Overview

• The Ontario Research Fund-Research Excellence (ORF-RE) program promotes research excellence in Ontario by supporting transformative, internationally significant research.

• The ORF-RE focuses on scientific excellence and benefits to Ontarians, and targets new leading-edge research initiatives.

• ORF-RE Round 8 is a general funding round. While Round 8 is open to all disciplines, the Ministry particularly encourages applications in three focus areas:
  ○ Bioeconomy and Clean Technologies
  ○ Advanced Health Technologies
  ○ Digital Media and Information & Communications Technologies
ORF-RE History

- Introduced in 2005, has held 6 general and 2 special rounds
- To date, approximately $627M committed for 164 projects, leveraging more than $1.2B in private sector and institutional contributions
- Success rate in Round 7 was approximately 20% (21 projects funded out of 97 full applications received)
Eligibility

- Funding is open, on a competitive basis, to the following Ontario institutions:
  - Publicly assisted universities
  - Colleges of applied arts and technology
  - Hospital research institutes
  - Consortia of the above, with one institution as lead applicant, assuming responsibility and accountability for the consortium
  - Other Ontario not-for-profit research institutions at the discretion of the ORF Advisory Board

- The ORF-RE grant can be used for the following direct costs (and limited indirect costs) of conducting research:
  - Salaries and benefits
  - Facilities and equipment
  - Other direct research costs
  - Management and administration
Application Process

• Institutions submit Notices of Intent (Nols) by July 31, 2015.

• Nols will be made available to help institutions identify opportunities for meaningful collaboration on projects with similar research topics or objectives.

• Nols are mandatory but non-binding.

• Institutions submit full applications by January 19, 2016.
Adjudication Process

**Written Expert Reviews**
- Completed by local and international subject matter experts

**Discipline Panels**
- Review of all adjudication criteria to determine which proposals meet minimum criteria for advancement
- All eligible applications reviewed

**Cross-Disciplinary Panel**
- Comparative review of the impact of the highest quality, fundable applications

**Ontario Research Fund Advisory Board**
- Final funding recommendations to the Minister
1. Research Excellence

• All proposals must demonstrate leading edge scientific potential and the expertise to realize that potential through:
  ○ Scientific merit
  ○ Proposed innovation
  ○ Credentials and appropriateness of the research team
  ○ Where applicable, degree of inter-institutional and international research collaboration
2. Research Impact

• All proposals must demonstrate their anticipated value to Ontarians across three categories:
  ○ Commercialization
  ○ Economic Benefits
  ○ Societal Benefits

• Applications must address all three, but should emphasize the most relevant area
• All areas are viewed as equally valuable
• Impacts may be short or long term, but the timeframe should be specifically addressed in the application.
3. Achieving Impact

• All proposals must demonstrate their ability to achieve the identified Research Impact through a plan and engagement with users of the research, including but not limited to:
  ○ Firms
  ○ Trade associations
  ○ Clinicians
  ○ Researchers in the scientific community
  ○ Non-profit organizations
  ○ Community/patient groups
  ○ Government and agencies
4. Development of Highly Qualified Personnel

- Recruitment, retention and training of highly qualified personnel (HQP).
- Meaningful engagement of graduate and post graduate students and post-doctoral fellows.
- This should be demonstrated with a coherent plan and strategy for building and supporting an appropriate training environment.
- The number and type of HQP should be both necessary and appropriate to both the budget and milestones being proposed.
5. Project Management

• All proposals must demonstrate the ability to manage a project of the scope and scale requested:
  ○ Business plan for the management of the project, including governance structure (i.e. management team, arm’s length advisory board, scientific advisory committee, etc.)
  ○ Sustainability plan for the research capacity that is created
  ○ Project budget, budget justification and method for ensuring accurate forecasts
  ○ Clear, specific and measurable milestones and deliverables
  ○ If applicable, a data management plan
Funding Overview

• As a general rule, the minimum support provided to a project will be $1 million. The maximum support provided will be $4 million.

• ORF-RE will contribute a maximum of 1/3 of the total project value, with 1/3 of the project value coming from the applicant institution(s) and 1/3 from the private sector.

• The project start date will be negotiated as part of the grant agreement but may not be earlier than the date of the call for proposals, June 8, 2015.
Preparing the Budget

• The budget should be prepared as zero-based.
• Institutional and private sector contributions may be cash or in-kind.
• Eligible expenses include:
  ○ Salaries and benefits claimed in proportion to the time spent working on the project
  ○ Facilities and equipment: up to 10% of total direct costs
  ○ Other direct research costs including, but not limited to, materials fieldwork expenses, and dissemination of research
  ○ Management and administration: up to 10% of total direct costs
• Indirect expenses are also eligible to a maximum of 40% of the total direct expenses. This applies to both the total project value as well as the ORF-RE grant specifically.
• Applicants should prepare a realistic budget that reflects the true rate of expenses.
Institutional Matches

• Expenses are only eligible after the project start date, therefore contributions to cover expenses can only be made after the project start date. Contributions may be secured as early as one year prior to the application deadline (January 19, 2015).
• In order to be eligible funding must be used to directly support the activities of the ORF project.
• Eligible sources of Institutional matching (not necessarily exhaustive):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligible Sources</th>
<th>Ineligible Sources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tri-Council grants</td>
<td>CFI Infrastructure funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFI IOF funds</td>
<td>Any grants from the Ontario government or an Agency of the Ontario government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any research funding, philanthropic gift, or grants and gifts directed in general to the research institution</td>
<td>Any funding already fully leveraged by Ontario funds.</td>
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Private Sector Contribution

• Contributions from the private sector may be cash or in-kind
• Private sector entities are:
  ○ For-profit businesses
  ○ Business organizations and/or not-for-profit research institutes funded primarily by relevant businesses

• Letters of support from private sector partners must accompany the full application and detail the type and amount of support and the interest that the private sector has in the project.
• Before finalization of the grant agreement after an award has been made, the private sector support letters must also clearly justify the valuation of any in-kind support.
• Similar to institutional contributions, private sector contributions are only to cover eligible expenses which are incurred after the start date. Funds may have been received at the institution prior to the start date (no earlier than January 19, 2015) but must be spent after the project start date to be considered eligible.
What has changed from the previous round?

- There are no significant changes from the previous round in either the process or the criteria.

- There have been some changes to the application form, highlights include:
  - Application form supports rich text formatting.
  - References and figures can be included directly in the form.
  - Budget is completed directly in the application form, rather than a separate excel workbook.
  - Budget justification is a free text description, rather than in an excel table.
Application ‘Tips and Tricks’

• Ensure that the application clearly describes how the proposal relates to or differs from the current state of the art research in the field, within the Ontario context as well as nationally and internationally.

• The Research application should have a clear focus/hypothesis and is not be a collection of unrelated subprojects.

• Clearly describe the preliminary research that led to the proposed new concept.

• Ensure that the application adequately demonstrates the impact of the research.

• Do not ‘oversell’ the research impact.

• Clearly demonstrate the steps that will be taken to maximize the likelihood of achieving the research impacts and engagement with the next-stage recipients of the research or end-users.

• The proposed research should be ground-breaking or innovative.

• The budget should be realistic and adequately justified.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 8, 2015</td>
<td>Issued call for proposals</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 31, 2015</td>
<td>Notices of intent due</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 19, 2016</td>
<td>Full applications due</td>
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<tr>
<td>May – July 2016</td>
<td>Review Panels</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 2016</td>
<td>Minister’s approval of projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2016</td>
<td>Decisions communicated to Institutions</td>
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Contact Information

For Questions relating to Round 8 Application and Adjudication contact:

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Dawn.edmonds@ontario.ca

For questions relating to contracting and post-award administration contact:

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Or your institutional representative