

**University Delegates Meeting
July 7th, 2022 – 12:30-1:30pm (EDT)
Meeting Minutes**

Chair: Adrian Mota - Associate Vice-President, Research Programs (Operations)

Moderator: Allison Jackson – Director General, Operations Support

1. CIHR Updates

- The Chair welcomed M. Oumar Mallaé Samb, who is the New University Delegates Member for l'Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue.
- An update on the expanded EDI Self-Identification Questionnaire was given. The expanded questionnaire includes questions about sexual orientation and population group as well as more detailed questions about Indigenous identity, and disability status.

2. Clinical Trials Fund

An update on the Clinical Trials Fund was provided, followed by a question and answer period.

Q: Are the gender designations seen by reviewers?

A: No, all EDI data including gender data is subject to CIHR's data security practices. As such, access to EDI data is restricted even within CIHR. Reporting on EDI data is only made on an aggregate level to maintain anonymity.

Q: Has CIHR considered extending the deadlines for Clinical Trials Training Platform and Consortium application submissions? Upcoming deadlines of other major initiatives (e.g., CFI, CERC, CFREF, CBRF) and some apparent coordination between them has made the CT proposal development a particular challenge.

A: CIHR will not be extending the deadlines for these funding opportunities. Any such requests from applicants should be sent to the CIHR Contact Centre (support-soutien@cihr-irsc.gc.ca) where requests will be evaluated by CIHR

Q: Does this include phase I trials?

A: The Clinical Trials Projects funding opportunity is open to any phase of clinical trial.

Q: Are the trials restricted to therapeutics and vaccines?

A: The Clinical Trials Project funding opportunity is not restricted to therapeutics and vaccines.

Q: How will each of these two components impact the evaluation of the proposal? In other words, how important will it be to include elements dealing with pandemics preparedness? And what will be the role if any for the Biomedical hubs?

A: The Clinical Trials Fund (CTF) is a component of the [Biomedical and Life Sciences Strategy](#) (BLSS). As such, the CTF funding opportunities were developed to support applications which align with the objectives of the BLSS. Potential linkages between the teams funded through the CTF and the research hubs funded through the Canada Biomedical Research Fund and Biosciences Research Infrastructure Fund have not been defined.

Q: Will this impact current panels that fund clinical trials given that there is now ring fenced money?

A: This funding opportunity will have no impact to how CIHR funds grant across various panels. Applicants are reminded that they must not submit identical or ‘essentially identical’ applications to CIHR, as mentioned in CIHR’s *Application Administration Guide*. Applicants will need to choose whether they submit an application to the Clinical Trials Fund or the Project Grant competition.

Q: Would CIHR consider extensions to permit submission of letters of support and collaboration? RGOs are being caught off guard with the requests coming from other institutions.

A: Requests should be sent to the CIHR Contact Centre (support-soutien@cihr-irsc.gc.ca); they will be evaluated by CIHR on a case-by-case basis.

Q: Will there be another round next year?

A: The timing of future CTF funding opportunities is not known at this time.

Q: Is it accurate that this is focused on biomanufacturing/biomed side? Is there room to look at the balance with health consequences (mental, delayed diagnosis, etc.) of shutdowns, etc. Part of pandemic preparedness, no?

A: The focus of the Clinical Trials Projects funding opportunity is to support clinical trials. The evaluation criteria that will be used to assess eligible applications are outlined in the funding opportunity.

3. Project Grant Competition Update

Fall 2022 Project Grant Competition - Important Dates

Competition Launch	July 5, 2022
Registration deadline	August 17, 2022
Application deadline	September 14, 2022

An update on the upcoming Fall Project Grant competition deadlines was provided. Members were encouraged to participate in the recent survey regarding peer review panel preferences.

Q: Could you provide more information about the cancellation of DEV and E committees?

I can only find "developmental biology" mentioned in Cell Biology – Molecular/Fundamental (CB1).

"Endocrinology" is only mentioned in Behavioural Sciences – A: Neurobiological Basis of Behavioural Processes (BSA).

Have these committees been informed that they may be seeing new types of grants?

Are new members being recruited to provide the necessary expertise?

A: CIHR’s Project Grant panel structure is consistently under evaluation and evolving to suit the needs of the evolving research environment. The CB1 and BSA committees have been experiencing a steady decrease in application intake and the decision was made not to reconvene these committees. CIHR works collaboratively with the Chair and Scientific Officers of each panel to get the expertise needed to review the applications submitted to that panel. If expertise is missing, CIHR will work to locate and recruit reviewers to support a thorough application evaluation.

Q: How many grants to be funded- the usual 400?

A: CIHR anticipates the number of funded grants to remain consistent with previous years.

Q: Will there be more of a peer review committee refresh? It’s not clear where folks in E panel will now go?

A: CIHR is committed to conducting a comprehensive refresh of the panels. The University Delegates and the Delegates Advisory Committee will be consulted during this review.

Q: There were some shockingly poor reviewer comments from some panels who seem to be making up their own rules - do we have sufficient numbers of experienced chairs to deal with this?

A: When an applicant receives poor-quality reviewer comments, they are encouraged to report it to CIHR, which will then conduct a reviewer quality assessment. CIHR has measures in place to review and resolve quality issues that arise when a reviewer's comments do not follow the *Peer Review Manual's* principles.

4. Funding Opportunities

Funding opportunities launched in June 2022 were highlighted.

5. Adjournment

The University Delegates meeting concluded at 1:30 pm EDT. The Chair thanked Network members for their participation. The next meeting of the University Delegates is scheduled to take place on August 4th, 2022.

Please reach out to the UD Support team by email, or to a member of the UDAC, with questions or topics for future UD meetings.