



NSERC Alliance Grants

Canada's research partnership program

Linda Martin and Tricia Meaud
Prairies Regional Office
Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada

May 15, 2019

One
New
Flexible
Simplified
Enhanced
Responsive
Partnerships
Program

Alliance grants encourage university researchers to collaborate with partner organizations, which can be from the private, public or not-for-profit sectors. These grants support research projects led by strong, complementary, collaborative teams that will generate new knowledge and accelerate the application of research results for the benefit of all Canadians.



NSERC grants support....

Research

that generates knowledge and ideas that can generate benefits for Canada

Researchers

establishing a base research program



NSERC will support connectivity between generators of knowledge and users of that knowledge through the new Alliance Grants



Alliance Grants...

were designed in consultation with the community and create an enabling platform for starting and growing research partnerships, while building on the strengths of our previous Research Partnerships Programs.

Previous Programs

- Engage Grants
- Collaborative Research & Development Grants
- Strategic Grants
- Industrial Research Chairs

Alliance Grants

- more flexible
- more eligible partners
- no restriction on research topic
- no application deadlines
- simpler process
- faster decision times



Alliance Grants support collaborative projects that will...

Generate new knowledge / technology

Create economic / social / environmental benefits

Contribute to Canada's long-term competitiveness

Support public policy

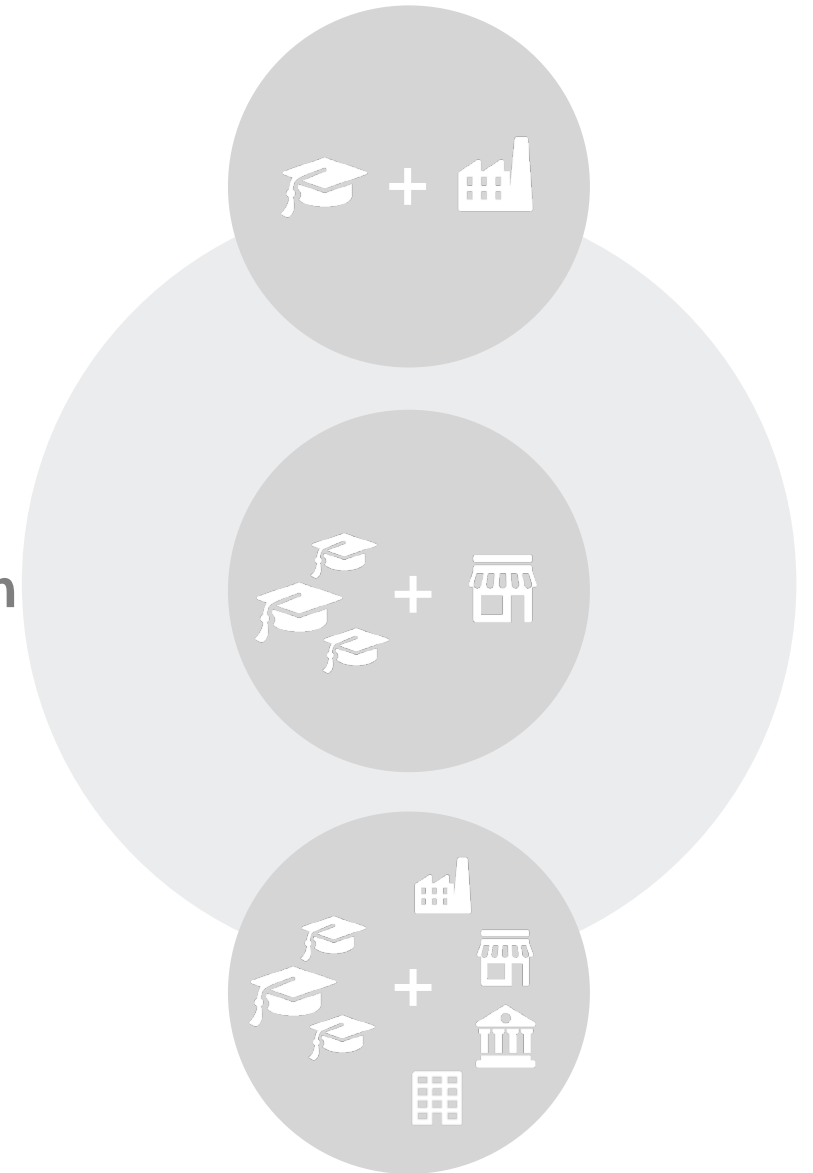
Train new researchers

Draw on diverse perspectives / skill sets



Projects can vary in size and scope

- Short-term projects with one researcher
- Long-term projects involving several researchers
- One-on-one collaborations with one partner organization
- Projects involving many partners organizations from different sectors



Examples of partner organizations

Private Sector	Public Sector	Not-for-profit Sector
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Canadian private companies• Multinationals with presence in Canada• Foreign companies (not as sole partner)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Municipalities, local/regional governments• Federal/provincial/territorial government departments (not funding agencies)• Public utilities• Crown corporations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Producer groups• Industrial associations• Registered charities with a research mandate• Museums/libraries• Indigenous groups• Community groups



Role of partner organizations

Every partner organization must do at least one of:

- Play an active role in research activities
- Utilize the research results and achieve desired outcomes
- Play an active role in mobilizing knowledge

At least one partner organization must demonstrate ability to exploit research results

- Other partners may be chosen for their ability to generate and mobilize knowledge

Partner organizations must collectively support the project through cash and/or in-kind contributions



Research topics

Alliance Grants can support any R&D project that responds to a research challenge in the natural sciences or engineering

- See: [Selecting the Appropriate Federal Granting Agency](#)

Applicants are encouraged to collaborate with academic researchers in fields other than the natural sciences or engineering

- Costs for these collaborations must be identified in the project budget
- Up to a maximum of 30% of the project costs



Grant size and project duration

The minimum grant size is **\$20,000** per year

The maximum is **\$1 million** per year

Alliance Grant projects can range from **1 year** up to **5 years** in duration

Shorter projects can be scaled up or extended within the maximum 5-year period



Cost-sharing...



Cost-sharing

Alliance Grants are calculated based on cost-sharing with the partner organizations

- **The portion that can be cost-shared with NSERC includes only the cash contributions from partner organizations recognized for cost sharing**

In-kind contributions are important for the success of the project

- **In-kind contributions are considered as part of the proposal evaluation**
- **In-kind should not be considered when determining NSERC's contribution to the project costs**

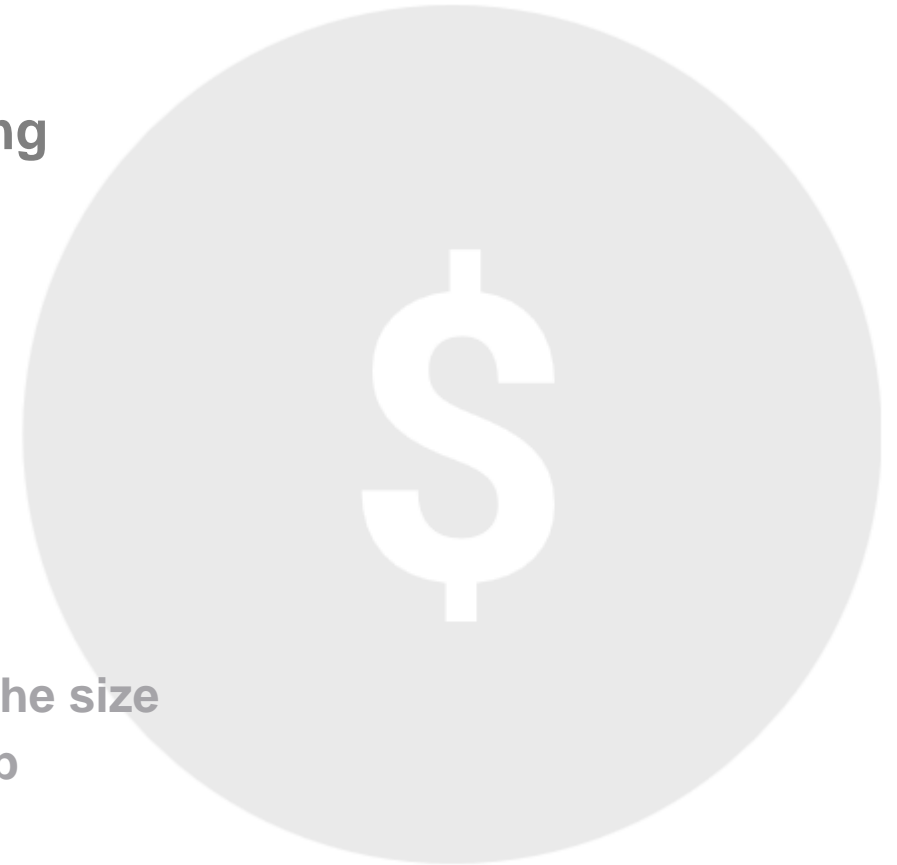


Cost-sharing options

Alliance Grants incorporate a three-tiered cost-sharing structure

NSERC will provide:

- 1 **50%** (a 1:1 leverage ratio),
- 2 **66%** (a 2:1 leverage ratio), or
- 3 **90% to 100%** of the shareable costs, depending on the size of the partner organizations and the type of partnership





Cost-sharing options

Option 1

Size of partner organization	Type of partnership	NSERC Contribution to Project costs	Parameters
Large organizations* 500+ employees globally	Sole partner organization or in partnership exclusively with other large organizations	50% (1:1 leverage)	Applications per year: no limits Grant size: \$20,000 to \$1 million per year Duration: 1 to 5 years
	As a partner with small and medium-sized enterprises such as in value- or supply-chain relationship, or with other sectors*	66% (2:1 leverage)	
Small and medium organizations* Less than 500 employees globally	Sole partner organization or in partnership with other sectors*	66% (2:1 leverage)	

*including private, public and not-for-profit



Cost-sharing options

Option 2

Size of partner organization	Type of partnership	NSERC Contribution to Project costs	Parameters
All partner sizes Partnership must include one organization that is recognized for NSERC cost-sharing	Exclusively not-for-profit and public partner organizations	100%	Applications within a 12-month period: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two for non-academic partners Two for applicants (one as the principal investigator, one as co-applicant) Grant size: \$20,000 to \$200,000 per year Duration: 1 to 5 years
	Any private-sector partner organization Requires a 10% cash contribution from the combined partner organizations	90%	



Partner organizations recognized in cost-sharing calculations

Private Sector

Cash contributions can be recognized*	Cash contributions <i>cannot</i> be recognized
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Canadian private companies• Multinationals with a presence in Canada• Foreign companies (but not as the sole partner organization)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Venture capital / Angel investors / Seed companies• Holding companies• Companies with less than two full-time employees

*if NSERC cost-sharing requirements are met



Partner organizations recognized in cost-sharing calculations

Canadian Public Sector

Cash contributions can be recognized*	Cash contributions <i>cannot</i> be recognized
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Municipalities and local or regional governments established by or under provincial or territorial statute• Provincial/territorial government departments• Federal government departments• Indigenous organizations• Public utilities• Crown corporations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Funding organizations (federal, provincial, territorial, international) whose primary mission is to fund R&D• Organizations whose primary mission is to perform R&D and are funded or controlled primarily by government• Foreign governments

*if NSERC cost-sharing requirements are met



Partner organizations recognized in cost-sharing calculations

Canadian Not-for-Profit Sector

Cash contributions can be recognized*	Cash contributions <i>cannot</i> be recognized
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Producer groups• Industrial associations• Registered charities that have a mandate to carry out and apply research (within natural sciences and engineering)• Organizations whose primary mission is to maintain collections (e.g., historical, scientific, artistic, or cultural) for the public good, such as libraries, museums, zoos or aquariums• Community organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not-for-profit organizations whose primary mission is to fund R&D and are funded or controlled primarily by government• Post-secondary institutions• Incubators and accelerators• Other registered charities• Hospitals and medical/clinical research institutes• Philanthropic organizations• Consortia with the majority of their funding originating from government sources• Foreign not-for-profit organizations• Individuals

*if NSERC cost-sharing requirements are met



Example cost-sharing scenarios...



Cost-sharing example

OPTION 1

Large partner organization(s)* only

**public, private, or not-for-profit*

**50% cost-sharing
(1:1 ratio)**

Total project cost: \$180,000

- **Partner(s) cash contribution**: \$90,000**
- **NSERC contribution: \$90,000**

***Contributions recognized in cost-sharing calculation*



Cost-sharing example

OPTION 1

Large partner organization(s)* with small / medium-sized enterprise(s)

**public, private, or not-for-profit*

66% cost-sharing
(2:1 ratio)

Total project cost: \$180,000

- Partner(s) cash contribution^{**}: \$60,000
- NSERC contribution: \$120,000

***Contributions recognized in cost-sharing calculation*



Cost-sharing example

OPTION 1

Large partner organization(s) with not-for-profit and/or public sector organizations

**public, private, or not-for-profit*

66% cost-sharing
(2:1 ratio)

Total project cost: \$180,000

- Partner(s) cash contribution^{**}: \$60,000
- NSERC contribution: \$120,000

***Contributions recognized in cost-sharing calculation*



Cost-sharing example

OPTION 1

Small / medium-sized organizations*

**public, private, or not-for-profit*

**66% cost-sharing
(2:1 ratio)**

Total project cost: \$180,000

- **Partner(s) cash contribution**: \$60,000**
- **NSERC contribution: \$120,000**

***Contributions recognized in cost-sharing calculation*



Cost-sharing example

OPTION 2

Any size of private-sector partner organization

90% NSERC cost-sharing

Total project cost: \$180,000

- Partner(s) cash contribution^{**}: \$18,000
- NSERC contribution: \$162,000

***Contributions recognized in cost-sharing calculation*

Limit of two applications in a 12-month period



Cost-sharing example

OPTION 2

**Not-for-profit and/or
public-sector only**

**100% NSERC
cost-sharing**

Total project cost: \$180,000

- **Partner(s) cash contribution^{**}: \$0**
- **NSERC contribution: \$180,000**

***Contributions recognized in cost-sharing calculation*

Limit of two applications in a 12-month period



**Funding research
projects...**



Funding research projects

Applicants and co-applicants may receive funds from multiple sources to cover the costs of their research projects, including:

- Alliance Grant funding from NSERC to cover the direct costs of the research, in proportion to the amount provided by the partner organizations recognized for cost-sharing
- Cash contributions from partner organizations that are paid to the university for the direct costs of the research project (not including overhead)
- Cash provided by the university or by external sources such as other funding agencies

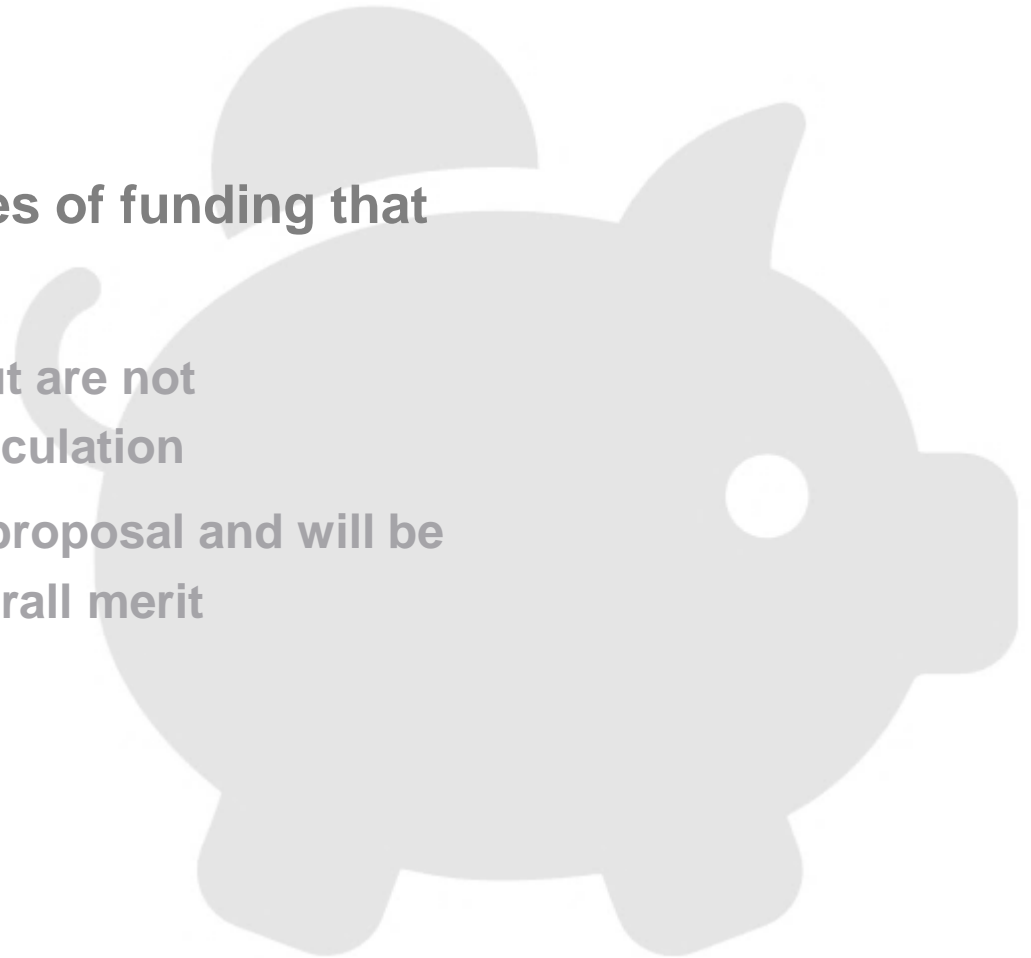
The funds from NSERC and from the partner organizations must be paid to eligible universities and cannot be used to buy equipment, products, or services from any partner organization



Project Budget

Projects can be supported by additional sources of funding that are not recognized for cost sharing

- Such funds can be listed in the project budget, but are not considered as part of the NSERC cost-sharing calculation
- These additional funds must be described in the proposal and will be considered in the assessment of a proposal's overall merit



Determining the funding to request from NSERC

Apply the appropriate cost-sharing ratio from the table to the amount of funding received from partner organizations

1. Determine the total project cost
2. Subtract any costs being paid from other sources (i.e.: partner organizations not recognized for cost-sharing, the university, other funders)
3. Multiply this by the appropriate cost-sharing percentage from the table



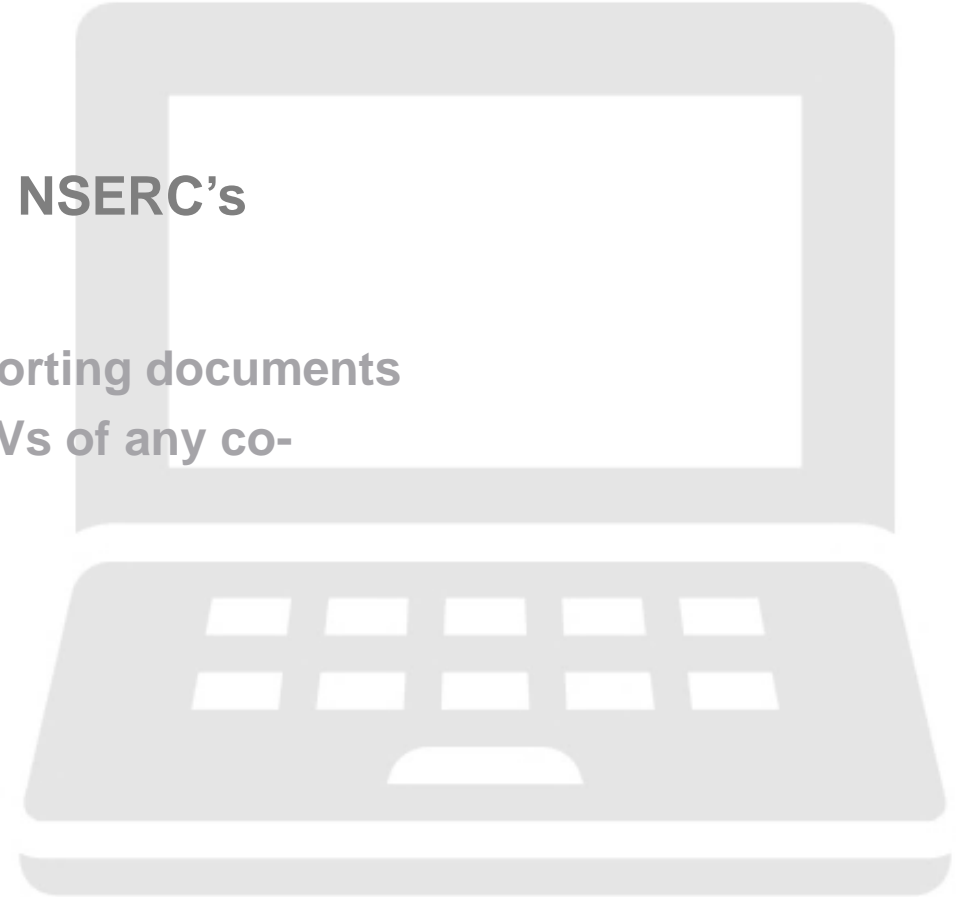
Review of the application...



How to apply

Alliance Grant applications are submitted using NSERC's online system

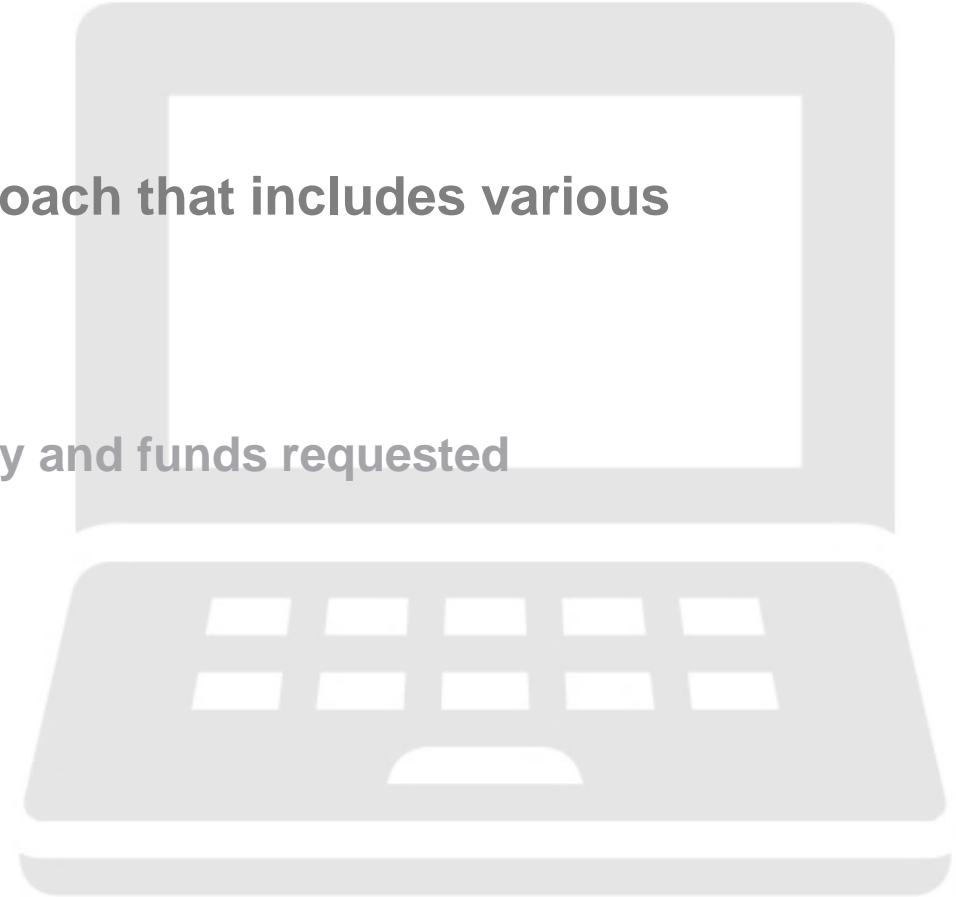
- Applicants fill out the proposal template and supporting documents and include their Common CV and the Common CVs of any co-applicants
- See the instructions for NSERC's online system



How applications are reviewed

N SERC has adopted a financial risk-based approach that includes various assessment tools

- Reduces burden and delays
- Recognizes risk as a function of project complexity and funds requested



Review of the application

Project Size	Small	Medium	Large
Approximate thresholds	Average annual request of \$20,000 to \$30,000 for 1-5 years	Average annual request of more than \$30,000 up to \$300,000 for 1-5 years	Average annual request of more than \$300,000 up to \$1,000,000 for 1-5 years
Review mechanism	<p>NSERC File Managers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation supported by existing NSERC peer review (i.e. Discovery Grant rating, active Canada Research Chair holders, prior Partnership grants) If no existing NSERC peer review evidence is available, external reviewers will be used 	<p>External Referees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With expertise directly related to the proposal Provide review based on all evaluation criteria 	<p>Ad hoc committee members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With expertise directly related to the proposal Provide review based on all evaluation criteria
Funding decisions	NSERC assigns merit indicators to determine priority for funding		
Expected decision time*	4 weeks	8-12 weeks	12-16 weeks



Evaluation criteria

Applications are evaluated using the following criteria:

- Relevance and outcomes
- Partnership
- Quality of the proposal
- Training



Equity, diversity and inclusion

NSERC is committed to excellence in research and research training for the benefit of Canadians.

Achieving a more equitable, diverse and inclusive Canadian research enterprise is also essential to creating the excellent, innovative and impactful research necessary to seize opportunities and respond to global challenges.



Equity, diversity and inclusion

You are asked to consider sex, gender and diversity in the project's research design and to consider how to promote and support a variety of forms of mentoring to ensure trainees' equitable participation and growth.

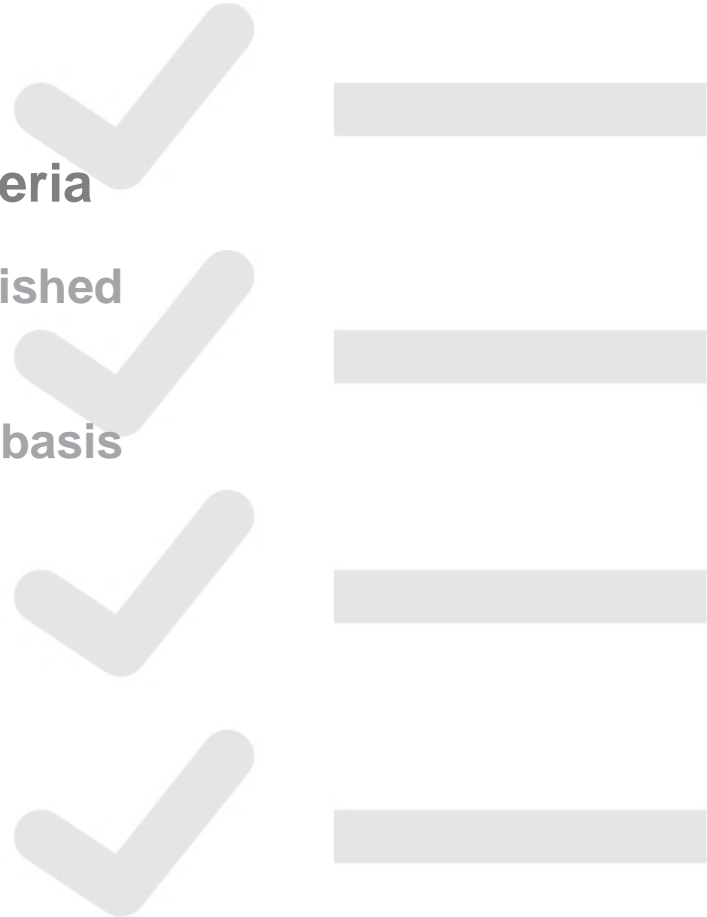
- In large proposals, you must strive for equity, diversity and inclusion when developing your group of co-applicants, partners and trainees
- See [Guide for Applicants: considering equity, diversity, and inclusion in your application](#)



Funding Decisions

Applications will be assessed using the evaluation criteria

- Priority for funding will be determined according to established merit indicators
- NSERC will select proposals for funding on a competitive basis



Awards

Research agreements and intellectual property

- NSERC recommends that applicants and their universities follow best practices by signing a research agreement that defines the intellectual property rights and obligations of all the partner organizations involved in the project
- The agreement should be aligned with NSERC's Policy on Intellectual property, which promotes the use and/or exploitation of knowledge and open access to results of research funded by NSERC



Awards

Research agreements and intellectual property (continued)

- NSERC claims no rights of ownership to any intellectual property generated by Alliance Grant projects
- NSERC's Policy on Intellectual Property stipulates that each student must maintain their right to defend their thesis without delays or impediments
- All participants, including trainees, should consult this policy to ensure they are aware of their rights and obligations



Scaling-up successful research collaborations

NSERC will support the growth of a project as the partnership progresses by providing options to expand successful projects

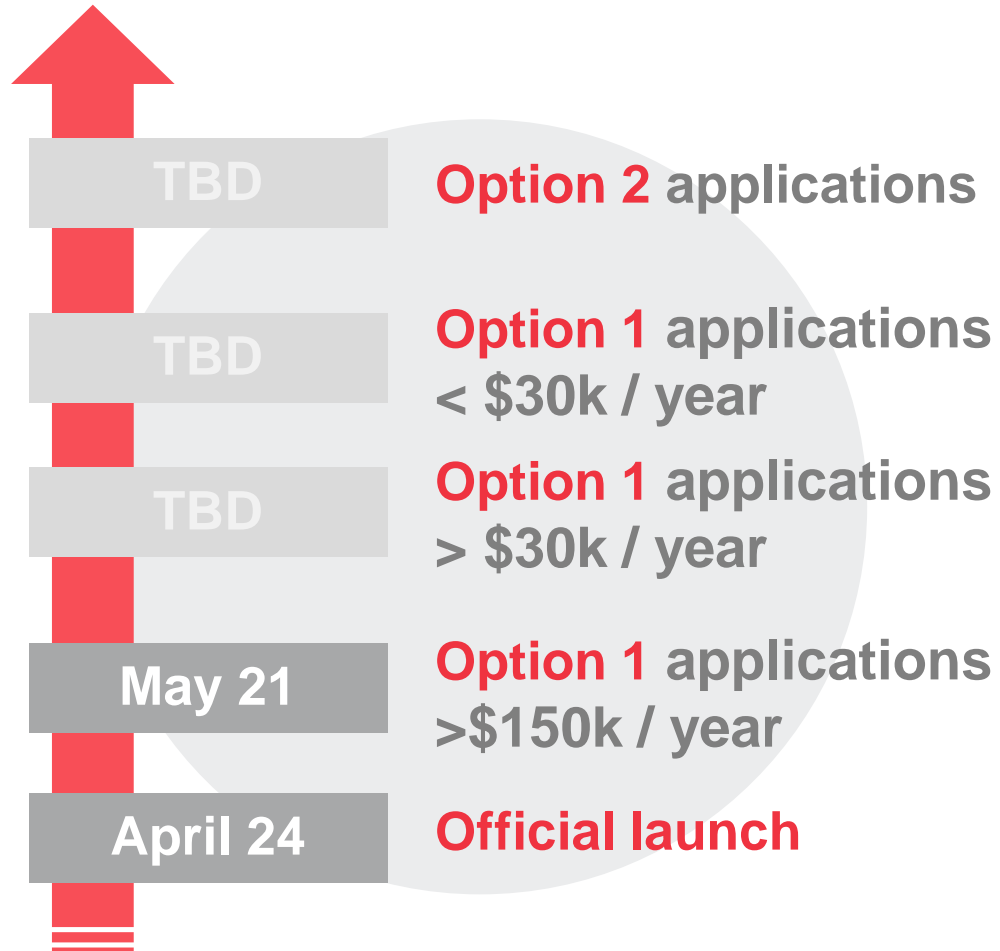
- Additional funds can be awarded within the original timeframe or during additional years of the project
- Maximum project duration (including any time extension) is five years
- Procedure for expanding projects will be detailed at a later date



Alliance Grants timeline...



Transition



Alliance Grants

Deadline for last invited applications for Industrial Research Chairs

Application deadline for CRD, Engage and Engage+

September 2

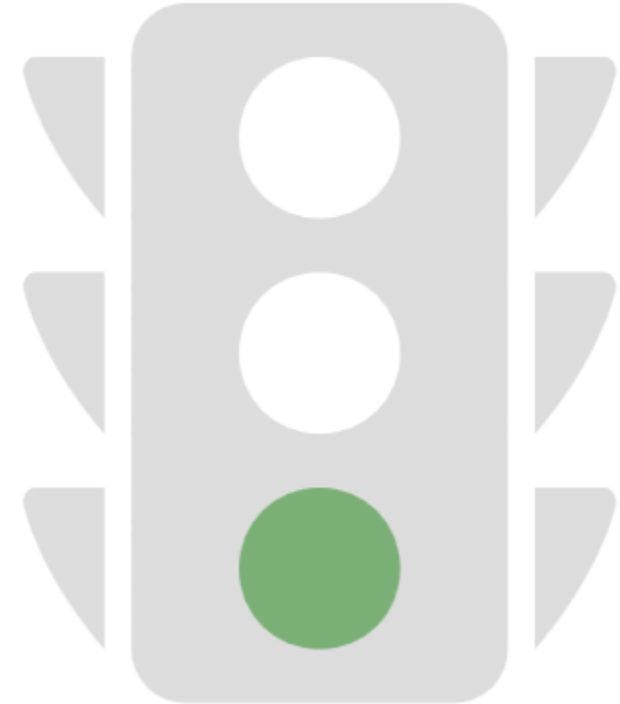
May 31

Prior Programs



Transition

- All ongoing awards & all new commitments made before the launch of Alliance **will be honored**, as long as they continue to meet the T&C of the award
- All IRC, CRD, Engage applications received before deadline **will be evaluated according to the original rules and evaluation criteria**



Some useful links

- [Selecting the Appropriate Federal Granting Agency](#)
- [Alliance Grants program description](#)
- [Alliance Grants: Role of partner organizations](#)
- [Instructions for completing an Alliance Grant application](#)
- [Evaluation Criteria](#)
- [Merit Indicators](#)
- [Use of Grant Funds](#)
- [FAQ](#)





Thank you!

Visit nserc.ca/alliance
to learn more about the
new Alliance grants.

N SERC Head Office

613-995-1111

alliance@nserc-crsng.gc.ca

N SERC Regional Offices

Toll-free

1-877-767-1767

nserc-atlantic@nserc-crsng.gc.ca

nserc-ontario@nserc-crsng.gc.ca

nserc-pacific@nserc-crsng.gc.ca

nserc-prairies@nserc-crsng.gc.ca

nserc-quebec@nserc-crsng.gc.ca



Natural Sciences and Engineering
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en sciences
naturelles et en génie du Canada

Canada