

**GUIDELINES FOR THE OPERATION & MAINTENANCE OF  
CANADA FOUNDATION FOR INNOVATION-FUNDED INFRASTRUCTURE**

## 1. Overview

Saint Mary's University has benefited from substantial investments from the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) for research infrastructure which have enriched the institution's research capacity. As a recipient of funds to establish and upgrade research infrastructure, Saint Mary's University is committed to providing support for the operation and maintenance (O&M) of CFI-funded infrastructure at the institution over its useful life.

These guidelines outline the overall strategy and procedures for the operation and maintenance, and long-term sustainability, of CFI-funded research infrastructure, including planning, roles and responsibilities, allocation of funding, monitoring of expenditures, and reporting. These guidelines were developed by the Vice President Academic Research (VPAR) in consultation with Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) and the Associate Vice-President Research (AVPR).

The objectives of these O&M guidelines are:

- To support the operation and sustainability of CFI-funded infrastructure and prevent or resolve issues related to O&M so that they can be addressed before they have an adverse effect on research or technology development activities;
- To optimize the use of available resources for O&M;
- To facilitate the development of reasonable, accurate, and sustainable O&M plans by Project Leaders, departments, and faculties;
- To provide guidance and resources for Project Leaders to identify O&M costs and funding sources and ensure sustainability of CFI-funded infrastructure over its useful life; and
- To provide guidance for multi-year planning and monitoring of O&M needs across the institution throughout the useful life of the infrastructure.

## 2. Guiding Principles

- Saint Mary's University is committed to supporting the operation and maintenance of CFI-funded infrastructure over its useful life through the allocation of institutional support and through institutional efforts to secure funding from internal and external sources, as required.
- Requests submitted to the CFI by Saint Mary's University reflect the institution's best efforts and practices to identify accurate and realistic O&M costs and sources of support.
- The Associate Vice-President Research (AVPR) oversees Saint Mary's University accountability to the CFI to provide O&M support, which comes from all levels of the institution, including the Project Leader(s), the relevant department(s), and the relevant faculty(ies).
- Saint Mary's university maintains an overall risk-based approach to assessing O&M needs and funding sources for CFI (and other) projects. The ongoing management of smaller projects with limited O&M needs is primarily undertaken at the investigator and departmental levels; larger and more complex projects are expected to develop business/operational plans and will receive proportionally augmented faculty-level and central institutional oversight. These plans are developed in coordination between the investigators, the department, the faculty, and central administration.
- The CFI Infrastructure Operating Fund (IOF) allocation provided to Saint Mary's University will be managed by the Associate Vice-President Research (AVPR) in ways that:
  - Leverage common O&M needs across facilities, including those not initially joined by a common request;
  - Coordinate with resources available from within the institution;
  - Align with the efforts, investments, and priorities of the Project Leader(s), department(s), and faculty(ies) to sustain the infrastructure;
  - Are transparent.
- Saint Mary's University recognizes that the portion of the IOF associated with CFI projects may be insufficient to cover all O&M costs associated with the infrastructure.

- The O&M plan and the need for O&M funding may change over the course of the infrastructure's useful life. In order to adapt to unexpected variations in O&M costs, the on-going institutional support for O&M, including IOF allocations, must be flexible.
- On-going institutional support for a CFI-funded facility may cease once the facility has achieved its intended purpose, if the facility is no longer state-of-the-art, or if key changes to the project team are such that the infrastructure cannot deliver on its intended purposes.

### 3. Definitions

**CFI-funded infrastructure** includes “the state-of-the-art equipment, laboratories, databases, specimens, scientific collections, computer hardware and software, communications linkages and buildings necessary to conduct leading-edge research.”<sup>1</sup>

**Operation and maintenance support** include technical support, maintenance and repairs, materials and supplies for the operation of infrastructure, utilities, and support for core research facilities.

**Useful life of CFI infrastructure** is defined as “the period of time over which the infrastructure is expected to provide benefits and be usable for its intended purpose, factoring in normal repairs and maintenance.”<sup>2</sup> Useful life is not equivalent to physical life.

**Project Leader** is the lead researcher responsible for the CFI infrastructure. The Project Leader is the scientific leader of the research program proposed for awarded CFI projects. The Project Leader may be the sole user of the infrastructure, or share with several other users.

## 4. Planning Process and Sources of Support for Operation & Maintenance

### 4.1 Planning for O&M at Request Stage

Requests to the CFI require an O&M budget for the first five years of infrastructure operation, and a sustainability plan including a description of O&M costs and sources of support. This plan is an important starting point for the assessment of O&M needs, available resources, and sources of funding for O&M.

### 4.2 Project Leader Responsibilities

Project Leaders have the primary responsibility for identifying O&M costs at the time of request, and for planning for the longer-term sustainability of the infrastructure, in consultation with their Department Chair and Dean. Project Leaders are expected to use the expertise and resources available at the department, faculty, and institutional level. Project Leaders are responsible for developing a reasonable O&M budget and all request components related to Sustainability / O&M for internal review (Section 5) prior to request submission.

Project Leaders are expected to recognize that the portion of the IOF associated with their project, and allocated to them through Saint Mary's University internal IOF process (Section 6), may be insufficient to cover all O&M costs associated with the infrastructure.

Project Leaders are asked to:

- Identify the amount and type of O&M costs anticipated of infrastructure use, including anticipated personnel needs, supplies, maintenance and repairs, and services.
- Identify the proposed sources of support for these O&M costs, including the IOF, internal or external funding such as start-up grants or operating funds, or user fees.

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<sup>1</sup>Canada Foundation for Innovation. Our Mandate. <https://www.innovation.ca/our-mandate>

<sup>2</sup>Canada Foundation for Innovation. Program & Policy Guide, 2017, Section 4.4

- Provide realistic and obtainable options for securing other funding as necessary, and for longer-term sustainability of the infrastructure.

### **4.3 Faculty/Department Responsibilities**

Saint Mary's Universities Faculties play a key role in setting the institution's infrastructure strategy and priorities, and have a responsibility to ensure at the time of request that the necessary space, support, and services are in place to ensure sustainability and successful operation and maintenance of the infrastructure.

### **4.4 Sources of Support for Operation & Maintenance**

Support for O&M expenses comes from multiple sources which can be internal or external to the institution. It is the joint responsibility of the Project Leader(s), the host department, faculty, or affiliated research institute, and the institution to provide sufficient funds for the operation and maintenance costs of CFI-funded infrastructure.

### **4.5 Institutional support**

Saint Mary's University commitment to supporting its faculty, their research initiatives, and the operation and maintenance of CFI-funded infrastructure is demonstrated by the support structures and resources made available to investigators, departments, and faculties. Saint Mary's University provides pre-and post-award research services over the entire life cycle of the project, including financial and project reporting, human resources, facilities management, procurement services, insurance coverage, utility costs, and specialized safety training.

Institutional support for O&M can include personnel support (e.g. technical staff), support for the indirect costs of research (e.g. utilities, ITSS), maintenance of the space housing the infrastructure, or contributions towards the operating costs of core facilities. Information Technology support is provided across the institution through Saint Mary's University Information Technology Services (ITSS).

Funding requirements from Saint Mary's University capital or operating budgets in support of core facilities is considered on a case-by-case basis through the annual planning and budget processes.

## **5. Saint Mary's CFI Review Process**

Requests must be approved by the applicant's Dean / Associate Dean and Associate Vice President Research (AVPR) to ensure that investments in infrastructure by the CFI are aligned with faculty priorities.

FGSR, Procurement Services, Facilities Management (where projects include construction or renovation), and department and faculty leadership and staff work closely with applicants and help in developing the proposal including the O&M budget and plans for sustainability of the infrastructure.

## **6. Allocation of CFI Infrastructure Operating Funds (IOF)**

### **6.1 IOF Allocations**

Project leaders from all eligible funded CFI infrastructure projects are permitted to submit IOF requests.

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### **6.2 IOF Eligibility**

In order to be eligible to receive an allocation from the IOF:

- The infrastructure item to which the request relates must have been funded by the CFI (i.e. appears on the itemized list and/or the final financial report).

- The CFI-funded infrastructure project to which the request relates must have been approved by the CFI
- The CFI-funded infrastructure project to which the request relates must have passed the stage of award finalization and have an Award Agreement in place for the project.
- The operation and maintenance activities to be supported by the IOF are needed to ensure the infrastructure can be used to carry out the proposed research.

### **6.3 IOF Application Process**

Project leaders must submit a request to FGSR. The request will be reviewed and evaluated for eligibility by the Research Grants Officer (RGO) and the AVPR.

### **6.4 IOF Administration & Adjudication**

The IOF is administered by FGSR and the AVPR. Requests will be adjudicated by the AVPR in consultation with the faculties, as required.

### **6.5 IOF Monitoring & Reporting**

IOF expenditures will be monitored by FGSR and the AVPR to ensure compliance with CFI policy. The RGO will coordinate with Project Leaders to prepare annual financial reports on IOF spending and the next year forecast. The financial report is submitted to CFI by the institution by June 15<sup>th</sup> for the fiscal year ended March 31<sup>st</sup>.

### **6.6 Inter-Institutional Projects**

When two or more institutions are involved in a CFI project, the inter-institutional agreement (IIA) must be negotiated at time of award confirmation, to address the operational and management plans and IOF allocation to each institution.