

Scope

This policy covers all applied research funds disbursed by the New Brunswick Innovation Foundation (NBIF) but does not apply to the NB Graduate Scholarship, the NBIF Innovation Voucher or any NBIF Venture Capital investments. This policy is active as of April 1, 2021 and applies to all awards granted on or after this date.

Preamble

Wherever possible, the NBIF applies the rules and regulations of the Tri-Agencies of Canada, specifically the Tri-Agency Financial Administration guide with effective date April 1 2020 (https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/InterAgency-Interorganismes/TAFA-AFTO/guide-guide_eng.asp). Our provincial focus, our applied research mandate and the nature of our funding sources necessitates, however, some differences from the Tri-Agencies, which we outline in this document.

Note that the following sources take precedence over this Award Administration Policy:

- The Administration of Grants and Awards Agreements that exist between NBIF and each research institution
- Program/funding opportunity literature as published at nbif.ca
- Any relevant separate agreements with grant recipients and/or administering institutions

In the event of a dispute or lack of clarity, the NBIF has final say in the administration of its awards.



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Approvals

The following outlines the internal approval authorities at NBIF for extensions/alterations:

- Research Development Coordinators can approve project extensions that fall within the limits in Appendix B, and can approve changes in use of grant funds vs. application details
- The Director of Research, the Director of Investments, or the CEO or can approve exceptions that fall outside of the norms established in this Award Administration Policy

For grant approvals, the Director of Research or the Director of Investments may approve awards valued up to \$80,000. Awards valued higher than \$80,000 must be approved by the following bodies, in successive order:

- The CEO must approve awards valued between \$80,001 and \$200,000
- The NBIF Executive Committee must approve awards valued between \$200,001 to \$500,000
- The NBIF Board must approve awards above \$500,000

At the NBIF's discretion, a higher level of approval may be used versus the minimums listed above.

Disbursement of Funding

NBIF disburses funding to the administering institution on behalf of the grant recipient when all payment conditions detailed in the Notice of Decision have been met. NBIF Research funding can only be disbursed to approved research institutions in the province of New Brunswick. A list of the approved institutes is shown in Appendix A.

Leveraging

A source of financing can be leveraged against NBIF funding only if it directly contributes to the work described in the funding application. Funding that supports the program, group or researcher in general but does not impact the described work in the application will not be counted as leverage.

NBIF cannot leverage funding provided by the Government of New Brunswick (GNB) or agencies wholly supported by GNB (e.g. NBHRF). However, NBIF can support projects receiving provincial funding by leveraging other eligible partners' contributions. Applicants should contact their institution's research office to discuss specific cases. Also, money from a previous NBIF grant cannot be used to leverage another NBIF grant.

Federal sources of funding (e.g. NSERC, CFI) can be leveraged. While Mitacs funding can be included in a funding table containing other sources of financing, NBIF cannot use solely Mitacs funding for leverage in a grant application. Additionally, the NBIF cannot be a named partner on a Mitacs grant unless the intern is working at the NBIF on a research problem that is relevant to our core business.

There is no restriction on other sources of cash contributions, e.g. from international grants, private sector partners, not-for-profit agencies etc. Additionally, the NBIF does not have any stacking rules, e.g. there is no limit on the proportion of federal money that can be leveraged. If the leveraged funds are already secured, evidence should be provided at the time of application. If the funds are not secured at the time of application, evidence that they are secured must be provided before the award can be disbursed.

Money that is already spent cannot be leveraged. Multi-year grants are eligible to be used a source of leverage even if the grant has already begun (e.g. the 3rd year of a 5-year NSERC Discovery Award) as long as the funding claimed as leverage has not yet been spent.

Employment and Compensation rules

The Triagencies directives on reimbursement of employment and compensation expenses apply to NBIF grants. In particular, NBIF funding cannot be used to pay compensation to grant recipients or individuals who conduct research independently as part of the terms and conditions of their employment, including but not limited to researchers in academia, colleges and research institutes.

Overhead/Indirect Expenses

Funding from the NBIF cannot be used to pay for indirect expenses or overhead.

In-kind contributions

In-kind contributions can be counted as a source of leverage and may count for up to 50% of the total leveraged funding, unless otherwise specified in the award description. All valuations of in-kind contribution must be based on fair value and justification of the amounts claimed must be available if requested. The following may not be claimed as an in-kind contribution:

- Salary of the principal investigator
- Equipment already in place in the applicant’s lab / facilities
- Costs for use of the applicant’s normal lab space/facilities at the institution (e.g. rental, provision of utilities like heat and water)

A non-exhaustive list of valid in-kind contributions includes: material donated by an industrial partner, analysis services provided by an academic collaborator, time spent on the project by collaborators in the private sector, research release credits provided by the institution, vendor discounts on equipment, etc. The value of research release credits should be calculated based on actual cost to the institution. The nature of all in-kind sources must be described in the application and acceptance of the contribution as a valid source of leverage rests at the discretion of the NBIF.

Retroactive Expenses

The NBIF cannot disburse funding for project costs already incurred before the date of application (this is taken as the date at which the electronic application is submitted to the NBIF or, failing this, the date at which NBIF confirms receipt of the application). However, the NBIF will not assume any responsibility for costs incurred for a research proposal that is not ultimately approved for funding. Other sources of funding claimed as leverage cannot have been already spent at the time of application.

Exceptionally, for applications using CFI funding as leveraging, expenses can be backdated to the date established by CFI as the start date for expense eligibility. This date should be communicated to NBIF for clarity.



Travel

NBIF funding can be used to pay for travel expenses only where these are critical to complete the proposed project. In general, attendance at academic research conferences will not be supported unless this can be demonstrated to be critical to the work (i.e. for more than just general knowledge dissemination). However, the cost of attendance at workshops, industry engagement sessions and other events with active involvement of a variety of stakeholders can be included.

Travel directly related to the research is considered an eligible expense, e.g. for data collection, sampling, field work, and collaborator meetings.

Consulting Fees

Consulting fees are an eligible expense but require justification as to the nature of the service provided and how it is critical to the research project. These fees can comprise a maximum of 20% of the amount requested to NBIF. However, fees where the applicant or the members of the research team act as consultants are not eligible expenses.

Intellectual Property and Publications

Due to our focus on applied work and the important role that confidential research plays in this space, our approach to IP is substantially different from the Tri Agencies. While the source of our grants is public funding and thus there is an obligation for some public dissemination of knowledge, we also recognise that a focus on applied research requires some knowledge to be kept secret. Today, it is widely understood that the research process should culminate not simply with the development of knowledge but rather with the mobilization of the knowledge therein developed. Progress comes from the engagement of knowledge, and engagement is dependent upon mobilization.

Our guiding principal is that, when intellectual property is an outcome of a funded research project, we expect researchers to strike a balance between open sharing of the results and not disclosing intellectual property. In every project that NBIF supports, we expect that at least a portion of the work will be broadly shared and disseminated, in the fashion that best suits that project and field. The entire body of results stemming from an NBIF Research funded project cannot be intentionally kept secret.

Therefore, NBIF Research funding cannot be used to conduct research for the exclusive benefit of one sole commercial partner. We recognise that involvement of commercial partners is an important part of many NBIF funded projects and it is accepted that the partner may restrict a portion of the project's results from open dissemination.

NBIF takes no position on ownership of IP and expects institutions and PIs to determine how intellectual property will be managed before commencing a project.

The costs to protect intellectual property (patenting costs, legal fees etc.) are considered eligible expenses.

Eligibility of Faculty

The NBIF allows applications from either a single principal investigator (PI), or from a joint team comprising the PI and a co-applicant. The PI will be used as the point of communication with NBIF regarding administration of the grant. If the PI and the co-applicants are not employed by the same institution, the funding will be disbursed to the PI's institution.

The PI must be employed at an institution listed in Appendix A in a role as described below, or, have signed an offer of employment for one of these positions.

- Universities: A full-time tenured, tenure-track, or lifetime emeritus faculty member. Faculty on non-permanent contracts are eligible if their contract lasts at least until the project end date. Adjunct professors are permitted only if their primary place of employment is in NB and their term as adjunct must last until at least the project end date. Adjunct professors outside of the university sector can apply for funding only for the direct support of students. Postdocs are not eligible.
- Colleges: A full time individual in a role whose primary purpose is conducting research is eligible. Also eligible are full time teaching staff with either a permanent position or a contract position lasting until at least the project end date. The position must permit the individual to engage in research activities that are not under the direction of another individual.
- Research Institutes: A full time individual in a role whose primary purpose is conducting research. The position must be either permanent or a contract position lasting until at least the project end date.

In all the cases listed above, part-time employees are eligible to apply, but should demonstrate in their application that they have sufficient time and resources to carry out the proposed work. The co-applicant must be employed at an institution listed in Appendix A. In addition to the employment types listed above for PIs, the co-applicant can also be

- Universities: A postdoc or a research professional role (non-faculty). The position must be full time and expected to last at least until the project end date
- Colleges / Research Institutes: A full time role, expected to last until at least the project end date. The primary purpose of the role does not need to be conducting research.

Applicants must be in good standing with the NBIF, including having filed any outstanding status reports and having paid or returned any money owing to the NBIF.

The NBIF recognises that projects may involve multiple collaborators in addition to the named PI. These collaborators can contribute funding to the project which can be used as leverage; a letter of support from the collaborator is required that gives express permission for the funds to be used in this way.

Eligibility of Partners

Non-academic partners (e.g. not for profit organisations and private sector companies) may be included as collaborators in research projects. There is no restriction as to the location of these partners; they may be anywhere in the world. However, the not for profit organisations must be registered entities and the private sector companies must be officially incorporated.

Abandoned Applications

NBIF reserves the right to delete or archive incomplete, unsubmitted applications made using the NBIF online portal (<https://nbif-finb.smapply.io/>). Applications which contain no substantive content may be deleted after results are announced for a given funding round, or, for continuously open competitions, at the end of the fiscal year (March 31). Applications which are partially complete but were never submitted will be archived. An applicant may request at

any time to have a partially complete application returned from the archive if they wish to resume it.

Extensions, Deferrals and Transfers

All NBIF awards are intended to be used in a specified amount of time, which is listed in Appendix B. Projects must also have a stated End Date that falls within this time limit unless otherwise approved by NBIF and stated in the Notice of Decision. Extensions, up to the maximum listed in Appendix B, will be considered on request. A written request must be submitted to the NBIF 30 days before the stated end date. The request must explain the need for an extension and provide a date for when the research activities will be completed.

An exception is made for the maximum extension times in the case of a grantee that takes an extended leave of absence (e.g. for maternity, parental, medical or family leave) during the award period. In this circumstance, an extension of any award for up to two years may be requested. Alternately, grantees may choose for their projects to continue uninterrupted while they are on leave and can appoint a delegate for communication purposes while they are away, if desired.

Once the End Date for a grant is reached, any remaining unspent funds must be returned to the NBIF. These funds cannot be transferred or used for another purpose without the written approval of the NBIF.

In the event that a grantee moves from the original institution to another NBIF approved institution (See Appendix A), any unused NBIF funds can be transferred with them. If a grantee leaves their original institution for another place of employment not on the approved list, unused funding cannot be transferred and must be returned to the NBIF. The only exception is if the PI has an adjunct professor status at the original institution and can continue to use the funding exclusively for the support of students. Institutions can request that the funding be re-assigned to another faculty member at that same institution, but this decision is at the discretion of the NBIF. Equipment purchased using NBIF funding is owned by the Institution that received the NBIF grant used to purchase it, and guidelines on ownership transfers of said equipment are governed by the ADMINISTRATION OF GRANTS AND AWARDS AGREEMENT with each institution

Status reporting

Research activity reports and /or financial reports are required at the completion of a grant. In some cases, intermediate progress reports may also be requested. These reports must be completed within 3 months of the date of report request by the NBIF. Dates at which reports are due will be specified in the Notice of Decision letter, though additional reporting may be requested by NBIF at any time. This additional reporting will only be requested if there is pressing external demand on the NBIF (e.g. extra information is requested by the government). If a report outside the normal requirements is requested by NBIF, NBIF will give ample time for the completion of this report.

If the grantee leaves the institution during the course of an award without submitting the needed reports, the institution's appropriate administration office assumes responsibility for filing the reports.

Public Communications

In the interests of jointly promoting research and innovation, the NBIF requests to be included prior to significant pieces of public communications about projects funded by NBIF. These include

- Press release
- Media appearance (Television, radio, etc.)
- Podcasts
- Etc.

For other types of public communications (Blog posts, academic publications, etc) we requested that NBIF's funding be mentioned in the communication.

Notice of Decision format

Application: (ProgramYEAR-File#)

(Date)

(Researcher Full Name)
(Full Research Institute Address)

Dear (Researcher first name),

Re: NOTICE OF DECISION

NBIF is pleased to inform you that your application to the (NBIF Program Name) entitled [Application Title] has been approved.

Value of Grant or Award: \$xx,xxx
Anticipated Start Date:
Anticipated End Date:

The following reports are due on the following dates, subject to change pending confirmation of the start date:
1st Yearly Status Report –
2nd Yearly Status Report - (If applicable)
Detailed Technical Report –

This Grant or Award is conditional on your signed acknowledgement of your obligations under the Administration of Grants and Awards Agreement attached as Schedule "A" within six months of the date of this letter. All Recipients noted above are required to review Schedule "A" and sign below acknowledging their acceptance of the Terms and Conditions contained within.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

I, the Recipient, having read and understood this Notice of Decision and the attached Schedule "A", hereby agree to act in accordance with all the terms and conditions herein, and further to agree to ensure that all personnel involved in the Project are informed of their obligations under the Administration of Grants and Awards Agreement and agree to act in accordance with such terms and conditions.

Name & Title (PI)

Signature & Date

Name & Title (Administrator)

Signature & Date

Appendix A

Approved Research Institutions

Name of Institution	Classification
Atlantic Cancer Research Institute	Research Institute
CCNB (all campuses and CCNB-INNOV network)	College
Centre de formation médicale du Nouveau-Brunswick	University
Dalhousie Medicine, NB campus	University
Huntsman Marine Science Centre	Research Institute
Mount Allison University	University
Northern Hardwoods Research Institute	Research Institute
NBCC (all campuses)	College
Research and Productivity Council (RPC)	Research Institute
St. Thomas University	University
UNB (all campuses)	University
Université de Moncton (all campuses)	University
Valorès (also known as l'Institut de recherche sur les zones)	Research Institute

Appendix B

Standard Duration of NBIF Research Awards

Dates given in individual notice of decision letters take precedence over these general ranges. One-off funding opportunities (e.g. COVID-19 Research Fund) are not included in this list.

Award Name	Time to confirm	Time to use funds*	Maximum possible extension (by request)
Research Assistantships Initiative	6 months	2 years	1 year
Equipment	1.5 years	2.5 years	1 year
Lab-to-Market	6 months	2 years	6 months
Emerging Projects	6 months	1.5 years	6 months
Talent Recruitment/Start-up	6 months	2 years	6 months
Research Professional Initiative	6 months	3.5 years	1 year
Social Innovation Research Fund	6 months	2 years	6 months
Strategic Opportunities Fund	1.5 years	4 years	1 year
Early Stage Commercialization	1 month	1 year	6 months (<i>subject to change</i>)

**Calculated from the Start Date as specified in the Notice of Decision letter
Start Dates must fall within the standard condition confirmation time range*