
CIFAR

**GLOBAL CALL
FOR IDEAS**

Program Details
2017 - 2019

CIFAR
CANADIAN
INSTITUTE
FOR
ADVANCED
RESEARCH

CIFAR GLOBAL CALL FOR IDEAS

The Canadian Institute for Advanced Research invites the global research community to submit proposals for new programs that address complex, fundamental questions of importance to the world. Ideas must be novel, bold, and potentially transformative to warrant the creation of a sustained, interdisciplinary, and collaborative research program.

Deadline for Letter of Intent submissions: January 21, 2018

CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Current Opportunity	2
Criteria for Selection	4
Assessment Process	5
Further Information	6

INTRODUCTION

Building on our experience as a convener of global research networks, CIFAR (Canadian Institute for Advanced Research) challenges the international research community to identify questions of importance to the world that require an interdisciplinary lens to advance understanding and promote positive change.

CIFAR is a non-profit global organization based in Canada dedicated to research excellence and impact. For over 35 years, CIFAR has focused on bringing the best minds together to address complex challenges of importance to the world. Since its inception in 1982, CIFAR has had a significant impact on the way the world understands critical issues such as the Earth's evolution, social identity and well-being, early child and brain development, artificial intelligence, building stronger societies, genetic networks, and many others. CIFAR takes a long-term view and supports leading-edge research with the potential for global impact.

CIFAR's collaborative approach and support of research is unique, focusing on challenges that transcend disciplinary boundaries and geographic borders. CIFAR supports sustained collaborations between Canadian and international researchers to address global problems, open new fields of inquiry, and accelerate the creation and mobilization of knowledge that address these challenges.

The Institute is driven by three points of accountability. First, CIFAR creates transformative knowledge through research. CIFAR's programs support world-class researchers to accelerate cutting-edge knowledge creation and make significant contributions to the world's understanding of complex issues.

Second, we nurture the next generation of research leaders through our CIFAR Azrieli Global Scholars program. We provide opportunities for exceptional early-career scholars to join our programs, participate in knowledge mobilization efforts, and to develop the relationships and skills required to become research leaders.

And third, research excellence is enhanced and global impact accelerated when active communities of innovative knowledge-users are engaged with CIFAR's research programs. Through knowledge mobilization, CIFAR promotes knowledge exchange that informs research and helps lead to innovation and evidence-based changes in policy and practice.

Currently, CIFAR includes nearly 370 fellows, scholars, and advisors from more than 125 institutions in 18 countries. CIFAR fellows are among the most frequently cited and honoured researchers in the world. Eighteen Nobel Laureates have been associated with CIFAR since its inception.

CIFAR is not a traditional funder of research but is a convener of researchers. We support synergy and collaborative investigation into complex challenges through sustained interactions between researchers. Through 5-year, renewable program terms, CIFAR provides flexible research support for fellows and supports face-to-face interaction between program fellows, guests, and early-career researchers and trainees.

CURRENT OPPORTUNITY

CIFAR's first Global Call for Ideas was held in 2013 and resulted in the creation of four CIFAR research programs: Bio-Inspired Solar Energy; Azrieli Program in Brain, Mind and Consciousness; Humans and the Microbiome; and Molecular Architecture of Life.

CIFAR is pleased to announce a second Global Call for Ideas, inviting research leaders worldwide to identify important global research challenges that would benefit from CIFAR's approach to sustained research interactions that include diverse perspectives. Submissions must address global, complex questions and identify an interdisciplinary research approach. Proposals will be accepted from all areas of research.

Overview

The CIFAR Global Call for Ideas is open to researchers from around the world. A two-stage process will be used to identify the most promising proposals.

Stage I requires a Letter of Intent (LOI) from researchers who would be key members of the program. This submission should identify the core elements of the research idea and the range of possible research questions for consideration. CIFAR will shortlist LOIs based on the recommendations of the International Review Body and CIFAR's Research Council.

The deadline for LOI submissions is January 21, 2018 at 11:59pm (PST). No late submissions will be accepted.

Stage II of the process will support the development of full proposals. Each LOI team that passes Stage I will work with CIFAR to convene up to two small workshops over a four-month period to prepare a full proposal. The full proposals will be reviewed by an International Assessment Panel (IAP) comprised of research leaders of diverse expertise. The IAP will make recommendations to CIFAR's Research Council. The Research Council will make recommendations to CIFAR's President about funding decisions. CIFAR's Board of Directors will make the final decision based on the President's recommendation.

Timeline

Call for Letters of Intent opens: November 15, 2017

LOI deadline: January 21, 2018

Announcement of shortlisted proposals: Spring 2018

Final Proposal deadline: Fall 2018

Announcement of competition results: Spring 2019

Stage I: Letter of Intent

CIFAR is looking for novel ideas to form the basis of new CIFAR programs that address complex, fundamental research challenges of importance to the world. These ideas must require sustained, deep collaboration within an international, truly interdisciplinary research network. The ideas should be ambitious enough to sustain the active engagement of outstanding investigators for at least five years and should also have a longer-term vision.

A successful LOI must address the criteria outlined in the section below. Instructions for completing the **LOIs are available here**. Please follow these instructions to ensure that the necessary information is provided. LOIs must be submitted electronically through our online portal which can be accessed by visiting cifar.ca/cifar-global-call-for-ideas.

CIFAR will shortlist LOIs based on the recommendations of the International Review Body and CIFAR's Research Council. Shortlisted LOIs will proceed to Stage II, based on the criteria described in more detail below.

Stage II: Proposal Development

The proponents of shortlisted LOIs recommended for full proposal development will first discuss with CIFAR staff how best to use the workshop process to create the strongest possible proposal. CIFAR will provide the resources (travel, accommodation, meals) and logistical support for these workshops as needed.

The purpose of these workshops is to bring the researchers involved in developing the full proposal face-to-face with other international researchers in order to refine the research question or challenge. Some of these researchers may be involved in the proposed research program.

Each workshop will bring together 8 to 15 researchers from Canada and abroad to further articulate the nature of the research question, how it could be tackled, and what intellectual resources are needed to make progress.

The workshops will be held during the period from June 2018 through September 2018 at CIFAR's office in Toronto, Canada.

The full proposal will describe the research challenge and how it addresses one or more global, complex questions facing our world. The full proposal will also provide evidence for the excellence of the potential team's leadership and team members.

CIFAR is strongly committed to diversity, with fellows from across the world. CIFAR welcomes applicants from underrepresented groups, women, Indigenous persons, persons with disabilities, members of sexual minority groups, and others who may contribute to further diversification of ideas. Program membership and its evolution must be aligned with these values. Proposals must also outline a plan for inclusivity of potential fellows across all career stages.

The proposals will be reviewed by an International Assessment Panel of outstanding researchers using the selection criteria outlined below.

After the submission of the full proposal, proponents will be interviewed by the International Assessment Panel in advance of their ranking and recommendations.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

The International Review Body and the International Assessment Panel will use the following criteria to assess the submissions.

Research Significance: CIFAR supports research that accelerates cutting-edge knowledge creation and has the potential to make important contributions to the world's understanding of complex issues. Proponents must clearly articulate the proposed research questions to be addressed through sustained, deep collaboration within an international, truly interdisciplinary research network. Applicants must describe the current state of knowledge of the proposed topic areas that they wish to advance, including any necessary conceptual frameworks and/or methodologies. There should be a clear articulation of how this proposed research program will add value to current research being undertaken globally, including how such an effort is distinct from existing international research networks that are exploring similar questions. Proponents are required to explain how the research effort is interdisciplinary and how each represented discipline will contribute towards knowledge creation.

Potential Impact: The questions of global importance that CIFAR seeks to address are not defined by geographic borders or by research discipline. As such, successful proposals will hold the potential to make a significant impact on our understanding of the world. Topics that are complex, have strong potential for intellectual advancement, and identify emerging areas of inquiry are especially encouraged. Proposals should address why this is the right time to pursue this research challenge and how a commitment based around global, deep interdisciplinary collaboration, would produce unique and important progress.

Excellence of Research Team: CIFAR's model for supporting interdisciplinary research involves engaging outstanding groups of scholars committed to deep collaboration over a sustained period. CIFAR is not primarily a funder of research; rather we create global communities of exceptional scientists and scholars dedicated to open, long-term discussions. Potential program members should be researchers who are recognized to be among the best in their fields globally. Anticipated members of the program should be identified in the proposal: up to seven members in the LOI and up to 15 members in the full proposal, inclusive of the potential Program Co-Directors. Applicants should demonstrate the scholarly excellence of proposed program members and make clear how the proposed program members reflect the necessary interdisciplinarity required to address the research questions or challenges. Proposals should include a plan to promote diversity of membership within the proposed program. A successful proposal must have at least one core team member based at a Canadian institution.

Potential Leadership: CIFAR's experience is that leadership plays a crucial role in the success of a given program. In addition to the research team members, in the LOI applicants are expected to describe the potential leadership of the proposed program. The two potential leaders should be selected not only for their research excellence, but also for their openness to disruptive thinking and deep collaboration across disciplines and national borders, and their commitment to impact. Proponents that develop a full proposal will finalize the proposed co-leadership of the program in consultation with CIFAR.

Alignment with CIFAR's mission and vision: Applicants should make the case why a CIFAR effort, based around a global, deep collaboration, would produce unique and important progress towards advancing the current state of research related to the proposed research challenge. Proponents should clearly articulate how CIFAR support will add value to the pursuit of the identified research challenge or questions, including how CIFAR's model of supporting international engagement and knowledge mobilization over a sustained period will contribute toward transformative knowledge creation and impact.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

CIFAR anticipates LOIs on a broad range of topics, consistent with our mandate to advance knowledge across the full spectrum of research. CIFAR's International Review Body will consist of the highest caliber researchers from every discipline around the world. This body will provide feedback on each LOI and identify the most promising submissions. CIFAR's Research Council will make recommendations on which LOIs should proceed to the workshop stage to be developed into full proposals.

The panel for the full proposals – the International Assessment Panel (IAP) – will consist of international researchers chosen for their intellectual breadth and leadership. The IAP will make recommendations to CIFAR's Research Council. The Research Council will make recommendations to the President about funding decisions. CIFAR's Board of Directors will make the final decision based on the recommendation of the President.

Number of Successful Proposals

CIFAR plans to initiate from three to six new programs through this process.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Individuals interested in submitting an LOI are strongly encouraged to visit CIFAR's website to look at the nature, breadth, and scope of our existing research programs.

A **Frequently Asked Questions** page has been developed to address questions that we anticipate. We encourage potential applicants to review these first, and to contact **globalcall@cifar.ca** with any questions not addressed in the FAQ.

Instructions for submitting an LOI are available here:

LOI instructions

Information about the Global Call for Ideas is available online at:

cifar.ca/cifar-global-call-for-ideas/