



Management Response and Action Plan

A - For inclusion in the report

The findings and recommendations of the Evaluation of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada’s (ISED) Contribution to the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) were provided to the Science Programs and Partnerships Branch of the Science and Research Sector (SRS) at ISED as well as to the CFI.

Established by an act of Parliament in 1997, the CFI is an independent organization that operates at arms-length from the Government of Canada. The CFI Board of Directors has the fiduciary responsibility to make research infrastructure funding decisions based on the recommendations of experts from Canada and around the world, following a rigorous merit-review process.

ISED and CFI management have been consulted and agree with the findings included in this report and will take action to address all recommendations by December, 2021. While the recommendations are directed to the SRS, the actions to address them will be delivered in collaboration with the CFI, respecting the CFI’s governance structure and internal decision-making processes.

B - For follow-up purposes - Detailed actions to address the recommendations in the report

Recommendation	Planned Action on the Recommendation	Responsible Official (position)	Target completion date
ISED’s Science and Research Sector should work with the CFI to identify and examine areas for improvement in the College-Industry Innovation Fund (CIIF), including opportunities to improve access (e.g., review eligibility criteria and approval processes) to better meet the needs of colleges and their private sector partners.	<p>The CFI recently completed an independent program evaluation of the CIIF. Findings echo those of the ISED evaluation, pointing to the need to broaden access to the Fund to include a wider range of colleges, research sectors and partners in response to evolving research and community needs.</p> <p>ISED SRS will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engage the CFI in discussions to identify potential improvements to the CIIF eligibility criteria and approval processes, building on the findings and recommendations of 	Director General, Science Programs and Partnerships	June 2021

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Recommendation	Planned Action on the Recommendation	Responsible Official (position)	Target completion date
	<p>both ISED's evaluation and the CFI's CIIF evaluation. (January – February 2021)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Once agreement between ISED and the CFI has been reached, the proposed changes will be presented to the CFI Board of Directors for information. (March 2021) - Assess if new authorities are required to implement the recommended changes and, if so, the most appropriate mechanism(s) to use. Secure new authorities as required. (June 2021) <p>The CFI will implement the changes in the 2022 CIIF – stream 1 competition (with a call for proposals expected in December 2021).</p>		
<p>ISED's Science and Research Sector should collaborate with the CFI to review the scope/criteria for eligible research infrastructure costs, particularly activities associated with the development of databases which can be a significant component in many research fields, including social sciences and humanities.</p>	<p>The CFI is undertaking a joint study with the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) to assess the infrastructure needs of researchers in the social sciences and humanities. The study, scheduled to be completed by March 2021, will identify possible steps to increase the participation of the social sciences and humanities in CFI programs and will help the CFI define databases, platforms and networks and associated eligibility costs.</p> <p>ISED SRS will:</p>	<p>Director General, Science Programs and Partnerships</p>	<p>September 2021</p>

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Recommendation	Planned Action on the Recommendation	Responsible Official (position)	Target completion date
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engage the CFI and SSHRC to better understand the infrastructure needs of the social sciences and humanities research community, leveraging the findings of the CFI-SSHRC study. (January - April 2021) - Identify, in collaboration with the CFI, proposed changes to the scope/criteria for eligible research infrastructure costs. Once agreement between ISED and the CFI has been reached, the proposed changes will be presented to the CFI Board of Directors for information. (June 2021) - Assess if new authorities are required to implement the recommended changes and, if so, the most appropriate mechanism(s) to use. Secure new authorities as required. (September 2021) <p>The CFI will implement the changes in Fall 2021, starting with the launch of the next Innovation Fund competition.</p>		
<p>ISED’s Science and Research Sector should work with the CFI to examine opportunities to improve program application and review processes.</p>	<p>The CFI carries out detailed internal post-mortems at the end of each competition, with a view to streamlining and simplifying processes, while assuring the quality and integrity of the programs. Post-mortems of the 2020 Innovation Fund (IF), Major Science Initiatives (MSI) Fund and College-Industry Innovation Fund (CIIF) competitions are underway.</p> <p>ISED SRS will:</p>	<p>Director General, Science Programs and Partnerships</p>	<p>September 2021</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure the CFI’s post-mortem reviews consider key issues identified in this evaluation, including: the length of time between application, funding decision and disbursements; application requirements vis-à-vis the size and complexity of proposals; the frequency of competitions; as well as opportunities to build on efforts to integrate equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) considerations into programming. (January - February 2021) - Further to evaluation and post-mortem findings, identify, in collaboration with the CFI, potential changes to program application and review processes. (March - June 2021) - Once agreement between ISED and the CFI has been reached, the proposed changes will be presented to the CFI Board of Directors for information. (June 2021) - ISED SRS will assess if new authorities are required to implement the recommended changes and, if so, the most appropriate mechanism(s) to use. ISED SRS will secure new authorities as required. (September 2021) <p>The CFI will implement the changes in the next cycles of competitions.</p>		
<p>ISED’s Science and Research Sector should work with the CFI to explore opportunities to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the</p>	<p>The CFI has recently taken steps to address the issue of timely draw down by institutions of their available IOF funding. The CFI is transitioning towards disbursing IOF awards to institutions within two years after the associated infrastructure award is</p>	<p>Director General, Science</p>	<p>June 2021</p>

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<p>Infrastructure Operating Fund (IOF), including the timely draw down of available funding.</p>	<p>finalized, to ensure that funds will be used in a timely manner. Implementation of these changes began in 2020 and will be completed in April 2024 in order to reach all award funds associated with the IOF. Institutions are encouraged to distribute their IOF allocation based on actual operating and maintenance needs. (Action ongoing)</p> <p>Broader issues of the effectiveness of the IOF will need to be addressed within the limits of the CFI’s overall funding envelope. In the absence of additional funding, any increase to the IOF would be at the expense of another CFI Fund. ISED SRS will engage the CFI in discussions on key issues identified in the evaluation, with a view to identifying opportunities to enhance the effectiveness of the IOF within this funding context. Any proposed changes will be presented to the CFI Board for information. (January – March 2021)</p> <p>Should new authorities be required to implement potential changes, ISED SRS will identify the most appropriate mechanism(s) to use and secure the authorities. (April – June 2021)</p>	<p>Programs and Partnerships</p>	
<p>ISED’s Science and Research Sector should work with the CFI to examine opportunities to improve collaboration and coordination with stakeholders.</p>	<p>ISED SRS will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review, in collaboration with the CFI, opportunities for improvements in the CFI’s engagement with provinces/territories regarding new funding programs or potential changes to plans and priorities. (June 2021) 	<p>Director General, Science Programs and Partnerships</p>	<p>December 2021</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognizing the CFI’s mandate to build capacity at post-secondary institutions, work with the CFI and the granting agencies (NSERC, SSHRC, CIHR) to identify and implement collaborative opportunities to bring greater coherence to federal research and infrastructure programming for the benefit of the research community. (January - December 2021) - Within this broader effort, work with the CFI and the granting agencies to optimize existing support across the four organizations specifically for equipment and enabling platforms, identifying opportunities for improved coherence in federal support for research equipment. (January - December 2021) 		