2020 INNOVATION TO COMMERCIALIZATION COMPETITION

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

DEADLINES:
LETTER OF INTENT: JANUARY 27, 2020, 4:30 p.m. PT
FULL APPLICATION: MARCH 31, 2020, 4:30 p.m. PT
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Application Phase Questions

1. **Who can apply to the I2C Program?**
   Applicants who hold an appointment\(^1\) at a BC university, health authority or research institute that holds a memorandum of understanding\(^2\) with MSFHR as a host institution, are eligible to apply. In addition, the proposed research must have a clear link to human health and the majority of which must be conducted within BC.

2. **How many awards will be funded in the 2020 I2C competition?**
   The current budget envelope for the 2020 I2C competition is $2,700,000, enough to fund a minimum of six awards over the maximum four-year term of the award. Additional funds contributed by competition partners may increase the number of awards MSFHR and our partners are able to offer.

3. **Where can I find the list of available partners for award co-funding?**
   MSFHR partners with other funders to build capacity and fill strategic gaps in health research in BC. By partnering on our competitions, MSFHR and our partners are able to increase the total number of applications funded by I2C awards. Partners will be added to MSFHR’s website as they are confirmed. MSFHR will email the Office of Research Services, grant facilitators, and applicants who have launched a letter of intent or full application with a link to the list of available partners.

4. **What are the instructions on how to register my interest in the partnered awards?**
   Applicants interested in being considered for partnered awards are encouraged to email Muneerah Kassam, Manager, Partnerships at mkassam@msfhr.org to register your interest. Applicants interested in being considered for partnered awards are encouraged to indicate this preference in MSFHR ApplyNet when completing their full application. Please indicate the partner(s) of interest and how your research aligns with their funding priorities. MSFHR staff will attempt to match the keywords of the applicants with those provided by the partner, and if there is a match, will inform the respective applicant.

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\(^1\) The appointment must allow the applicant to a) apply for and hold peer-reviewed funds as a principal investigator; b) be a research supervisor for graduate and post-graduate trainees; and c) publish their research results.

\(^2\) Please refer to the list of eligible host institutions [www.msfhr.org/sites/default/files/MOU_List.pdf](http://www.msfhr.org/sites/default/files/MOU_List.pdf).
5. **Can research associates and post-doctoral fellows apply?**
   Yes, but if they are successful in the I2C competition, they must have the appointment described in **Question 1** at an eligible BC institution as of the award start date: September 1, 2020.

6. **What does an “eligible” BC institution refer to?**
   An eligible BC institution is one that has a memorandum of understanding with MSFHR. View the complete [list of eligible host institutions](#).
   
   **Note:** The host institution is the institution that administers funds for the duration of the award. The selection of the host institution is based on where the research project is being conducted and the majority of resources to support the project (e.g. infrastructure, human resources, administration, etc.) is provided. It does not need to be the same BC institution where the appointment is held. Applicants should verify their host institution and where their appointment is held prior to submitting a full application.

7. **Can I apply for this award if I already hold an MSFHR award?**
   Applicants may not apply for an I2C award if they currently hold an MSFHR Scholar, HP-I or I2C award. Individuals may only hold an I2C award once every 10 years, beginning from the funding start date of the previous award.

8. **Is the I2C award competition open to health professionals?**
   Yes. Health professionals may apply to the I2C competition as long as they meet all of the eligibility criteria.

9. **My appointment is with a university, but my research is conducted at another institute. Who should complete the Department Head Form?**
   The department head, or equivalent, is someone at a senior level who can comment on the nature of your research support, any additional non-research activities you participate in (e.g., teaching, clinical service, etc.) and confirm your academic/clinical appointment. Whoever fits this role best must be nominated as a third party in MSFHR ApplyNet to complete the Department Head Form.

10. **Will interruptions/delays in my career be taken into account when evaluating my application?**
    Interruptions and delays in your research career will be taken into account by the review panel when assessing productivity. You are advised to clearly and fully describe any interruptions or delays that affected the research and the dissemination of research results in the Career Timeline section of the letter of intent.
11. **What is the difference between a letter of collaboration and a letter of support?**
Letters of collaboration are not mandatory and are written by collaborators who are expected to make a significant contribution to the research plan, confirming their enthusiasm to participate in the manner indicated. Letters of support are provided by partners contributing some form of support to the application. Although not a requirement, applicants are invited to secure cash or in-kind support from partners as a means to strengthen resources and accelerate progress. Partners secured by the applicant must provide a signed letter of support describing the nature of their contribution, and confirming their interest and enthusiasm for the proposed project.

12. **Can I apply more than once with different projects?**
Individuals can only be designated as a primary applicant on one application in a given competition. Individuals can be designated as a co-applicant on up to two separate applications in a given competition. A single individual may only be named (i.e., as a primary applicant or co-applicant) in a total of two applications in a given competition.

13. **Can co-applicants be from outside of BC?**
Yes, although justification for their role as such must be included. It should be explained how their participation will still help produce outcomes that will potentially improve health outcomes and enrich the health innovation ecosystem in BC.

14. **My application contains sensitive information regarding proprietary and/or unprotected intellectual property. What precautions are taken to avoid disclosure during the review process?**
All information presented in the application, including descriptions and applications of intellectual property, is strictly confidential and is only made available to MSFHR staff and the review panel for evaluation purposes only. Review panel members and MSFHR staff involved in facilitating the peer-review process will be required to sign a confidentiality/non-disclosure agreement prior to application review.

15. **Is match-funding support required for the I2C application?**
Match-funding from a partner(s) is not required for Phase I of the I2C competition, although applicants are invited to secure their own partnerships in applying for Phase I of the program as a means to strengthen resources and accelerate progress.
16. I have a partner that will provide support for my application. What proportion of their contribution needs to be cash?

There are no restrictions or requirements as to the amount or type of support provided by partners secured by applicants for their application to Phase I of the I2C competition. If in-kind support is provided, it must be described in the letter of support signed by the partner. If the same partner commits to match-funding support for the award renewal (Phase II), up to 25 percent of their support can be in the form of in-kind contributions as described in Section 10 of the 2020 I2C competition guidelines.

17. How do I know if the technological readiness of my product/technology is eligible for the I2C Program?

Applicants should do their best to ensure their product/technology is between research and development for concept validation (i.e., proof-of-principle) and a successfully-demonstrated product or technology in a relevant environment (i.e., a prototype, working model, formulation, etc.) as described in Section 7 of the 2020 I2C competition guidelines. If applicants are unsure, they should consult with their institutional technology transfer office, or equivalent, who can include their technology assessment in the IP Assessment Form.

18. Will the level of technological readiness of my product/technology impact the competitiveness of my application?

It is generally understood that research and development timelines for certain areas (e.g., drug development) can take considerably longer than other areas. Therefore, scoring of an application during peer review is not dependent upon the absolute stage of technological readiness (i.e., how close a product or technology is to market), but rather it is determined based on the quality of the application as a whole relative to its stage of commercial readiness. For example, an application featuring a product at a high level of technological readiness may still score poorly based on a poor commercialization plan or unrealistic research strategy.

19. What expenses can I use the I2C award for?

The I2C award provides funds for salary contributions, inclusive of benefits, to the award recipient or to designated individuals directly related to the conduct of the award recipient’s research and commercialization activities. The award can also be used to defray costs incurred through feasibility research and activities directly related to the implementation of the proposed commercialization plan. Details on eligible expenses can be found in Appendix A of the 2020 I2C competition guidelines.

20. Can I2C award funds be used outside of BC?

The bulk of the proposed research and commercialization activities must be conducted in BC.
However, realizing that some projects may require expertise or services that can only be provided out-of-province, up to 25 percent of the proposed total budget can involve expenses incurred outside of BC. If out-of-province expenses are proposed, applicants must make a case as to why these cannot be incurred within the province, as part of the budget justification.

21. I want to allocate award funds towards my salary in the budget template of the application. What happens if I receive external salary support following submission of the full application?

If you receive external salary support following submission of the full application, but prior to accepting the award, you must indicate the new source of salary funding in the appropriate section of the Award Acceptance Form. If external salary support is received following award acceptance, you must notify MSFHR and provide a copy of the award notification letter. In either case, funding originally allocated to award recipient salary must then be reallocated to other eligible expenses, which must be reflected in the annual progress report.

22. Are I2C awards eligible for salary incentives or top-ups like other MSFHR salary awards?

No. The I2C award is not considered a personnel award, and is therefore not eligible for salary incentives or adjustments. If the award recipient already holds external salary support, they are obligated to allocate award funds to supporting staff or trainees, or research and/or business expenses that are directly involved in the implementation of a commercialization plan.

23. I fulfill all eligibility requirements for the I2C award, but I am also affiliated with a private company that has a stake in the intellectual property featured in the application. Am I still eligible to apply?

Yes, provided a plan to manage any and all perceived or actual conflicts of interest is adequately described in the full application, where required. Failure to declare these conflicts, and/or provide a suitable management plan can result in dismissal of the application.

24. Is the additional application for Mitacs Accelerate internship funding required?

No. Inclusion of the Mitacs Accelerate proposal application (Part 1) is completely optional. It simply allows applicants who are interested in applying for additional funding for trainee support to have access to an expedited review process for their Mitacs application.

25. I have indicated my interest in applying for Mitacs funding in the I2C Letter of Intent (LOI). What happens next?

Information regarding applicants who have expressed interest in applying for Mitacs Accelerate funding will be shared with Mitacs so that their business development team are aware of interested applicants.
Applicants interested in including Mitacs Accelerate internships in their MSFHR I2C application must contact their regional Mitacs Business Development representative to learn more about the Mitacs Accelerate program and obtain a Mitacs Accelerate Proposal application (Part 1). Applicants who indicate their interest in applying for Mitacs funding at the LOI stage are under no obligation to complete the Mitacs application at the full application stage. Conversely, an expression of interest in Mitacs funding at the LOI stage is not a requirement for completing the Accelerate proposal application at the I2C full application stage.

26. I have included the Mitacs application as part of my I2C full application. What happens next? I2C applications will undergo peer review. If applicable, reviewers will also consider additional review criteria related to the Mitacs application. Applicants who are awarded I2C awards, and that have applied for Mitacs funding will be asked to contact Mitacs and complete Part 2 of the Mitacs Accelerate proposal application. Mitacs will then review Part 2 of the application for eligibility. If all requirements are met, Mitacs funding will be awarded. All details regarding the Mitacs Accelerate Program can be found at: [http://www.mitacs.ca/en/programs/accelerate](http://www.mitacs.ca/en/programs/accelerate).

27. What happens if I included the Mitacs application as part of my I2C full application, but I was not awarded an I2C award? The expedited review process for Mitacs Accelerate internship funding is only eligible for successful applicants in the I2C competition. However, unfunded applicants can still apply for this or other Mitacs funding for trainee support on their own, although these funding requests will be independent of MSFHR, and subject to Mitacs’ full peer review process.

28. Do I need to identify a trainee for the Mitacs Accelerate internship during the I2C application? No. I2C applicants interested in applying for Mitacs Accelerate internship funds do not need to provide the name of the trainee at this stage. For Part 1 of the Accelerate proposal application, research supervisors only need to identify the academic level of the proposed trainee, the length of the internship, provide a work plan for the trainee, as well as information on how the trainee will benefit from an internship with the partner organization.

29. How do I get help with developing a Mitacs Accelerate proposal? Applicants interested in applying to the Mitacs Accelerate program are encouraged to contact the Mitacs business development team: [http://www.mitacs.ca/en/contact-us/business-development](http://www.mitacs.ca/en/contact-us/business-development). All questions regarding the Accelerate Program, such as eligibility, application forms, timelines, expectations and benefits should be directed to Mitacs.
Award Administration Questions

1. Can I defer the start date of the I2C award?

   The I2C award is effective September 1, 2020. Deferrals may only be requested for the following reasons: required appointment not yet obtained, medical, parental leave, and caregiving. Other reasons not stated will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. If a deferral is required, award recipients must indicate the requested award start date and the reason for deferral on the Award Acceptance Form and obtain approval from MSFHR. The deferred start date must be on the first day of any month and be no later than December 1, 2020. Deferred start dates, once confirmed by MSFHR, cannot be revised. Delays due to technology/product readiness are not considered eligible reasons for deferral.

2. How much time do I have to respond to an offer of the I2C award?

   Successful award recipients have 10 business days to accept or decline the award as of the date on the funding notification letter.

3. What documents will I need to provide before I can start my award?

   A copy of the Award Acceptance Form signed by you and your department head or equivalent (which also confirms your research appointment) must be uploaded in .pdf format to MSFHR ApplyNet via the Accept Grant Award Agreement task.