more broadly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Is the project idea creative?**
- The project idea is among the best formulated ideas in its field, stemming from new, incremental, innovative, and/or high-risk lines of inquiry; new or adapted research in basic science, or health care, or health systems or health outcomes. When applicable, knowledge translation/commercialization approaches/methodologies should be considered, as well as opportunities to apply research findings nationally and internationally.

**Is the rationale of the project idea sound?**
- The project rationale is based on a logical integration of concepts.

**Are the overall goals and objectives of the project well-defined?**
- The goal states the purpose of the project, and what the project is ultimately expected to achieve.
- The objectives clearly define the proposed lines of inquiry and/or activities required to meet the goal.
- The proposed project outputs (i.e., the anticipated results of the project) are clearly described and aligned to the objectives.

**Are the anticipated project contributions likely to advance basic health-related knowledge, or health care, or health systems or health outcomes?**
- The context and needs (issues and/or gaps) of the project are clearly described.
- The anticipated contribution(s) are clearly described, and should be substantive and relevant in relation to the context of the issues or gaps.
- The anticipated contribution(s) are realistic, i.e., directly stemming from the project outputs, as opposed to marginally related.
### Criteria and Components

**Assessment of Feasibility: Approaches and Methods**

Are the approaches and methods appropriate to deliver the proposed output(s) and achieve the proposed contribution(s) to advancing health-related knowledge, health care, health systems, and/or health outcomes?

- The research and/or knowledge translation/commercialization approaches, methods, and/or strategies should be well-defined and justified in terms of being appropriate to accomplish the objectives of the project.
- Opportunities to maximize project contributions to advance health-related knowledge, health care, health systems and/or health outcomes should be proactively sought and planned for, but may also arise unexpectedly.

Are the timelines and related deliverables of the project realistic?

- Timelines for the project should be appropriate in relation to the proposed project activities. Key milestones and deliverables should be aligned with the objectives of the project, and be feasible given the duration of the project.

Does the proposal identify potential challenges and appropriate mitigation strategies?

- Critical scientific, technical, or organizational challenges should be identified, and a realistic plan to tackle these potential risks should be described. An exhaustive list is not expected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IHR Committee Considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In addition to demonstrating scientific excellence (Western, Indigenous, or both), the proposed research approaches and methods must respect Indigenous values and ways of knowing and sharing, and abide by Tri-Council Policy Statement Chapter 9: Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada and/or Indigenous partnering community/organizational ethical guidelines or clearly explain why other guidelines have been developed and agreed upon with the study governance body.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Criteria and Components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment of Feasibility: Expertise, Experience and Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does the applicant(s) bring the appropriate expertise and experience to lead and deliver the proposed outputs and achieve the proposed contribution(s)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The applicant(s) should demonstrate the combined expertise and experience needed to execute the project (i.e., deliver the proposed outputs as well as achieve the proposed contribution(s)). The roles and responsibilities of each applicant should be clearly described, and linked to the objectives of the project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there an appropriate level of engagement and/or commitment from the applicant(s)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The level of engagement (e.g., time and other commitments) of each applicant should be appropriate for the roles and responsibilities described.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the environment (academic institution and/or other organization) appropriate to enable the conduct and success of the project?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Project applicants should have access to the appropriate infrastructure, facilities, support personnel, equipment, and/or supplies to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Carry out their respective roles; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• As a collective, manage and deliver the proposed output(s), and achieve the proposed contribution(s).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### IHR Committee Considerations

| Appropriateness of the team based on their overall scientific experience (Western, Indigenous, or both) and skills as well as their Indigenous community-based research experience, track record, relevance of past experience, including expertise related to Indigenous Health Research. |

### Notes:

The IHR committee does appear to consider expertise in Cultural Knowledge (or “Indigenous Science”). It is unclear how they make this evaluation and, to what extent, allowances for the rich diversity of Indigenous cultures.
10.0 Endnotes


Provides guidelines to choosing the right RC for your research and discusses areas where overlap may be an issue e.g. Health
Notes 69-71 link to general guidelines on applicant eligibility for each RC. These rules apply to the majority of cases but some grant programs may have additional requirements.


Note 72 links to an excellent example of CIHR requirements for teams involved in Indigenous Health Research.


Details for scoring criteria are often given in the descriptions for individual programs (see Section 4 of this Report).

However, RCs provide extensive guidelines to assist peer-reviewers in the evaluating applications. These can be accessed via the links above or links therein.


RCs do release the names and affiliations of selection committee members. The notes above, and links therein, will access such information.


CIHR Contact Centre Toll Free Phone: 1-888-603-4178; Email:support-soutien@cihr-irsc.gc.ca.
Webpage: https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/9833.html

SSHRC contact for support with Indigenous Non-profit eligibility institutional.eligibility@sshrc-crsh.gc.ca


SSHRC uses the term "Emerging scholar". Definitions and requirements to be considered an ECR varies between RCs. Typically refers to a scholar who has not held an independent research/tenured faculty position for longer than five years.


Note 126 provides a general overview of SSHRCs Partnership system and links to many useful guides for creating a partnership, the advantages and disadvantages for Partners from other sectors etc.

