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Research & Innovation

Research Partner Network

SSHRC Knowledge Synthesis Grants: Envisioning Governance Systems that Work

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Hello, my name is Ayantika Mukherjee and I am the lead research partner for SSHRC Knowledge Synthesis Grants. I'm also the lead for SSHRC Connection Grants and the lead for community-engaged research grants for the College of Social Sciences and Humanities.

I also have my colleagues here today:

Craig Taylor who specializes in major SSHRC grants including Insight, Partnership, and Partnership Development Grants.

Sylvia Ijeoma Madueke who specializes in Insight Development Grants, Partnership Engage Grants, and applications in French. She will be moderating the chat today.

Lan Chan-Marples who also provides support for grants related to community engaged research for the College of Health Sciences and she is also involved in SSHRC Partnership Grants.

Today I will be presenting on Knowledge Synthesis Grants: Envisioning Governance Systems that Work. I will talk about some key aspects of the grant and about the application components, process, and deadlines. This powerpoint will be emailed to all the attendees. During the presentation, feel free to ask questions in the chat or you can raise your digital hand and unmute yourself. Either I or one of my colleagues

will answer the question. If we cannot answer a question, I will do my best to find the answer for you after the session and follow up with you.

Land Acknowledgements

The University of Alberta acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 6 territory, and respects the histories, languages, and cultures of First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and all First Peoples of Canada, whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant community.

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Before I begin, I would like to provide the land acknowledgements. The University of Alberta acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 6 territory, and respects the histories, languages, and cultures of First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and all First Peoples of Canada, whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant community.

Overview

Key Sponsors: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (**SSHRC**), Canadian Institutes of Health Research (**CIHR**), and UK Research Innovation: Arts and Humanities Research Council (**UKRI-AHRC**) and the UK Research and Innovation: Economic and Social Research Council (**UKRI-ESRC**).

Some Factors that Can Impact Governance Systems:

- Democracy Under Threat
- Digitization of Citizenship and Government
- Influence of Non-State Actors
- Nation State Powers in Question

This call is one of the 16 global future challenges identified through SSHRC's Imagining Canada's Future initiative (ICF).

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The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) has partnered with the Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR), and UK Research Innovation Arts and Humanities Research Council (UKRI-AHRC) and the Economic and Social Research Council (UKRI-ESRC) to launch the international call for proposals for Knowledge Synthesis Grants (KSGs) on the topic of Envisioning Governance Systems that Work.

The reason for this call is because there are various factors that can affect how successfully governance systems can work.

Democracy under Threat: Mistrust of governments, turning to alternative narratives and ideologies

Digitization of Citizenship and Government - digital technologies are changing the role of governments (e.g. how to create online healthcare systems that are accessible and inclusive)

Influence of Non-state Actors - e.g. the role that AI and tech companies have played in influencing elections

Nation State Powers in Question- Digital economies, such as cryptocurrencies, bring into question the role and responsibilities of central banks, accelerated development of technologies often results in governments not being able to create laws fast enough to regulate them

These are some of the factors that have made it challenging for governance systems to address wicked problems such as climate change, pandemics, housing crisis, and unemployment to name a few.

This call is part of Imagining Canada's Future Initiative (ICF) and what this means is that there is a recognition that Canada and the world will continue to face these challenges in the years to come and there is a need for intersectoral and interdisciplinary collaboration to address this problem.

Objectives

This grant is **not intended to support original research** but to support the **synthesis of existing research knowledge from the last 10 years which can be used to inform future decision-making and research agendas** .

2 key questions:

- Drawing on domestic, international and/or cross-sectoral evidence, what can researchers tell us about these issues?

- How might the findings guide public policy, practice and research agendas for Canada (Stream 1) or Canada and/or the UK (Stream 2) in the immediate and long term?

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Successful applicants would need to produce a **synthesis report** and **evidence brief** guided by 2 key questions:

Question 1 calls upon applicants to **synthesize existing knowledge of governance systems** by drawing upon information from a variety of perspectives such as different levels of government but also non-state actors such as academics, public, private, non-for-profit sectors, including Indigenous rights holders. The synthesis can be in the form scoping reviews, systematic reviews or narrative syntheses and can include qualitative, quantitative or multimethod search methods. It should **state** the knowledge, strengths, but also **identify** gaps and **assess** the existing methodologies and data.

Question 2 asks applicants to identify the role that the various sectors will play in developing and implementing robust policies, best practices and tools to improve governance systems whether in Canada or Canada and UK in the short and long term. The proposal should include a plan for **knowledge mobilization** -i.e. which stakeholders do you plan to engage with, how to engage stakeholders across different sectors, and how to share findings with them.

Themes

Involvement and inclusion in governance structures	Finance governance
International governance	Systems of governance
Health governance	Housing and infrastructure governance
Digital governance and democracy	Past and future models of governance

Note: Projects whose primary objective is curriculum development are **not eligible** for funding under this funding opportunity.

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Please take a look at the program guidelines for more information about these themes, their subthemes, and research questions. These are some of the themes that you can base your application on. If there are other themes in relation to governance systems that you would like to propose, SSHRC is open to it so long as it addresses the objectives of the competition . You are also not obligated to address more than 1 theme.

Involvement of Inclusion in Governance Structures: To what extent does the polarization in society correlate with barriers in existing governance models that prevent the inclusion of unheard or underheard voices? How can communities be engaged in co-creation of governance systems?

International Governance: What changes in global governance might help address current stresses in the global order such as outer space treaties?

Digital Governance and Democracy: How can the electoral and democratic process adapt to recent changes in digital technologies, including the rise of cyberthreat activity targeting national elections, the growing influence of AI transforming access to information about candidates and means of communication with elected

representatives, or new forms of digitized democratic expression, such as e-voting?

Finance Governance: To what extent could governance mechanisms for sustainable finance and financial inclusion activities be further improved?

Systems of Governance: Considering the central role played by municipalities in recent crises (pandemic, opioid crisis, wildfires, housing crisis, etc.), how could the relationship between the federal, provincial, municipal and Indigenous levels of government be improved, and their roles and responsibilities be better defined? In the UK, how are levels of governance and responsibilities between national, regional and local governments working, and how could they be improved (including, e.g., consideration of the role of citizen assemblies)?

Housing and Infrastructure Governance: Given rapidly changing population dynamics in specific localities in a country like Canada, along with growing health inequities related to housing, what governance models are better equipped to respond to changing infrastructure or housing needs?

Past and future models of governance: What roles should legislators, regulators, courts, non-state forms of governance, and the general public play in governance systems amidst uncertainty?

Theme: Health Governance

How can governance models be designed that support practical, ethical responses to emergencies, such as pandemics, while protecting human rights?

What governance changes might improve Canada's and the UK's performance in the next pandemic? Is the creation of a specialized body a good strategy? What characteristics should relevant governing bodies have so they are better prepared for the next pandemic?

How might a health data strategy in Canada and/or in the UK impact health inequities in underserved groups?

If you are from the College of Health Sciences and plan to apply for a proposal on health governance, please contact Research Partner Lan Chan-Marples (lan.marples@ualberta.ca).

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For health applicants, consider for e.g., how COVID-19 pandemic recently demonstrated the importance of concerted and proactive efforts between various sectors (private, public, local communities, government) to improve preparedness for and response to public health emergencies. The pandemic raised the importance in adopting an inclusive approach to reduce disparities in health outcomes among equity-seeking groups. You could take this example as way to consider what characteristics governing bodies should have in future pandemics.

Value, Key Deadlines, and Duration

Value:
$30,000 for 1 year

Dept. Approval Deadline	Check with Department Chair
Faculty Approval Deadline	Check with Faculty ADR/VDR
RAS Approval Deadline	December 5, 2024, at 3.30pm MST
Sponsor Deadline	December 12, 2024, at 10 am MST
Notice of Award	March 2025

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The value of this grant is $30,000 for 1 year.

While the sponsor deadline is December 12, 2024, the grant will need to go through an internal approval process before it can be submitted in the SSHRC Portal. I will provide more information later on in the presentation about the approval process but please note that the institutional approval process is carried out by Research Administrative Services (RAS) and whose deadline for approval is December 5th at 3.30pm. Please reach out to your Department Chair and Faculty ADR/VDR for their approval deadlines as those will be earlier.

Required for Successful Applicants

Virtual kick-off webinar	tentatively in May 2025
Synthesis report (max. 40 pages) and 2 page evidence brief	tentatively late Nov 2025
Virtual knowledge mobilization forum	tentatively January 2026

Key Tip: Include them in your proposal plan (e.g. in the timeline)

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The results of this competition are expected to be released by the end of March. If that deadline remains, then these are some of the things that successful applicants will need to participate in and complete.

The kick-off webinar where the teams get to share with each other what they are working on and a space for the sponsors to provide guidelines on how to format the evidence brief and the report.

The synthesis report and evidence brief will need to be completed within 8 months of receiving the grant.

The virtual knowledge mobilization forum is expected to be held 10 months after the grant has been awarded.

Streams: Eligibility

	Stream 1	Stream 2
PI	1 from an eligible Canadian university	2 (1 each from an eligible Canadian and UK university)
# of Projects to be Funded	20: SSHRC (17); CIHR (3)	27 (jointly funded by SSHRC, UK-AHRC and UK-ESRC)
Key Links	Stream 1 and 2 (applicants from eligible Canadian universities) should refer to SSHRC's program guidelines and subject guidelines Stream 2 (applicants from eligible UK universities): UKRI's Check If You Are Eligible for Research Funding guide. Section 2 of UKRI-AHRC's research funding guide or Section 3 of the UKRI-ESRC research funding	

This grant offers 2 streams and you can only **choose 1**.

Stream 1:
Applications can be submitted by an individual researcher or a team of researchers (consisting of one applicant and one or more co-applicants and/or collaborators) but the PI must come from an eligible Canadian university and have the ability to apply and hold grants.

20 projects are expected to be funded in this stream. CIHR may fund up to three projects and would need to address governance questions that directly or indirectly impact population health and/or social inequities in health, such as governance of public health systems, healthy cities, and global health.

Stream 2:
This stream is for applications jointly submitted by two applicants, one based in Canada and the other in the UK, who are affiliated with eligible institutions in their respective countries and 1 or more co-applicants and collaborators.

UK Applicants: To be eligible to apply for this funding opportunity, you must be at an

eligible research organization. This is any UK higher education institution that receives grant funding from one of the UK higher education funding bodies, or a UKRI-recognised research institute or organization.

Projects are not required to cover both AHRC and ESRC remits but must be relevant to one council's remit: UKRI-AHRC's remit or UKRI-ESRC's remit.

Application Process

All documentation should only be sent to SSHRC via the [SSHRC Portal](#).

United Kingdom applicants in Stream 2 **do not** need to submit any documentation to the UKRI-AHRC or UKRI-ESRC at the application submission stage.

If successful, UK applicants will be asked to provide UKRI-AHRC or UKRI-ESRC with a copy of their team's application as part of the process of awarding the grant. UKRI-AHRC or UKRI-ESRC will provide these applicants with specific information on how to do this after the call's assessment process is finished.

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What to Include with Full Application

Role	"Accept Invitation" Form	Full SSHRC C.V.	Research Contributions	Relevant Experience
Applicant/PI		X	X	X
Academic Co-Applicant	X	X	X	X
Non-Academic Co-Applicant	X	Optional or complete a short profile form		X
Collaborator	X			

This table shows what needs to be included depending on the role of the person on your team.

Research contributions and relevant experience are a good places to demonstrate past work and why you and your research team are a good fit to advance knowledge

The Canadian applicant should be listed as the principal investigator in the application form. The Canadian PI updates their SSHRC CV and makes sure it is attached to their application.

Invite your co-applicants and collaborators where relevant regardless of stream,
- You can do this in the Participant section of the application form
- You will need to provide the email address and family name
- Co-applicants must submit their required PDF attachments with their own CV, not within that of the applicant.

For Stream 2, The UK principal investigator should be listed as a co-applicant in the application form. The UK team should also be invited to complete these attachments.

Some Key Application Sections

Summary of proposal (mandatory) – Max 1 page

Description of Project Proposal (mandatory) – Max 5 pages, use evaluation criteria to prepare this section.
- Consider including a timeline

Knowledge Mobilization Plan (mandatory) - (2 pages)
- Provide 2 or 3 names of potential knowledge users for the knowledge mobilization forum
- Types of activities
- Method of promoting synthesis report to ensure it is open access (e.g. website, University repository).
- See also the Tri-Agency Open Access Policy (2015),

Expected outcomes (mandatory) – (1 page)

Summary: This is a 1 page document that goes out to the public if you are awarded. Do not just copy and paste from your proposal but indicate the challenges or issues to be addressed, the methodologies you will use, who is your target audience, and how you wish to mobilize the recommendations to the target audience.

Description of the Project Proposal: identify the themes and subthemes that will be addressed, what kinds of past scholarship do you plan to draw upon, the expected contributions and impacts of the approach. How will the work of the project be divided amongst the team members? Consider also including a timeline to demonstrate a plan for participating in the webinar and for completing the synthesis report and evidence brief, and for participating in the knowledge mobilization forum, but also to account for changes and delays to your work plan.

Knowledge Mobilization Plan:

Who is your target audience? provide the names of individuals or organizations of potential knowledge users to be invited to the knowledge mobilization forum (two to three names or organizations).

How do you plan to use the forum to engage with the knowledge users? Provide a

schedule of intended knowledge mobilization activities.

How do you plan to measure the success of your knowledge mobilization activities? For instance, what are your indicators of success?

Researchers are expected to make their synthesis reports publicly available—such as through their web page or through an institutional repository—and to include the link in their evidence brief. SSHRC and CIHR (Stream 1) and SSHRC,UKRI-AHRC and UKRI-ESRC (Stream 2) make all evidence briefs publicly available on their websites.

Expected Outcomes – Consider what are the outcomes going to be and who will benefit. Ideally the project should have wide impact.

Key Application Sections: Budget and Budget Justification (Canadian Applicants - Stream 1 and 2)

- **Funds requested from SSHRC** (mandatory) – SSHRC Budget Template
  - a headset with an integrated boom microphone or an approved table-top microphone (see here for more information)

- **Budget justification** (mandatory) – Max 1 page
  - **Key Tip**: use the same categories in SSHRC budget template and in same sequence clearly explain who is paying for what (SSHRC vs other contributions), cost sharing or 100%.
  - Grant is for 1-year with an auto 1-year extension but budget period and activity period should not include the second year in the proposal.

- Every request must start from **after** the notice of award and be in Canadian currency (CAD $)

- **Key Tip**: Follow the guidelines of Tri Agency Guide to Financial Administration (TAGFA) and the specific rules for the use of grant funds in the program guidelines to ensure that your proposal is not deemed ineligible.

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Canadian applicants, regardless of stream will need to fill out the Funds Requested from SSHRC form and attach the Budget justification.

Both of these components are to demonstrate to SSHRC what funds you are requesting for the **Canadian team**. (e.g. personnel costs such as hiring a research assistant, travel and subsistence costs for the research team, equipment costs, other costs such as hiring a translator, etc.). You will also want to make sure that you have an approved headset for the knowledge mobilization activities and this is an eligible request.

- UKRI budget form and justification - 2 pages, mandatory
  - Requests in UK pounds (£)
  - a headset with an integrated boom microphone or an approved table-top microphone (see here for more information) as part of the hardware costs
  - **All UK costs will be funded at 80% of the full economic cost. 20% will have to be sourced from the UK host institution.**
  - **Key Tip**: UK applicants should consult Section 3 of the UKRI-AHRC research funding guide or Section 5 of the UKRI-ESRC research funding guide for the UKRI Funding Service for ensuring that their requests are eligible.
- Must be attached to the Canadian PI's application in the SSHRC Portal.
- Ensure the full economic cost (as outlined in the third column in the UK budget form) combined with the total in the SSHRC budget form does not exceed CAD$30,000. **Budgets cannot exceed a maximum 60/40-% or 40/60-% split e.g., C$18,000/£10,517 or £7,011/C$12,000)** across the two agencies SSHRC and UKRI-AHRC or UKRI-ESRC. **Key Tip**: Use U of A's Guidelines and Tools for Calculating Exchange Rates.

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The purpose of the UKRI Budget and Justification Form is to list the requests of the **UK team**, which should be in pound sterling.

The UK principal investigator should be listed as the PI in the UKRI budget form.

Depending on which council the team belongs to, UKRI-AHRC or UKRI-ESRC, the costs are funded at 80% of the full economic cost. What this means is that the remaining 20% will have to be funded by the UK PI's research institution. The UK PI should look at the respective guidelines to ensure that all their requests are eligible.

The form should be attached to the Canadian PI's application in the SSHRC Portal.

The SSHRC Budget Form along with the UKRI Budget Form should should have a balanced budget in a combination of up to 60/40-% or 40/60-% that does not exceed CAD $30,000. I have added U of A's link for obtaining Bank of Canada exchange rates in the slide, which you may use for your calculations.

Stream 2: Some Possible Budget Scenarios

- Scenario 1: 60/40% split

60% of $30,000 = CAD$18,000/£10,517 [funded by SSHRC]

80% of $12,000 = CAD $9600 [funded by UKRI-AHRC or UKRI-ESRC]

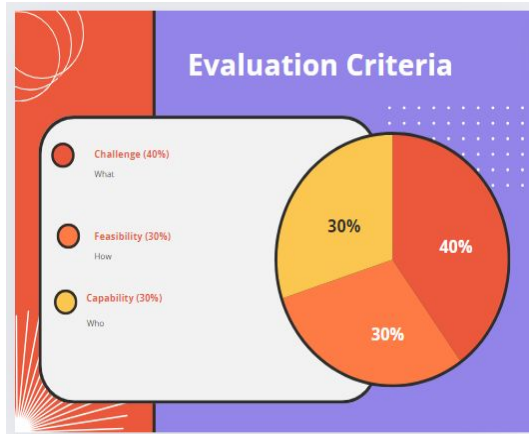20% of $12,000 = CAD$2400 [funded from UK host institution]

- Scenario 3: 50-50% split
50% of $30,000 = CAD $15,000/ £8442
80% of $15,000 = CAD$12,000 [funded by UK-AHRC or UK-ESRC]
20% of $15,000 =CAD$3000 [funded by UK host institution]

- Scenario 2: 40/60% split

40% of $30,000 = CAD$12,000 / £7,011 [funded by SSHRC]

80% of $18,000 = CAD$14,400 [funded by UKRI-AHRC or UKRI-ESRC]

20% of $18,000 = CAD$3600 [funded from UK host institution]

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Total budget for stream 2 will consist of: request from SSHRC, the request from UKRI-AHRC or UKRI-ESRC, and the funds from the UK PI's research institution

Tips for Success...

Evaluation Criteria

Challenge (40%)
What

Feasibility (30%)
How

Capability (30%)
Who

30%
40%
30%

Use the [Evaluation Criteria](#) as your checklist:

- Challenge (40%): What
- Feasibility (30%): How
- Capability (30%): Who

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Challenge/What (40%):
What is it about emergencing systems of governance you wish to investigate?
What are the key issues and research gaps?

Feasibility/How (30%)
How will you conduct a literature review of this the topic? What methods will you use?
How long is it going to take you to complete the project?
How much is going to cost?
Timelines and budget are key

Capability/Who (30%)
Who are the people involved in the project and how are they right fit?
Past research contributions and experiences are key

Tips for Success and Supports

- Update your SSHRC CV and make sure that it is attached to your application (always save and preview)

- If relevant, invite your co-applicants and collaborators early

- Check out successful applications from past KSG award winners in the Successful Grants Library

- Check out the GrEx Toolkits via the Education and Research Archive: Rates for Hiring RAs, Budget Considerations, and Knowledge Mobilization

- EDI in SSHRC Grants Recording and Transcript

Download and consult our Grant Excellence/GrEx documents. The documents are bookmarked so that you can go to specific sections.

If you are thinking about how to incorporate EDI in your proposal, you can take a look at our past information session recording and transcript.

Sponsor-Led Supports

- Check out [successful evidence briefs and synthesis reports](#) from past KSG competitions

- Stream 2: If you are looking for partners, you may complete the [networking form](#) to facilitate partnerships between Canadian and UK applicants for potential applications./ Les candidats canadiens et britanniques peuvent remplir le [formulaire de réseautage](#) à l'avance afin de faciliter les partenariats pour les candidats potentiels**.**

- SSHRC is organizing a **second webinar** to review the application process for both streams and provide information on partnership best practices and networking. Tuesday, **October 10th**, 9am-10am MST. Register [here](#)**.**

UofA Approval and Submission Process

This process must be completed *at least* <u>five business days</u> prior to the SSHRC deadline. Consult your Department Chair and Faculty ADR for their earlier deadlines.

- ❑ Create a "New Proposal Request" (RES#) on UAlberta's Researcher Homepage (RHP), following the step-by-step process
- ❑ Fill in the requested information - See Request for New Application step by step process.
- ❑ Attach a complete single PDF document of the application including supporting letters with 50% matching contributions (download the "Preview/PDF" in the SSHRC Portal).
- ❑ Click on Submit in RHP. Your application will automatically move through your Departmental and Faculty approval chain. You can see the progress in the RHP.
- ❑ Wait for RAS to complete the review. The review and approval is communicated in email and comments in the Application Review Report.
- ❑ Don't submit in the SSHRC portal until RAS/RSO is done with review, approves and gives you permission to do so.
- ❑ Submit application on the SSHRC portal by 10am MST of the SSHRC deadline by clicking the SUBMIT button.
- ❑ RAS/RSO will forward your submitted application to SSHRC.

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SSHRC requires that applicants get approval from their institutions prior to submitting their applications. The entire internal application approval process, departmental, faculty, and institutional, occurs through the Researcher Homepage.

Institutional or RAS approval deadline is 5 working days prior to the sponsor submission deadline. Your Department Chair and Faculty ADR's deadlines will be earlier .

After creating an application in the SSHRC Portal, don't hit submit just yet but download a print preview of the application and create an application in the Researcher Homepage for approval first.

You can track the approval process in the Researcher Homepage.

Once RAS has reviewed and sent you an email to confirm you can submit the application, you can then hit submit in the SSHRC Portal and RAS will forward your application.

Future Knowledge Synthesis Grant Competitions

The KSG competition of Envisioning Governance Systems that Work complements upcoming KSG competitions:

- [The Changing Nature of Security and Conflict](#) (2025)

- [The Arts Transformed](#) (2025)

- [Truth Under Fire in a Postfact World](#) (2026)

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Each competition operates independently but here some of the upcoming KSG competitions which have yet to open. Check out the links in the slide for more information.

The Changing Nature of Security and Conflict
New technologies will change the nature and location of conflict, which can result varied types of threats. What is the impact it can have and how might we adapt?

The Arts Transformed
Digital technologies and social media can revolutionize creative expression as much as it can challenge notions of creative monopoly, authenticity, artistic rights, and ownership. What is the impact it can potentially have and how might the arts be supported for a positive transformation?

Truth under Fire in a Post-Fact World
In a post-fact world, political, social, and economic systems could become dysfunctional when emotions increasingly become more common in public discourse and social media. What is the significance and what are the steps to address this

problem?

Contact Ayantika Mukherjee (Lead for Knowledge Synthesis Grants):
ayantika.mukherjee@ualberta.ca

QUESTIONS ?

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"uplifting the whole people"
— HENRY MARSHALL TORY, FOUNDING PRESIDENT, 1908