



ICF Ideas Lab: Canada and the Circular Economy **FAQ**

The Imagining Canada’s Future (ICF) Ideas Lab is an exciting, new two-year pilot program designed to encourage innovative research partnerships and projects.

What is the ICF Ideas Lab?

Ideas Labs are interactive workshops designed to stimulate innovative and interdisciplinary research leading to creative solutions for pressing global challenges. They have been organized by research agencies throughout Europe and the United States.

In SSHRC’s ICF Ideas Lab, thirty (30) Canadian researchers from a variety of disciplines will be selected to participate in a virtual workshop, where they will develop ground-breaking project ideas with the potential to inform policies and programs addressing the needs of diverse sectors.

Workshop teams in the ICF Ideas Lab will explore the theme of “**Canada and the Circular Economy**,” linked to the global challenge of Living within the Earth’s Carrying Capacity.

Participants with the most promising workshop proposals will be invited to apply for funding to further develop their project idea. Up to three (3) grants of up to \$250,000 will be awarded in this program.

There are three (3) components to the ICF Ideas Lab framework:

- Stage 1: Virtual Workshop (October 18-29 2021)
- Stage 2: Funding Opportunity Application (January 2022)
- Stage 3: Project Development Phase (2022-2024)

Eligibility

Are senior research staff with industry experience but not PhDs eligible to apply? Does institutional affiliation apply only to faculty members or are staff eligible to apply as well?

- Applications for Stage 1 (Workshop participation) may be submitted by an individual who is affiliated with an eligible post-secondary institution or not-for-profit organization at the time of application. This includes both faculty members and potentially some research staff, although researchers must hold affiliation in their own right and cannot be employed as an assistant or associate for a research program directed by another researcher.

Interested researchers should review the eligibility section of the [Stage 1: Expression of Interest call](#) and contact their Research Office if they have questions about eligibility.

Is this opportunity open to non-faculty independent scholars i.e. someone who is not formally affiliated with a post-secondary institution?

- No, applicants to the workshop (Stage 1) must be affiliated with an eligible Canadian institution (see SSHRC's website for the [list of eligible institutions](#)) or with [an Indigenous not-for-profit organization being assessed for or holding institutional eligibility](#) at the time of application.

During Stage 2 of the ICF Ideas Lab, teams may invite additional researchers to join their projects. At this point, independent scholars may join the teams as collaborators.

Are researchers who have an affiliation with a college eligible to apply?

- Yes, researchers who are affiliated with an eligible college institution are able to apply.

I don't have experience specific to the circular economy, but I am interested in applying my area of research to the theme and in expanding my research in this direction. Are you specifically looking for applicants who have experience directly related to the theme?

- The success of Ideas Labs is linked to the involvement of researchers from a wide variety of disciplines who can approach research questions from different perspectives and who are willing to experiment with new and imaginative ways of addressing global challenges.

Applicants do not need to have experience directly related to the theme of Canada and the Circular Economy. However, in their applications, they must demonstrate an interest in the theme and/or related topics (for example, sustainability, consumer behavior, manufacturing, etc.) and provide an explanation as to how their research experience will allow them to contribute to the workshop.

Will there be any considerations for emerging researchers in the evaluation criteria for participant workshop selection?

- Emerging scholars are encouraged to apply to this funding opportunity.

There are no special considerations for emerging researchers in the evaluation criteria, but in their letter of interest they have the opportunity to demonstrate their potential for innovation and creativity, to detail their reasons for wishing to participate in the workshop, and to explain how participation in the program would have a positive impact on their career. This funding opportunity aims to bring together a diverse group of participants to provide creative insights throughout the workshop.

Does the Principal Investigator (PI) need to be someone who would usually apply to SSHRC for funding (i.e., from the social sciences or humanities)?

- Workshop participation (Stage 1) is open to researchers from all disciplines. **Applicants apply as individuals** and the merit review criteria and evaluation is based on their research experience and potential to contribute to the workshop.

At the workshop, participants will come together in teams to develop project ideas that they will pitch to a merit review committee. Before pitching their project, each team must identify a PI who is from a social sciences or humanities discipline.

For the purposes of the Stage 2 funding application, the workshop PI will act as the primary applicant, and team members from other disciplines will contribute to the application as co-applicants or collaborators.

Applications

Does the CV need to be in a specific format?

- The CV is to be uploaded to the application as a pdf. See the [Application Instructions](#) for a list of sections to be included in the CV. It is up to the applicant to determine the arrangement and content of each section.

Is the CV directly retrievable from CCV?

- No, the CV is not retrievable from the CCV. We ask that all applicants simply attach their CV as a pdf following the [instructions](#) provided.

Should the letter of interest contain project ideas?

- No. Applicants should discuss their interest in the workshop theme, but specific project ideas are not required or encouraged during the expression of interest. It is intended that participants will develop project ideas at the workshop with other participants.

Is the letter of interest from an individual or can a team apply?

- Applicants apply as individuals to the workshop, as it is intended that new research collaborations will emerge from the program.

Does the researcher submit the expression of interest and the application directly to SSHRC or to their research office?

- Applicants must submit their expression of interests to their research offices. This is to ensure that research offices are prepared if funding is awarded in Stage 2. Please contact your research office in case there is an internal deadline for your application.

Workshop Logistics

What is the time commitment for workshop participants?

- The workshop will take place between Monday, October 18 and Friday, October 29, 2021.

Virtual plenary sessions will take place on:

- (full day) October 18, 19, 22, 25, 2021
- (half day) October 28, 29, 2021

Workshop participants will be required to participate in all plenary sessions. Participants can also expect that some individual and group work will take place outside of the plenary sessions.

Will course releases be made available?

- Course releases is not available for the pilot program. Workshop participants will be responsible for making their own arrangements for teaching or other administrative responsibilities.

For individuals with disabilities what is the accommodation for the online meetings?

- SSHRC strives to be as accommodating as possible for any person with a disability. Applicants accepted to the workshop will be asked if they require accommodations, which will be made on a case-by-case basis. Applicants may identify accommodations they might need in the special circumstances section in the application form.

How many projects are expected to be pitched at the workshop?

- The number of projects that will be pitched depends on the number of teams formed at the workshop (see section below for more information about team and project development).

Are there references we can look at to get a sense of how SSHRC is defining the circular economy?

- The funding opportunity provides a brief introduction to the topic. However, as interest in circularity and sustainability increases in Canada, there is an opportunity for the research community to frame the discussion. Researchers at the ICF Ideas Lab will

discuss their understanding of the circular economy and as a group create a working interdisciplinary definition of the circular economy for the purposes of their project ideas.

Formation of Research Teams

Do you anticipate that interdisciplinary teams may be formed during the workshop or are individuals coming in with the set team in mind?

- One of the objectives of the ICF Ideas Lab is to stimulate new, interdisciplinary research collaborations. It is intended that the teams come together over the course of the workshop, with researchers who may not otherwise have met working together to develop innovative projects. Team formation will occur through facilitated activities and discussions.

How many teams do you anticipate will be formed at the workshop if only 3 will ultimately be funded?

- It will be up to the workshop participants to determine the composition of the teams. The workshop facilitators will provide some guidance regarding team formation, but there are no limits on the number of teams or the number of researchers in each team.

Based on information from other Ideas Labs, organizers anticipate 6-8 teams will be formed at the workshop.

Can individuals join the teams at Stage 2 if they weren't part of the workshop?

- Teams formed at the workshop will have the option to add additional co-applicants and collaborators from the public, private and not-for-profit sectors when applying for funding in Stage 2. However, teams must justify the addition of new researchers in their funding applications, and the project idea cannot be altered significantly between Stage 1 (workshop) and Stage 2 (application for funding).

Will there be a new Ideas Lab launching in 2022?

- As this is a pilot project, there is no additional Ideas Lab scheduled at this time. Updates and information will be posted on the SSHRC website.

For more information:

Visit the SSHRC website for:

- [ICF Ideas Lab Stage 1 Expression of Interest Call](#)
- [ICF Ideas Lab Stage 1 Application Instructions](#)

Contact information: ksg-ssc@sshrc-crsh.gc.ca