Innovation to Implementation Supplement

Request for Applications

Version 1.1

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

This document is intended to guide Investigators applying for OICR's Clinical Translation Pathway **Innovation to Implementation Supplement (I2IS**), which is focused on overcoming barriers to the mobilization, or uptake, of knowledge required to inform adoption of OICR research assets into policy or health care. OICR is committed to providing research funding to help support a sustainable health system that enables fair and equitable access to cancer interventions. **I2IS is a supplement for OICR research projects supported within the last five years to move them from an experimental phase towards clinical use.**

1.2 OICR vision and mission

OICR was established in 2005 to mobilize and reinforce Ontario research excellence in the fight against cancer, realize the local economic value of cancer discoveries, and make Ontario a major global address for cancer research and innovation. As Ontario's facilitator of translational cancer research, OICR brings together researchers, clinicians, patients and caregivers, health system partners, industry, and funders to drive solutions to cancer needs and accelerate the advancement of discoveries to improve cancer prevention, detection, diagnosis, and treatment.

Vision

Cancer solved together

Mission

Partner with the oncology community to translate cancer research discoveries, transforming cancer care to benefit patients, and strengthening the Ontario economy.

Values

Excellence | Innovation | Collaboration | Impact | Responsibility | Community

OICR invests resources in three areas:

1. Strengthening Ontario's capacity to undertake world-class cancer research.
2. Driving collaborative, translational cancer research; and
3. Working with partners to facilitate the advancement, commercialization, and adoption of cancer innovations into clinical practice.

***Figure 1**: OICR's Research Themes and Enablers*

OICR's research portfolio is grouped under three integrated themes, as outlined in Figure 1:

- **Adaptive Oncology (AO)**: Developing knowledge and approaches to detect and monitor cancer over its life cycle in order to enable precise and proactive clinical management;
- **Clinical Translation (CT)**: Advancing Ontario cancer discoveries through early clinical validation, partnering with industry and the health system for downstream development and implementation; and
- **Therapeutic Innovation (TI)**: Validating novel cancer drug targets and advancing selective therapeutic candidates to clinical development.

To date, OICR's investments have cultivated a collaborative, world-class cancer research system that has yielded a rich pipeline of discoveries poised for translation and clinical impact. As part of its 2021-2026 Strategic Plan, OICR seeks to capitalize on Ontario strengths and successes to develop and implement transformative, next generation solutions to cancer with a focus on early cancer detection, intervention and monitoring for improved patient management.

1.3 Clinical Translation Pathway

OICR's Clinical Translation (CT) theme is the translational engine of the Institute, advancing discoveries into clinical testing. It will support the advancement of discoveries through early clinical validation, partnering with patients, industry and the health system for downstream development and implementation. In order to accelerate translational cancer research so that precise, impactful and cost-effective treatments can benefit cancer patients, OICR implemented a new Clinical Translation Pathway (CTP).

The CTP consists of four separate funding streams;

- **Pre-Clinical Acceleration Team Awards (Pre-CATA):** Support pre-clinical projects with a clear path to the clinic, with a focus on development of biomarkers, diagnostics, and therapeutics.
- **Clinical Acceleration Team Awards (CATA):** Support early phase (I-II), prospective, biomarker-rich trials for clinical validation of biomarkers, diagnostics, and therapeutics.
- **Window of Opportunity (WOO) Trials**: Support pre-surgical trials focused on biomarker analysis characterizing the mechanism of action of single or combination agents that modulate the anti-tumour immune response in newly diagnosed, treatment naïve patients.
- **Innovation to Implementation Supplement (I2IS)**: I2IS is a supplement for OICR research projects funded within the last five years to move them from an experimental phase towards use.

2. REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

This request for applications is for investigators wishing to apply for funding support for the **Innovation to Implementation Supplement (I2IS).**

I2IS funding has two main purposes:

- To support research projects needed to overcome implementation bottlenecks and provide optimal approaches to accelerate the uptake and sustainability of OICR-supported research outputs in population health, cancer screening and clinical settings; and
- To support efforts to synthesize, disseminate, exchange and apply knowledge related to OICR-funded research in order to build on and use that knowledge to improve high-quality decision making to support health, the healthcare system or healthcare delivery.

Key elements of I2IS include the following:

- Alignment with OICR's 2021-2026 Strategic Plan;
- **The initial innovation/research finding must have been at least partially supported by OICR within the last five years;**
- Research projects from all areas of OICR's research strategy are eligible, including AO, CT, TI and Investigator Award projects and previously funded clinical trials or health services research projects; and
- New research funding will support the development of evidence or processes to move the existing innovation/research findings significantly further by partners/stakeholders outside the original development team towards health policy or health system implementation.

I2IS embraces the principles of:

- **Patient partnership** in OICR-supported research in order to:
  - Ensure studies meet the needs of the people intended to benefit;
  - Benefit from the integration of patient perspective; and
  - Ensure study activities and results are communicated in an accessible way to patients, caregivers and the wider community.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)** in OICR-supported research in order to:
  - Ensure research serves cancer patients from all communities, in particular those that are historically underrepresented;
  - Foster a more diverse and inclusive research community; and
  - Create an environment where all can thrive and feel included.

Projects that are in-scope include:

- Projects that facilitate movement of research-generated knowledge to actual application of such knowledge in population health, screening or clinical practice settings;
- Studies that enable engagement of new users, including patients, along the translational continuum in order to advance the research into clinical settings;
- Projects that adapt a research tool for use in cancer prevention, clinical settings or clinical trials;
- Studies that conduct economic analysis or generate real-world evidence required to inform adoption of OICR research into policy or routine health care;
- Studies evaluating the comparative real-world clinical- and cost-effectiveness of OICR-funded interventions; and
- Knowledge Translation (KT) activities (e.g., generation of policy papers, workshops, meta-analysis) that will advance the adoption of OICR research into policy or routine healthcare.

Projects that are out-of-scope include:

- Foundational or early discovery research.

2.1. Eligibility

This RFA is a **supplement** for projects that have received OICR support between April 1, 2016 and November 30, 2021 (the 'eligibility term'). To be eligible, the applicant must have been listed as a Principal Investigator (PI), co-PI, Investigator, or co-Investigator on a previously supported OICR project within the eligibility term. Applications from Investigators who have not received OICR funding over the eligibility term will only be accepted if a co-PI, who has received OICR support for the related project over the eligibility term, is also listed on the application. Applicants are eligible to submit a single I2IS application as the PI or Co-PI. PI/Co-PIs may participate on separate I2IS applications as Co-Investigators or Collaborators.

OICR is focused on developing and supporting the next generation of cancer researchers, and **strongly encourages applicants to include early career investigators/clinicians** as part of the project team. Further, teams should consider the inclusion of a biostatistician for relevant projects.

2.2. Term

Applications selected for funding will be provided with a funding term of July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023.

2.3. Funding available

Successful I2IS projects will be funded to a **maximum of $100,000 per year, inclusive of overhead, for a maximum of one year as outlined in Appendix I**. The annual budget for the entire I2IS funding stream is $600,000. OICR funding is only tenable in Ontario and can only be disbursed to not-for-profit entities.

2.4. Eligible expenses

Appendix I outlines OICR's guidelines for eligible expenses.

Funding is contingent upon available funding from the Government of Ontario via the Ministry of Colleges and Universities.

2.5. Deadlines and important dates

RFA information session:	January 12, 2022, 10-11 a.m. ET (register here)
Notice of Intent (NOI) submission*:	No later than January 26, 2022 by 5 p.m. ET
Letter of Intent (LOI) deadline:	January 26, 2022 by 5 p.m. ET
LOI results communicated:	Week of March 7, 2022
Full application deadline:	April 28, 2022 by 5 p.m. ET
Notification of results:	End of June 2022
Funding to begin:	July 1, 2022

*The NOI form must be submitted prior to receiving access to the LOI and will be used for competition planning purposes. Information collected at the NOI stage **is editable** at the LOI stage.

Late submissions will not be accepted.

2.6. Application requirements

I2IS applications are a three-step process, including a Notice of Intent (NOI), Letter of Intent (LOI) and a full application. Applications are to be submitted online using ReportNet, OICR's online system for managing grants and awards.

Applicants who have not used ReportNet before must register by visiting https://oicr.factorial.ca/s_Login.jsp and selecting 'Register' under 'New User?'. Once an account has been created, applicants can login to their account to view OICR funding opportunities and the associated RFAs (at the bottom of the screen under 'Funding Opportunities').

Applicants who have used ReportNet before can login to their account at https://oicr.factorial.ca/s_Login.jsp. If after logging in you see the screen in Figure 2 below, click the 'list' icon on the menu at the top right hand side of your screen and select 'Applicant' from the dropdown menu (refer to Figure 2). If you do not see this option, please contact the OICR Scientific Secretariat office at ScientificSecretariat@oicr.on.ca.

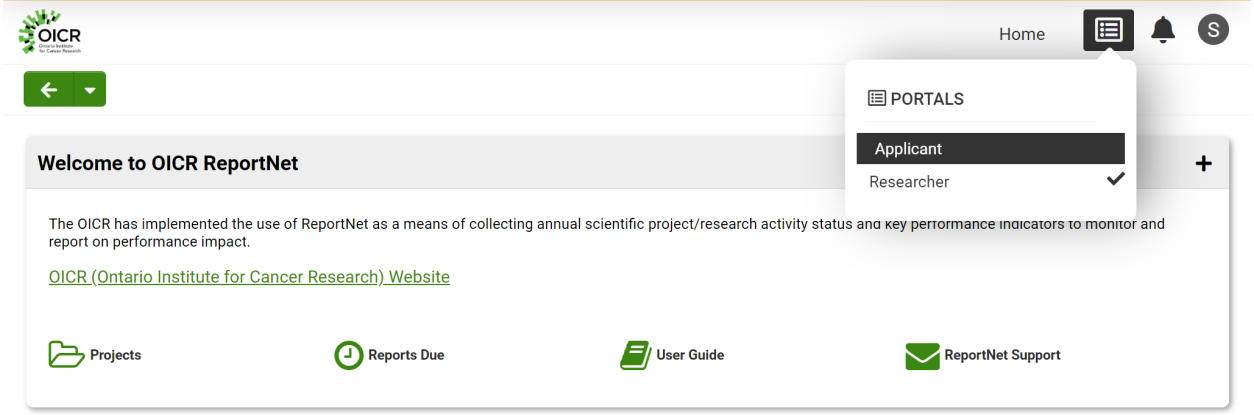

Figure 2: *How to toggle to the Applicant portal to apply for funding opportunities*

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

The proposal is expected to embrace the principles of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in order to:

- Ensure research serves cancer patients from all communities, in particular those that are historically underrepresented. These groups include persons with disabilities, racialized minorities/people of colour, women, Indigenous people, and LGBTQ2S communities;
- Foster a more diverse and inclusive research community; and
- Create an environment where all can thrive and feel included.

OICR is committed to embracing the concepts of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in our research design, practice, personnel support mechanisms, and training. It is mandatory for all ReportNet users to answer a series of demographic questions to assist the Institute with metric reporting. The questions are similar to those asked on the Canada Research Chairs Program Self-Identification Form, based on the current standards used by Statistics Canada in the Census. If an applicant prefers not to self-identify and/or provide the requested information, they may select "Prefer not to answer" for any or all the questions. Self-identification or the decision to withhold self-identification information *will not be used as part of the review process* for funding applications. Opting to answer or not answer these questions *will not impact the applicant's chances of receiving funding from OICR*, now or in the future, and responses will not be shared as part of the review process. To update your profile in ReportNet, click on the initial of your first name at the top right hand corner of the screen, and select 'User Profile'. Complete the questions under 'Demographics' and click Save. Responses to the demographics questions may be changed in the user's profile at any time.

Patient partners

Patient perspectives and insight can be transformative to research planning and execution. Applicants should address how patient partners and communities are being, or could be, engaged throughout the life cycle of the proposal. Throughout the funding period, and as early as possible, applicants are encouraged to contact Justin Noble (Justin.Noble@oicr.on.ca), OICR's Patient Partnership and New Initiatives Lead, to explore how to better involve patient partners and communities into the research process. OICR's Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC) may participate in the full application review and progress reviews to provide ongoing guidance over the funding term.

Completing open text fields in ReportNet

Open text fields in ReportNet accept plain text only, meaning that any text formatting (bold, italic or underlined font, bulleted lists, etc.) will not be accepted.

Contact information
The OICR Scientific Secretariat (ScientificSecretariat@oicr.on.ca) is available to help with any questions regarding the online submission process.

2.7. Completing a Notice of Intent (NOI)

The NOI collects basic application information and will be used by OICR for planning purposes. **An NOI must be submitted prior to gaining access to the LOI form**. The information provided in the NOI can be updated prior to submitting the LOI. Applicants are encouraged to submit their NOI as early as possible to assist with planning.

Application Information

Administrative

The system will pre-populate the PI's information from their ReportNet user profile. PIs must attest that they have completed the Demographics questions in their ReportNet user profile. To update your profile in ReportNet, click on the initial of your first name at the top right-hand corner of the screen, and select 'User Profile'. Complete the questions under "Demographics' and click Save;

Additional information, outlined below, is to be provided by the applicant(s). Required fields are marked with a red asterisk in the system. Word counts, where applicable, are noted.

- **Title**: Once a title for the application has been provided, use the Save Draft button at the bottom of the screen to activate the 'Invite Contacts' function (see below).
- **Invite contacts**
  - Co-PIs, Co-Investigators, Collaborators, and a PI Delegate(s) can be added using the '**Invite Contacts**' button.

    Principal Investigator (PI): Has responsibility for the intellectual direction of the project, as well as the technical and scientific content, the budget, deliverables and milestones, and supervision of members of the research team carrying out the activities of the project. If there is more than one PI, the PI is the individual who initiates the application and Co-PIs can be added subsequently. The PI can submit the application once complete.

    Co-Investigator: Carries out research activities related to the project. Co-Investigators are not able to submit the application on behalf of the PI(s).

    Collaborator: An individual whose role in the proposed activities is to provide specific expertise or access to resources (e.g., access to equipment, reagents, specialized knowledge (including techniques and statistical analysis), access to patient populations, patient partners/advocates etc.). Collaborators are not able to submit the application on behalf of the PI(s).

    PI Delegate: Provides an administrative role that can assume the duties of the PI, including editing and submitting the application on behalf of the PI(s).

    - Note: You must first provide a project title and hit 'Save Draft' for the 'Invite Contacts' button to appear;
    - All PIs/Co-PIs, Co-Investigators, and/or Collaborators involved in the application must be invited;

- Note: Before inviting contacts to your application, contact them to confirm if they have a ReportNet account, and if so, which email address they are registered with. Please use their registered email address when inviting them to your application. Invited contacts will receive an email to join the application. Please advise them to check their junk/spam folders if they do not receive the invitation within 30 minutes. While not mandatory, we encourage all investigators to accept the invitation and create their profile in the system. If you wish to remove an invited contact from your application, click on 'Invite Contacts' and select the 'x' button at the end of the applicable contact's row. If you wish to change their role on your application (i.e. from collaborator to Co-Investigator), you may remove them as an invited contact, and then re-add them in the new role. If you have any questions, please contact the OICR Scientific Secretariat (ScientificSecretariat@oicr.on.ca).

- **Start date**: Enter a funding start date for the application, no earlier than July 1, 2022;
- **End date**: Enter a funding end date for the application no later than June 30, 2023;
- **Application type**: Select 'Innovation to Implementation Supplement (I2IS)' from the dropdown;
- **Key words** (max. 50 words);
- **Cancer type**: If the cancer type(s) is non-specific, select 'All' at the top of the list. If there is more than one cancer type, select, 'Multiple' at the bottom of the list. If the cancer type(s) is not listed, select 'Other' at the bottom of the list.

2.8. Completing a Letter of Intent (LOI)

Information provided in the NOI will be carried over to the LOI form and is editable.

The LOI collects relevant application information that will be used by OICR leadership to ensure appropriate fit to the I2IS funding call and to recruit expert reviewers for the full application review panel. Applicants will be notified of their eligibility to submit a full application following an internal LOI review.

- **Abstract** (max. 250 words): The abstract should include the following information.
  - Background to the research;
  - Description of how the project will generate real-world knowledge and/or engage new partners;
  - Description of how the innovation will be moved towards clinical application or adopted into the healthcare system/policy; and
  - Discussion of the expected impact.

2.9. Completing a full application

Information provided in the NOI and LOI stage will be carried over to the full application form and will be editable.

- **Common Scientific Outline**: The applicant must select a primary classification for the research. Secondary and tertiary classifications may also be selected if applicable but **are not required**. CSO codes should reflect the main aim of the research program that is achievable within the lifetime of the award. Coding should NOT include potential or future applications of the research findings. Information on selecting an appropriate code can be found in the International Cancer Research Partnership (ICRP) Coding Guidelines;
- **Administrative authority of PI's Host Institution:** Information will be collected for the PI and any Co-PIs;
- **Does this application include a clinical trial?** I2IS applications must select 'No';

- **Regulatory requirements:** When applicable, certification requirements may be used in the process of developing funding agreements, should the application be approved for funding. Certificate numbers are not required but are encouraged, if available, for projects being conducted on OICR premises.
- **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) considerations:** Outline how the project will align itself to the principles of EDI outlined in Section 2.6 above, both within the project team, knowledge users (such as patients, clinicians, health technology assessment agencies, and health policy decision makers), and project participants. Describe how the project will include a diverse patient population (where appropriate), including participants from historically underrepresented populations. Describe whether the project may be of particular benefit to any historically underrepresented groups, and what those benefits may be.

  EDI considerations will be discussed for each application and included in the overall score/recommendation. Feedback on the proposed approach and opportunities for improvement may be provided to applicants.

  Several excellent EDI resources have been developed that are available, free of charge, for training and information purposes. OICR requires that teams complete, at a minimum, the CIHR Sex and Gender Training Modules (https://www.cihr-irsc-igh-isfh.ca/) in advance of submitting their application.

  Among others, OICR supports the EDI resources that have been made available by CIHR (https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/51709.html). These resources address many topics, including:
  - EDI in research design and practices.
  - EDI in the research environment, and
  - EDI and research excellence.

  Additional resources on including sex and gender in research can be found at: https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/50836.html.

Research proposal

- **Scientific summary** (max. 250 words);
- **Lay summary** (max. 250 words): The lay summary should explain complex research ideas in simple terms and plain language that can be easily understood by non-specialists. The language should be understandable to a high school graduate. This is unlike a scientific abstract, which is written for subject peers. The lay summary will be used by reviewers and patient partners during the review process. If funded, it may be used to communicate your research to the public and funders. The applicants are strongly advised to engage a patient partner to co-write or review the lay summary.

  An overview of each of the following topics is recommended, as applicable:
  - Background/context to the research;
  - Description of the current standard of care;
  - Research question or problem to be solved;
  - Thorough description of proposed research/method(s); and
  - Potential for impact/path to implementation.

  Bullet points are acceptable to highlight key points.

  Please use plain English while avoiding acronyms, scientific jargon and technical, field-specific terms unless a short explanation is added. Short sentences with easy sentence constructions are advisable.

- **Abstract** (max. 250 words): This will be copied over from the LOI submission. *Only edit the abstract if substantive updates are necessary*; and
- **Proposal** (max. 2000 words): Describe the background, rationale, execution plan (including the methodology that will be employed), deliverables, expected impact, alignment with OICR's strategic plan, statistical analysis required and team details. In addition, provide the following information:
    - Discuss how the project will facilitate movement of research-generated knowledge to actual application of such knowledge in clinical practice settings and/or engage new users along the translational continuum in order to advance the research into clinical settings. If applicable, demonstrate how the KT activities will raise knowledge users' awareness of research findings and facilitate the application of those findings.

Additional information

- **Patient and/or partner engagement** (max. 250 words): Patient perspectives and insight can be transformative to research planning and execution. Applicants should address how patient partners and communities are being, or could be, partnered with throughout the life cycle of the proposal. This section must be written as a stand-alone piece, assuming that readers may not have read the application proposal. It should be written in clear, easy to understand, lay language understandable to a high school graduate.

    Note: Throughout the funding period, and as early as possible, applicants are encouraged to contact Justin Noble (Justin.Noble@oicr.on.ca), OICR's Patient Partnership and New Initiatives Lead, to explore how to better involve patient partners and communities into the research process. OICR's Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC) may participate in the progress reviews to provide ongoing guidance over the funding term.
- **Data management plan** (max. 200 words): Applicants must provide a data sharing and access plan, as well as a data storage requirements and retention plan, specifying how much data will be generated or transferred into OICR (if applicable) during the course of the project, and the plan for retaining/archiving with the ability to restore the data for the five-year period following its conclusion. See Appendix III for additional information.
- **Differentiation** (max. 200 words): Provide a description on what makes this research unique, better and/or disruptive compared to what other researchers are working on in your field (i.e., what is distinguishing about this research that makes it more attractive than other existing work). This information may be shared with FACIT Inc., OICR's commercialization partner, should the proposal be funded.

Attachments

The following items should be attached to the application:

- **Figures and tables**, in PDF format (label file name: Request ID[1] - Figures and tables);
- **References**, in PDF format (label file name: Request ID - References);
- **Deliverables and Milestones (D/Ms)**, using the provided template, in Excel format (label file name: Request ID - D and M):
    - Specify one to two high-level deliverables that are projected to be achieved during the funding period, specified by quarter and fiscal year (OICR's fiscal year is from April 1 – March 31);
    - For each deliverable, specify at least one associated milestone for each half of the fiscal year. Milestones will be monitored to assess progress towards achievement of the deliverable. Include milestones that specify go/no go decision points whenever applicable; and

[1] Your project's Request ID can be located on your application in ReportNet and is in the format: P.CTP.###

- Both deliverables and milestones must be measurable and possess a target date for completion (provide the quarter and fiscal year of projected achievement). These deliverables and milestones will be used to measure research progress.

- **Budget** (label file name: Request ID - Budget):
  - Download the budget template provided in the application, complete budget request details (see Appendix I for eligible expenses) and upload the completed budget in Excel format;
  - **Note**: I2IS budgets should start in Q2 (Jul-Sept) on the budget template provided and end in Q1 (Apr-Jun); the total budget available across the four quarters is $100,000, inclusive of eligible overhead.
  - The total budget, inclusive of overhead for eligible expenses, should represent the OICR contribution. Additional contributions committed from other funding sources or collaborators should be included as co-funding (section provided at the end of the Excel template); and
  - The template will automatically calculate overhead at 30 per cent for non-MaRS based institutions. The overhead rate can be adjusted on the 'info and instructions' tab (all changes to the overhead rate must be addressed in the Host Institution commitment letter). Please contact the OICR Scientific Secretariat with any questions regarding overhead.

- Other
  - ***Budget justification*** (label file name: Request ID - Budget justification): Provide a high-level justification of the budget requested.
    - The document must outline total costs per expense category. It should summarize the total budget per year;
    - The document must highlight all current and pending funding applications, highlighting any overlap with the present application. If applicable, a robust plan must be included for attracting future partners during the funding period; and
    - The document must outline if the project will be funded entirely by OICR or if co-funded by a partnership. If applicable, provide evidence of co-funding through a letter of support, which is to be included as an uploaded document;
  - ***Co-funding letters*** (label file name: Request ID - Co-funding)*:* If applicable, provide evidence of co-funding through a letter of support from the funder. Include whether funds are cash vs. in-kind, and whether they are secured vs. expected. Co-funding should also be captured in the Excel budget upload.
  - ***Curricula Vitae*** (CVs; label file name: Request ID - CVs):
    - Compile CVs for the following individuals and submit as a single bookmarked PDF:
      - PI and Co-PI; and
      - Co-Investigators.
    - CVs can be in any format so long as it addresses education/training, employment, honours and awards, professional affiliations, research funding in the past five years, student/fellow training, and research outputs (e.g., publications, IP, presentations).
  - ***Lead PI's Host Institution commitment letter*** (label file name: Request ID - PI HI Letter)
    - A letter from the administrative authority/high-level institutional official (i.e., President or Vice-President, Research) of the Lead PI's Host Institution must be submitted. If the lead PI's institution is OICR, this letter is not required;
    - The letter must outline the institutional commitment to facilitate and support the research, assign space and resources, and provide other administrative support for the duration of the proposed research. The letter should describe how the institution maintains accountability for promoting scientific excellence and fiscal responsibility with awarded funds;

- The letter must declare that the signatories have read and acknowledged OICR's "Ontario First Policy" (Appendix II) and agree to abide by the policy through a funding agreement in the event of a successful application; and
- OICR provides 30 per cent overhead on eligible expenses (Appendix I). If an institution is requesting *less* overhead, they must confirm this in the commitment letter.

- ***Publications*** (label file name: Request ID - Publications): Upload the top three team publications relating to the project that reviewers should take special note of. Combine all three publications into a single bookmarked, PDF;
- ***Research Plan Flow Diagram*** (label file name: Request ID - Flow diagram)*:* Provide a diagrammatic representation (flow diagram) of the I2IS research plan (as described above);
- ***Commercialization plan*** (label file name: Request ID - Commercialization plan): If applicable, a commercialization plan should be developed in consultation with FACIT Inc., OICR's commercialization partner, and technology transfer offices at relevant institutions to ensure it is consistent with OICR's "Ontario First Policy" (Appendix II). The Ontario First policy requires that reasonable efforts are undertaken to commercialize and manufacture a project's arising intellectual property in Ontario and applicants will contractually agree to consult FACIT Inc. to finalize the commercialization planning, rights and obligations, with an emphasis on Ontario-based development.
- ***Project team:*** Provide a brief description of the project team and how it will be managed. The project team must include a biostatistician.

3. REVIEW PROCESS

3.1. LOI review process

LOIs will be reviewed internally by OICR leadership for fit with the I2IS program intent based on the information submitted. Eligible LOI proposals will be invited to submit a full application. If a high number of LOIs is received, a ranking system with scores may be used to select the applications that will be invited to submit a full application.

3.2. Full application review process

3.2.1. Administrative review

An administrative review will be completed by the OICR Scientific Secretariat in order to assess the submission for conformity with these guidelines. Relevant points from the administrative review will be shared with the PI.

3.2.2. Review panel

Each full application will be reviewed by three members of the review panel, which will be composed of:

- An external Chair;
- Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) members from OICR research themes; and
- External experts.

3.2.3. Patient and Family Advisory Council

Full applications will be shared with OICR's Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC), who will review application materials and provide written feedback to the review panel in advance of the full application review meeting. As deemed appropriate by the review panel, PFAC feedback may be provided to applicants as part of the Scientific Officer report that will be provided to teams following the review meeting.

3.2.4. Reviewer reports

Reviewers will receive applications approximately three (3) weeks before the reviewer report deadline and will be tasked with providing a brief report for their assigned projects using the following criteria:

- Relevance;
- Excellence;
- Potential for impact/path to implementation;
- Feasibility; and
- Leadership, team and collaboration.

Reviewers will also provide an overall score for the application which will reflect the proposal as a whole. The overall score may be used for ranking applications, if deemed appropriate by the review panel Chair.

Reports will be submitted online using OICR's ReportNet system. Anonymized reviewer reports will be made available to the panel in preparation for the review meeting.

3.2.5. Preparation teleconference

If deemed appropriate by the Chair, a teleconference will be organized prior to the review meeting to discuss any questions/feedback which will be provided to applicants ahead of the review meeting. Applicants will need to provide written responses within two (2) business days, which will be circulated to the panel in advance of the meeting. Late responses will not be accepted.

3.2.6. Review meeting

A review meeting will be organized and include the review panel, members from the PFAC and representatives from OICR. For information on evaluation criteria and scoring, see Appendix IV.

Depending on application pressure, and with the approval of the review panel Chair, applications may be ranked by overall score prior to the review meeting so that only the top applications in contention for funding will be discussed. The review panel will have an opportunity to review the rankings in advance of the meeting, and, if appropriate, revise the order.

The meeting will be moderated by the review panel Chair with support from OICR's Scientific Secretariat. For each application, the Chair will invite the three reviewers to provide their feedback and will oversee a discussion of the application by the review panel and PFAC. Following open discussion, reviewers will be provided with an opportunity to revise their initial scores and comments and will be asked to provide a final overall score. The panel will then recommend a consensus score by which the application will be ranked. The ranked list of applications, including those which are highly ranked and deemed meritorious for funding, will be shared with OICR and its Board who will make a final funding decision.

4. NOTIFICATION OF DECISION

A meeting report summarizing the review discussion and recommendation for each application will be prepared by a Scientific Officer (SO) and distributed to applicants, along with anonymized reviewer reports, as part of the Notification of Decision (NOD) from OICR.

OICR intends to provide NOD letters to all applicants by the end of June 2022. Applications recommended for funding will receive a Notice of Award outlining next steps in order to accept the award and establish a funding agreement.

5. ESTABLISHMENT OF AGREEMENTS

Following approval of the project, OICR will establish a funding agreement with the Host Institution of the Lead PI and Partner Institutions (if applicable). The agreement will cover the general principles regarding the conduct of research activities, eligible research expenses, terms and conditions regarding the disbursement of funds, agreements with third-party funders, financial and progress reporting, PI/Co-PI covenants, intellectual property (IP), commercialization, publications, and communication policies. In addition, OICR will establish a commercialization framework, which will require the recipient and OICR to set up an IP co-management plan, where applicable.

6. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

6.1. Financial and operational status reporting

The following schedule (Table 1) will be used for financial and operational status reporting. Note that the deadlines indicated are moved to the next business day if they fall on a non-working day. A quarterly reporting template and instructions will be available on the OICR online financial reporting system, CaAwardNet.

Financial Officers of the Lead Institution will be required to provide quarterly updates on budget versus actual expenditures as per the table below. When reporting on the operational status of a project, an explanation of variances of greater than ±15 per cent and mitigation plans to address the budget gaps should be provided.

Table 1: Financial and operational status reporting

Period covered	Responsible party and action	
	Financial Officer	PI at Lead Institution (or designate)
Q1-Q2 Jul-Dec	Quarterly financial report: *Due Feb. 15*	Review and submit quarterly financial operational status report: *Due Feb. 15*
Q3-Q4 Jan-Jun	Quarterly financial report: *Due May 15*	Review and submit quarterly financial operational status report: *Due May 15*
Q1-Q4 Jul-Jun	Annual fiscal year financial report: *Due August 31*	Review and submit fiscal year financial report: *Due August 31.*

6.2. Progress/Key Performance Indicator (KPI) reporting

All projects will be included in the reporting process as required by the Government of Ontario according to the schedule below (Table 2). Note that the deadlines indicated are moved to the next business day if they fall on a non-working day.

Table 2: Progress/KPI Reporting

Period covered	PI at Lead Institution (or designate)
Q1-Q2 Jul-Dec	Provide status updates on D/Ms to CT leadership: *Due February 15*
Q3-Q4 Jan-Jun	Provide status updates on D/Ms to CT leadership: *Due August 15*
Q1-Q4 Apr-Mar	Provide quantitative KPIs using ReportNet (OICR's online KPI reporting system): *Due April 30*

6.3. Communication with OICR

The obligations of the investigators to advise OICR of anticipated public dissemination, publications, and media announcements will be outlined in the research agreement.

7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND RECOGNITION OF SUPPORT

All investigators and the recipient institutions must acknowledge and credit the contribution/support, in whole or part, of OICR and the Government of Ontario to the projects in any promotional material, including, without limitation, scientific publications of whatever nature or kind, and in any communication materials or publications supported by OICR funding by referencing the projects with the following statement: “This project was conducted with the support of the Ontario Institute for Cancer Research through funding provided by the Government of Ontario.”

8. CONTACT INFORMATION

Email: scientificsecretariat@oicr.on.ca.

9. APPENDIX I: ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Eligible expenses are actual expenses necessary for the completion of the approved deliverables, subject to the terms and conditions of the agreement and the guidelines in this schedule, and subject to review and approval by OICR. Unspent funds must be returned to OICR upon request by OICR. It is expected that the recipient will withhold payment of expenses should it become known that any OICR, institutional, provincial, and/or federal regulations and/or policies have been breached.

Funding for the projects/sub-projects/clinical trials is provided by the Government of Ontario through the Ministry of Colleges and Universities. **Awarded funds will be solely disbursed to and administered by eligible institutions in Ontario. Further, with the exception of budget items classified as external research services, eligible expenses *may only be incurred in the province of Ontario*.** Allocation of funds to institutions outside of Ontario is allowable only when the studies outlined cannot be performed in whole at eligible Ontario institutions. Justification for such an allowance must be provided to and approved by OICR in advance of the investigator utilizing OICR funds for such a purpose.

Expenditures are actual outlays that can be documented through invoices or receipts. Expenses must support and be essential to carry out the activities described in the approved proposal for funding. Evidence of payment must be maintained for audit purposes.

In-kind expenses may include the contribution of goods, services, labour, fixed assets, or other such items that would otherwise have been provided and paid for in order to carry out the projects/sub-projects/clinical trials. In-kind expenses are not reimbursable.

Eligible expenses are described in the categories below. Expenses of the projects/sub-projects/clinical trials, which are not described in the categories below, require written approval by OICR. Pre-award budget questions should be submitted to the OICR Scientific Secretariat at ScientificSecretariat@oicr.on.ca. Post-award budget questions should be addressed to OICR Research Operations at ResearchOps@oicr.on.ca.

Table 3 outlines eligible expense categories and specifies which are eligible for overhead.

Table 3: Eligible expenses

Expense category	Eligible for overhead?
Salaries and benefits	Yes
Laboratory consumables (wet or dry lab)	Yes
External research services	No
Internal charge-back for laboratory services	No
Equipment, information technology (IT) support services and software	No
Dissemination of research results	No
Educational outreach and communication activities	No

Expense category	Eligible for overhead?
Hospitality	No
Training and professional development	No
Travel	No
Commercialization activities	No
Audit costs	No
General office and administrative costs	No
***NOTE**: All expenses incurred at OICR are NOT eligible for overhead*	
***NOTE:** Overhead is NOT provided for personnel awards, including the OICR Investigator Award Program*	

Direct research expenses

Stipends, salaries and benefits: Eligible expenses include the stipends or salaries and benefits for those staff responsible for supporting the conduct of the funded proposal, including research assistants and associates, technicians, statisticians, informaticians, support staff, postdoctoral fellows, students, project and program managers, study coordinators, and other highly qualified personnel. Applicable stipend levels for students are those used by the institution in which the research will be carried out. While benefits for postdoctoral fellows, research assistants, technicians, and support staff are eligible, stipends and student training awards are not to include allowances for CPP, Employment Insurance, health taxes, or any extra fringe benefits.

The eligible cost of salaries and benefits should be calculated using the employee's actual base salary amount, plus actual payroll benefits (vacation, medical, dental, etc.). The amount to be charged should reflect the proportion of the employee's normal total hours for payroll purposes spent working directly on the projects/sub-projects. The host institution is required to maintain time sheets or other appropriate records for all personnel working directly on the projects/sub-projects.

Staff and trainee hiring should align with the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) principles of the host institution and, when requested, meet the criteria outlined in the Request for Applications (RFA).

Only project/sub-project staff salaries and benefits that are not funded by monies received from any other grants from either the Government of Ontario or Government of Canada are eligible expenses.

Provision of salary increases should reflect applicable host institution guidelines.

Discretionary severance and separation packages are not eligible expenses.

Funds cannot be used to cover the salaries of applicants, including Principal Investigators and Co-Investigators, the exceptions being the OICR Investigator Awards Program, where the salary of the Principal Investigator is an eligible expense, and postdoctoral fellows who are listed as co-

applicants on an application for funding. The OICR Investigator Awards Program does **not** provide overhead.

Salaries and benefits are eligible for overhead.

Laboratory consumables: Expenditures are permitted on the actual cost of research materials, laboratory materials and supplies necessary for the projects/sub-projects. Procurement should be in accordance with the policies of the host institution and occur in a commercially reasonable manner in order to achieve value for money.

Costs related to animal expenses are only eligible as a laboratory consumable in cases where the institution does not operate an internal facility that provides animal purchasing and husbandry, and the lab maintains the animals themselves. Costs related to animals housed and cared for in institutional or other facilities should be classified as an external research service or internal charge-back, as appropriate (see below).

Laboratory consumables are eligible for overhead.

External research services: Contracted services related to the projects/sub-projects provided and invoiced by other research groups, platforms or companies are eligible. To be eligible, fees for use of services or equipment must be consistent with fees charged to all institutional users in accordance with a published schedule. The service provider will issue an itemized purchase order/invoice that will include the full cost of the services rendered (e.g., labour, consumables, sample handling, etc.). The services must be free from any Intellectual Property (IP) restrictions or restrictions on use of data. Service providers do not need to be located in Ontario, but whenever possible, Ontario-based service providers, with the capability to provide the required capacity, quality, timeliness, and value of the service, should be selected.

External research services are not eligible for overhead.

Internal charge-back: Funds for laboratory and/or technical services provided within an institution.

Internal charge-back amounts are not eligible for overhead.

Equipment, information technology (IT) support services, data retention, and software: Eligible expenses include research equipment and components, IT support services, data retention, software, and licenses required for the projects/sub-projects (beyond what is typically provided by the host institution), as listed in the application, and agreed upon with OICR.

Data retention charges are capped at five per cent (5%) of the annual award value and are eligible over the term of the award only. Requests in excess of five per cent (5%) may be considered with appropriate justification. The plan for data retention over the term, and beyond (as required by the specific RFA) must be detailed within the application.

Costs for equipment maintenance and service contracts, training of staff operating equipment/software, travel costs to visit manufacturers to select major equipment purchases, transportation costs for purchased equipment, and extended warranty for equipment are eligible.

Since the approved budget may reflect changes from the application, these should be confirmed with the Senior Director, Research Operations. Procurement must be in accordance with the policies of the host institution and should occur in a commercially reasonable manner in order to

achieve value for money. Note that equipment costs exceeding $25,000 per item require appropriate justification and prior approval from the OICR President and Scientific Director and/or Executive Vice President, Head of Implementation Science.

Equipment purchased with OICR funding will belong to the host institution. The host institution is responsible for the proper functioning and maintenance of research equipment purchased using OICR funds. Final disposition of research equipment will be the responsibility of the host institution. However, no OICR-purchased equipment should be sold within five (5) years of its acquisition without written approval from the OICR President and Scientific Director and/or Executive Vice President, Head of Implementation Science.

Should the equipment no longer be required during the course of the funding period, OICR reserves the right to relocate it at OICR's expense.

Fees for use of equipment owned by the host institution are not eligible expenses, unless such fees are charged to all institutional users based on a published schedule.

Equipment, IT support services, data retention, and software are not eligible for overhead.

Dissemination of research results: Expenses associated with the dissemination of research results and/or knowledge translation strategies, including publication costs directly related to the funded proposal, as well as costs to ensure open access of research results (up to a maximum of $10,000 per year, or five per cent (5%) of the overall budget (excluding overhead) per year, whichever is less), are eligible.

Dissemination of research results costs are not eligible for overhead.

Educational outreach and communication activities directly related to the projects/sub-projects: Expenses associated with educational outreach activities/workshops for the general public, students, stakeholders and peer groups, marketing and communication services and materials, website hosting/development, online application forms, and other knowledge materials, directly related to the projects/sub-projects, are eligible.

Educational outreach activities costs are not eligible for overhead.

Hospitality: When directly related to the funded projects/sub-projects, hospitality costs (non-alcoholic beverages and meals) for the purpose of essential communications between the awardee and other individuals involved in the projects/sub-projects, are eligible. The purchase of alcohol and entertainment is not eligible.

Hospitality costs are not eligible for overhead.

Training and professional development: Expenses for scientific staff training and/or professional development (e.g., novel techniques, specialized courses and membership fees in professional associations or scientific societies), and networking initiatives/events (e.g., workshops, seminars, meetings), related to the execution of the projects/sub-projects are eligible. Training and professional development must be carried out in accordance with the host institution's policies.

Training and professional development costs are not eligible for overhead.

Travel costs: Expenses for project/sub-project-related travel (including accommodation) are eligible and are capped at five per cent (5%) of direct research expenses per year. Travel must always be by the most practical and economical method. When air or rail are the most practical and economical methods, only the cost of an economy class seat will be reimbursed by OICR funds, and the recipient must maintain appropriate records of travel expenses and their purpose.

Travel costs are not limited to travel within Ontario.

Travel costs are not eligible for overhead.

Commercialization activities: Expenses related to intellectual property protection are eligible. Costs for securing external expertise for the preparation of a commercialization plan or for patent filings are capped at $10,000 per project/sub-project ($5,000 if it is part of a contract with another academic institution, a business development office, a private consultant, or equivalent).

Commercialization activities are not eligible for overhead.

Audit costs: The Ontario Government can audit OICR and any of its funded programs at any time during the award, with a forty-eight (48) hour advance notice and at the expense of the Government of Ontario. OICR may audit the research programs annually and/or at the end of the term. Audit costs may be included in a funding application as eligible expenses.

Recipients of financial contributions may be requested to submit an independent auditor's certificate with their year-end financial report. Such costs may be included in a funding application as eligible expenses.

Audit costs are not eligible for overhead.

General office and administrative costs: Expenses directly related to office expenses and communications necessary for the successful completion of the projects/sub-projects are eligible and capped at three per cent (3%) of direct research expenses per year.

General office and administrative costs are not eligible for overhead.

Clinical/health intervention trials: Trial costs fall under two categories:

1. ***Fixed costs***: Costs that are necessary to implement the trial regardless of patient recruitment status, which may include, but are not limited to:
   a. *Trial start-up costs* (e.g., protocol development, investigator meetings, Research Ethics Board costs, site initiation costs, etc.);
   b. *Central trial management and site monitoring*; and
   c. *Data management and statistical support*.
2. ***Per-case funding costs***: Costs that are dependent on patient accrual, which include, but are not limited to:
   a. Study coordinator salary and benefits;
   b. Screening costs;
   c. Patient visit costs: physical exams, blood test, imaging assessments, etc.;
   d. Clinical sample collection and processing; and
   e. Correlative laboratory analyses (e.g., immune correlates, gene panels, etc.)

Per-case funding costs should not exceed standard Ontario Health Insurance Plan/Canadian Medical Association rates, if rates have been published. Details of each type of assessment will be required in the budget justification for per-case funding costs.

Clinical/health intervention trial costs are not eligible for overhead. Clinical/health intervention trial costs are not an eligible expense for this RFA.

Cost recovery

Although cost recovery is a form of revenue, and not an expense, it may be reported as part of the budget to demonstrate that recoveries are part of the plan to cover all true expenses to ensure that the project or program does not exceed the OICR-approved budget.

Cost recovery is not eligible for overhead.

Overhead/indirect costs

Overhead (also known as indirect costs) will be automatically calculated in CaAwardNet, OICR's financial tracking tool. Overhead is not eligible for OICR-based expenses. OICR will provide up to thirty per cent (30%) with respect to eligible direct research expenses of the approved proposal to cover institutional overhead. The total amount of the OICR award that can be allocated for overhead will be listed in the agreement.

When changes to funded research activities result in a reallocation of funds between projects/sites or expense categories, the resulting calculations of overhead will require adjustments.

Overhead costs are:

- The facility or infrastructure costs required to perform research, and typically include costs associated with maintaining, renovating, and operating physical facilities (e.g., heating, lighting, maintenance, insurance), project administration costs (e.g., accounting), expenses associated with regulatory requirements and accreditation, and technology transfer offices and support facilities (e.g., libraries and computing facilities); and
- Calculated based on overhead-eligible expense categories as detailed above.

The allowable budget listed in the RFA, or program guidelines (as applicable) is inclusive of overhead costs. Overhead must be accounted for in the allowable budget.

NOTE: Overhead is NOT provided for projects funded through the OICR Investigator Award Program, consistent with other salary award programs. Overhead is NOT provided for expenses that will be incurred at OICR.

The host institution will not be eligible for reimbursement of overhead costs for the projects/sub-projects from any other Government of Ontario funds.

If an overhead amount of less than thirty per cent (30%) is requested, this must be detailed in the host institution's Letter of Support as part of the proposal submission process.

Placeholder budget

When eligible as per the RFA/guidelines, a placeholder budget for future research activities (up to a maximum of fifteen per cent (15%) of the total budget including overhead costs) will be allowed at the time of submission.

Placeholder budgets are not eligible for this FR.

Non-eligible expenses

The items below are not eligible for OICR funding:

- Salaries and benefits of the PIs, Co-PIs, etc. (with the exception of the Investigator Awards Program which will pay the salary and benefits for the awardee, and salaries for co-applicants who are not independent researchers*);
- Insurance for equipment;
- Benefits for trainees (i.e., undergraduate and graduate students). Note that benefits for undergraduate coop students and postdoctoral fellows are an allowable cost and should be in accordance with the host institution's policy;
- Any project where there is significant scientific overlap (e.g., the research objective and design are identical or very closely related) with a project currently funded through other sources; and
- Any project costs that are funded, will be funded, or reimbursed by any third party, ministry, agency, or organization of the Government of Ontario.

*An independent researcher is an individual who:

- Is autonomous regarding their research activities; and
- Has an academic or research appointment which:
  - Must commence by the effective date of funding; and
  - Allows the individual to pursue the proposed research project, to engage in independent research activities for the entire duration of the funding, to supervise trainees (if applicable, as per their institution's policy), and to publish the research results; and
  - Obliges the individual to conform to institutional regulations concerning the conduct of research, the supervision of trainees, and the employment conditions of staff paid with OICR funding.

Deviation from proposed activities and/or budget

A significant deviation (as assessed by the PI(s) in consultation with the Heads* of Adaptive Oncology, Clinical Translation or Therapeutic Innovation) in a project's anticipated deliverables/milestones and/or end date can be the result of significant delays (i.e., more than six months) in recruitment of qualified personnel, regulatory approvals, recruitment of patients, availability of supplies/drugs, or inter-institutional transfer of funds/activities due to enhanced collaborative activities. In such instances, the PI must provide an explanation for the change/delay, and formally request budget amendments/transfers or extensions, providing justification for all changes. Such changes will require a budget and agreement amendment. Any resulting budget amendment should be reported to OICR. Minor variances/shifts can be reported through quarterly reports and may not require changes to contractual obligations.

**In instances where the Head is also a recipient of OICR funding, the deviation should also be discussed with the Senior Director, Research Operations.*

Reallocation of budget

Up to fifteen per cent (15%) of the total budget may be reallocated between previously approved projects without OICR's prior approval.

Reallocation of more than fifteen per cent (15%) of the total budget will require express written permission of OICR's Executive Vice President, Head of Implementation Science and relevant Head.

Any resulting changes will require an amendment to the agreement and a corresponding budget amendment.

Carryover funds and no-cost extensions (NCE)

Budget monitoring must be carried out to ensure that funds allocated for a given fiscal year are utilized, as OICR does not have the ability to allow carryover of funds into the subsequent fiscal year. Host institutions are also strongly encouraged to utilize the funds for the fiscal year for which they are intended.

An NCE may be granted in exceptional cases with prior approval from OICR's Executive Vice President, Head of Implementation Science or Senior Director, Research Operations. Application for an NCE must be made in writing and supported by appropriate justification.

10. APPENDIX II: "ONTARIO FIRST" POLICY

In order to promote the commercialization and public availability of inventions made in Ontario by Ontario industry and, to ensure that Ontario businesses obtain sufficient opportunity to commercialize provincially-supported inventions, the Host Institution agrees that the following options to commercialize the arising intellectual property (IP) will be considered:

- An existing organization in Ontario with receptor capacity.
- An expansion of an existing company in Ontario.
- The formation of a new company in Ontario.
- Joint ventures or strategic alliances with a company in Ontario.
- Co-manufacturing involving a company in Ontario.
- Cross-licensing or co-development with a company in Ontario; establishment of a new subsidiary in Ontario (R&D, manufacturing, sales, marketing, distribution); and
- Development and/or production in Ontario by a foreign company.

If reasonable efforts to grant licenses to potential licensees to commercialize and manufacture the arising IP substantially in Ontario are unsuccessful, then the Host Institution agrees that the Lead will be responsible for documenting the rationale and circumstances that led to any proposed decision or step to pursue commercialization/exploitation by a non-Ontario company, including an account of the benefits to Ontario for review by an IP Commercialization Committee prior to finalizing the decision or step. The documentation will be forwarded to OICR.

11. APPENDIX III: DATA RETENTION, SHARING AND OPEN ACCESS

Applicants agree to adhere to the Global Alliance for Genomics and Health's Framework for Responsible Sharing of Genomic and Health-Related Data. The Framework interprets the right of all people to share in the benefits of scientific progress and its applications as being the duty of data producers and users to engage in responsible scientific inquiry and to access and share genomic and health-related data across the translation continuum, from basic research through practical applications. It recognizes the rights of data producers and users to be recognized for their contributions to research, balanced by the rights of those who donate their data. In addition to being founded on the right of all citizens in all countries to the benefits of the advancements of science, and on the right of attribution of scientists, it also reinforces the right of scientific freedom.

Recipients of OICR funding are required to retain original data sets arising from OICR-funded research for a minimum of five (5) years after the end of the research project as defined by the research agreement or Notice of Award. This applies to all data, whether published or not. Applicants must provide a data retention plan, specifying how data generated will be stored during the course of the project and for the 5-year period after its conclusion. If needed, applicants can request funds to support this data retention requirement, however, charges are capped at five (5) per cent of the direct, annual award value and are eligible over the term of the award only. For clarity, data retention costs must be accounted for within the allowable budget and is not in addition to the budget requested to conduct the project.

OICR promotes the GA4GH framework related to the deposition of publication-related data in openly accessible databases. OICR funding recipients are required to deposit bioinformatics, atomic, molecular coordinate data and source code for software into the appropriate public database, as already required by most journals, immediately upon publication of research results (e.g., deposition of nucleic acid sequences into GenBank, and source code into a publicly accessible FTP or web server).

OICR strongly supports unrestricted access to research outputs and aligns with the Tri-Agency Open Access policy on Publications. Funding agreements for successful applicants will include the expectation for adherence to Open Access principles.

12. APPENDIX IV: EVALUATION CRITERIA AND SCORING

Applications will be reviewed using the following evaluation criteria:

- Relevance.
- Excellence.
- Potential for impact/path to implementation.
- Feasibility, and
- Leadership, team and collaboration.

Table 4 provides a description of each criterion. The merit of each project will be evaluated against the listed criteria, where applicable.

Table 4: Evaluation criteria
Relevance The project**:** ● Is in line with OICR's strategic plan and elements of the I2IS RFA; ● Addresses a specific, well-defined, clinical priority/question for cancer patients and/or the Ontario health care system; ● Is appropriate given the current state of knowledge relative to the proposed project; and ● Is driven by a strong hypothesis that rests on sufficient evidence.
Excellence ● The proposed research is innovative and of international calibre; ● Research design is appropriate to answer the question(s) posed, with a cohesive plan that will lead to meaningful results; ● Goals and objectives are well defined and attainable; ● Statistical justification is provided to support the hypothesis and project design; and ● Potential pitfalls and possible mitigation plans are provided and appropriate.
Potential for impact/path to implementation ● The proposed research will have a transformative impact on clinical practice, benefiting Ontario patients, practitioners and/or users of the health care system; ● **Generation of real-world knowledge and/or engagement of new partners;** ● **Clear advancement of innovation towards clinical use or adoption into the health care system/policy**; and ● The EDI and patient partnership plans indicate the impact of the project on underrepresented communities and on patients, respectively.
Feasibility ● Proposed research is feasible, within the term of the award, with potential for success; ● Project team has access to appropriate facilities and resources to ensure project success; ● The deliverables and milestones are attainable within the specified timeline. They are appropriately defined to allow the monitoring of progress against goals and objectives. Appropriate Go/no-go decision points are outlined; ● A plan for biospecimen acquisition (if applicable) and/or a description of the existing biospecimen resource to be utilized is included. Where an existing biorepository is to be accessed, confirmation of support for the research is included by the "owner" of the specimens; and ● The budget is fully justified and appropriate to support the project.

Leadership, team and collaboration

- The team, and its leadership, have the necessary range of disciplines and experience necessary to conduct the project;
- The project leadership have appropriate qualifications, experience, and record of publications;
- The project leadership has led or contributed to research that has resulted in improvements in clinical practice;
- The team engages collaboratively with investigators with complementary expertise. There is a strong level of provincial participation, and where appropriate, OICR's program's/networks/resources;
- Opportunities for early career investigators/trainees are supported;
- The Patient Partnership plan clearly articulates the role of all integrated patient partners; and
- The approach for alignment with the principles of EDI within the project team is clearly articulated.

Table 5 will be used for scoring.

Table 5: Scoring		
Score	**Descriptor**	**Additional guidance**
4.7-5.0	**Excellent with no weaknesses identified**	Exceptionally strong with essentially no weaknesses. The project excels in most or all criteria. Any shortcomings are minimal. Proposed research has a very high potential for transformative impact on clinical practice and has a very clear path to completion with sufficient funding.
4.2-4.6	**Excellent with minor weaknesses identified**	Very strong with only some minor weaknesses. The project excels in many criteria and reasonably addresses all others. Certain improvements are possible. Proposed research has a high potential for transformative impact on clinical practice and has a clear path to completion with sufficient funding.
3.6-4.1	**Very good with minor weaknesses identified**	Some strengths but also some weaknesses. The project excels in some criteria and reasonably addresses all others. Minor revisions are required. Proposed research has a moderate probability for impact on clinical practice and has a reasonably clear path to completion with sufficient funding.
3.0-3.5	**Very good with moderate weaknesses identified**	Some strengths but also some moderate weaknesses. The project excels in some criteria and reasonably addresses all others. Major revisions are required. Proposed research has a moderate probability for impact on clinical practice and has a reasonably clear path to completion with sufficient funding.
2.4-2.9	**Good with moderate weaknesses identified**	Some strengths but with at least one major weakness. The project broadly addresses criteria, but revisions required are too significant to overcome. Proposed research has a moderate to low probability for impact on clinical practice, and the path to completion is missing or not feasible.
Below 2.4	**Unsatisfactory**	Very few strengths and numerous major weaknesses. The project fails to meet most of the criteria and/or has serious inherent flaws or gaps. Proposed research has a low probability for impact on clinical practice. The proposed project should not be funded.