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The Interdepartmental Inclusive Science Initiative

The Inclusive Science Excellence
Awards and Recognition Selection
Criteria

December 2025



Canada 

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1. Purpose of the Awards and Recognition Ceremony

The Interdepartmental Inclusive Science Initiative (IISI) is a collective effort by science-based departments and agencies (SBDA) within the federal government to actively address all forms of discrimination and exclusion in science while fostering an environment where all employees feel empowered and safe to produce science that is representative of people living in Canada. The Inclusive Science Excellence Awards (ISEA) recognize individuals or teams within the federal government that have demonstrated outstanding contributions to scientific excellence while advancing inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility (IDEA), Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) principles, or weaving of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) with research, regulation, policy, and practice. There are three separate awards: the Inclusive Science Innovation and Best Practices Award, the Inclusive Science Leadership Excellence Award, and the Inclusive Science Research or Regulation Award.

2. Award Categories and Criteria

I. Inclusive Science Innovation and Best Practices Award

This award recognises an individual or a team that has developed or implemented innovative tools, projects, or initiatives and outlined best practices to promote inclusive science in their line of work.

The successful candidate or team must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- a. Developed an original tool, project, or initiative, or uniquely modified existing best practices that have resulted in sustained impact in fostering inclusive science in their line of work.
- b. Developed and/or improved upon an innovative approach or process that is recognized as an IS best practice.

II. Inclusive Science Leadership Excellence Award

This award recognizes an employee or team that has demonstrated leadership and scientific excellence in driving inclusive practices and principles through their everyday work. Leadership within Inclusive Science is reflected in the ability to promote inclusive science principles by inspiring and encouraging colleagues and contributing to making their organization inclusive.

The successful candidate or team must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- a. Promotes and adheres to Government of Canada (GoC) principles on IDEA, GBA Plus, and IKS in their line of work.

- b. It is committed to implementing recommendations outlined in the IS Guidelines in decision-making, setting an example of integrity and ethical behaviour for others to follow.
- c. Consciously engages colleagues by promoting opportunities and sharing resources for continuous learning and implementation of inclusive science principles.

III. Inclusive Science Research or Regulation Award

This Award recognizes a researcher, scientist, or science team that can demonstrate implementation of inclusive science principles in the design, practice, reporting, and knowledge mobilization of their science activity within the past two years or beyond.

The successful candidate or team must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- a. Inclusive Design, Practice, Methodology, and Data Collection
 - Nominees should exhibit excellence in the development of inclusive methodologies that generate and assess disaggregated and representative data. This includes;
 - o Developing methodologies that consider *inter alia* race, ethnicity, geographic ancestry, Indigeneity, gender, and disability.
 - o Addressing conscious and unconscious bias throughout pertinent research steps.
 - o Enhancing the representation of Indigenous and racialized communities in data collection where needed.
 - o Ensuring research participants and team members reflect the diversity of the population under study.
 - o Ensuring and reinforcing a safe workspace and a positive sense of community.
 - o Encouraging team members to use workplace accommodation resources.
 - o Ensuring equitable access to professional development opportunities.
- b. Community Engagement and Collaboration
 - Nominees should demonstrate efforts in community engagement and outreach; this includes:
 - o Actively involving community input, particularly from Indigenous or racialized communities, in research that concerns them, at the different stages of the scientific process. This entails collaborating with relevant entities such as research centres, local grassroots organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and regional economic development associations to contribute essential perspectives and experiences to anti-racism efforts.
 - o Co-creating research activities with place-based knowledge systems.
 - o Creating/designing research outcomes that equitably benefit communities most impacted by the science.
- c. Effective Science Communication and Knowledge Mobilization
 - Nominees should communicate science effectively, reduce discrimination (e.g., stereotyping), and demonstrate cultural understanding and sensitivity through appropriate messaging and communications. This includes;
 - o Adopting inclusive communication strategies that consider diverse audiences, cultural diversity, and the use of respectful language.

- o Ensuring accessibility for Indigenous, racialized, and disabled communities.
- d. Monitoring, Impact Measurement, and Reporting
 - Nominees should demonstrate commitment to ongoing monitoring and impact measurement, with regular reporting and reflection on inclusive science initiatives. This includes;
 - o Establishing ongoing reporting mechanisms and updates on IS initiatives using IS reporting matrices.
 - o Setting targets and addressing disparities arising from disaggregated data.

3. Evaluation

The evaluation of candidates and teams for the different categories of the Inclusive Science Excellence Award and Recognition will be based on qualitative and quantitative assessments agreed on by the selection panel. Qualitative assessments will center on specific, evidence-based examples that demonstrate a nominee’s exceptional impact, leadership, innovation, and character beyond standard job duties. Nominations will be ranked on a rating scale of exceptional, very strong, good, mostly satisfies, and does not satisfy.

Quantitative assessments will be based on a cumulative score of each criterion, contributing to the overall evaluation of the nominee's dedication to advancing Inclusive Science principles within the Federal Government. The score ranges from 1 to 5, with 5 indicating exceptional achievement. The cumulative score will guide the selection panel in recognizing and honoring those who have made outstanding contributions to promoting inclusive science in their line of work in the federal government.

To ensure a high-quality submission, focus on the following:

- a. Be Specific: Use specific, genuine descriptions and examples.
- b. Provide Context: Describe the obstacles or circumstances the nominee faced that make their achievement especially significant.
- c. Gather Diverse Evidence: Include corroborating statements from colleagues, clients, or stakeholders that substantiate the claims and offer a comprehensive and credible perspective.
- d. Tell a Compelling Story: Present a compelling, well-structured narrative that articulates the nominee’s unique attributes and the significance of their impact.

4. Supporting Evidence

Nominees will provide documentation to support their application in a submission package. These will include a Director General (DG) or Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM) endorsement, at least one letter of support for the nomination, and details on projects, initiatives, tools, publications, etc., developed or revised to serve as evidence of achievements.

5. Nomination Process

All Federal employees can nominate an individual and/or a team that qualifies for any of the three award categories. Self-nominations will not be accepted. Nominator(s) cannot also be listed as the nominee and vice versa.

- a. A complete submission package (see checklist in the Inclusive Science Excellence Award and Recognition Nomination Form) should be sent to the Inclusive Science Mailbox: inclusivescience-scienceinclusive@nrcan-rncan.gc.ca.
- b. Ensure DG or ADM level endorsement or approval. Engaging senior management helps to avoid duplicate submissions and overlooked details and strengthens nominations.
- c. The deadline for submission is at the end of March 2026.
- d. Applicants who require accessibility accommodations should contact the Inclusive Science Mailbox: inclusivescience-scienceinclusive@nrcan-rncan.gc.ca.

6. Presentation of Awards and recognition

Awards and recognition will be given to the selected nominees during the annual National Inclusive Science Dialogue (NISD) in May 2026.

7. Composition of Selection Panel

The Inclusive Science Awards and Recognition Selection panel will be composed of 5 ADMs of the SBDA, chosen by the Co-Chairs of the Inclusive Science Working group and should not include ADMs from nominating SBDA. The Panel will rotate every year. Each year, Panel members will be selected after the closing of nominations.