

# Social Innovation Research Fund Evaluation Criteria

## Overview

The criteria listed below aims to give reviewers of applications guidance in scoring project proposals for the Social Innovation Research Fund Pilot administered by the New Brunswick Innovation Foundation (NBIF) in partnership with the New Brunswick Social Policy Research Network (NBSPRN).

Decision on proposals will be made via numeric ranking according to evaluation criteria and in the case of a tie, a final decision will be achieved with a vote. The committee will award grants according to highest total scores based on the criteria until the funding envelope is exhausted but may elect to award less than the funding envelope if insufficient high-quality applications are received.

## Project Evaluation

**Please note:** Each reviewer is asked to assign a score out of 10 for each category, where 10 is the highest score possible.

1. Knowledge mobilization plan:
  - How will the research involve the social group that it impacts?
  - Is there a plan to communicate results of the innovation with the impacted social group?
  - Is there a plan for these results to be shared and acted upon (timelines, milestones for future work or knowledge transfer)?
  - Will the knowledge flow in two directions between the researcher and the social groups, allowing for input and feedback?
2. Demonstrated social need for the innovation:
  - Has the target client group's need been clearly identified?
  - This identification can be through brief citation or description of the established need or explanation of the need observed on the part of the applicant.

### 3. Quality of the partnerships:

- Does the project cross multiple disciplines? Involve various stakeholders associated with the issue the innovation seeks to address?
- Are the stakeholders contributing to the project, either financially or with an in-kind contribution?
- Are there pre-existing relationships and partners on board for the project?

### 4. Social impact of the innovation:

- Does the innovation have a measurable impact on New Brunswickers (through a product, service or policy), or more specifically the community or group it was targeted to help?

### 5. Economic impact of the innovation:

- Does the innovation have a measurable economic impact – either directly through the creation of a product/service or more indirectly through cost avoidance, process or policy improvement?
- Does the innovation have impacts in the value chain of the sector it is aimed at influencing? I.e. with this innovation in place will there be further positive outcomes for individuals, society or environment that could be measured and assigned economic value?

### 6. Capacity of the researcher to execute the project or program:

- Through evaluation of the CV of the researcher, consideration of the resources that the research team has available (facilities, other sources of funds, etc.) – should they be able to complete the project?

## **INDIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT: MEASURING INTERVENTIONS AND IMPACTS IN SOCIAL INNOVATION**

Explaining the measurement of indirect economic impact is difficult in the context of social innovation as most researchers come from a wide variety of disciplines and are working with extremely varied partners on a wide variety problems and solutions. This means that attempting to provide a detailed explanation specific to activities supported by our Social Innovation Research Fund is complex – no two projects are alike and could all be realising different indirect economic impacts for New Brunswickers.

With social innovation it is generally very difficult to measure the innovation itself but it may be possible to measure the interventions or impacts by assigning them a relative value, i.e. indirect economic impact – this will be the focus. In seeking to offer more context for applicants, a short example will be offered to assist in the thought process for applying an indirect economic impact lens to a given project knowing that there is indirect economic value created in interventions along the way or in the impact of the innovation.

For example, in a situation where a socially innovative program has been designed to better connect a marginalized community with a service provider (community based or government) the indirect economic impact could be realised through a number of different ways, depending on the degree of marginalization and what type of barriers the clients are facing. Such as the indirect economic impact

for New Brunswickers of having this individual now able to work part time as they work through their addiction; or the impact of their child now having a secure and safe place to live – negating the need for foster care; or the impact that child will now be able to have over the long term and as an adult as they achieve more success in school.

The goal is to help applicants to be able to see the downstream or peripheral impacts of their research and innovation in the sense that they may be addressing an acute problem that does not necessarily have economic benefits, but through the betterment of that situation (be it social, environment etc.), certain indirect economic benefits can be understood to have taken place outside of the initial improvements made by the innovation.