

**Churchill Northern Studies Centre**

**Northern Research Fund (NRF)**

**Guidelines**

**Revised December 2021**

# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1. Objective

The [Northern Research Fund \(NRF\)](#) provides opportunities for research in the sciences, social sciences and humanities with interest in the North. The goal of the NRF is to enhance research conducted by researchers using the facilities and services of the Churchill Northern Studies Centre (CNSC). The fund is available to assist researchers in meeting the financial needs of projects that will lead to increased knowledge relevant to the people living in the north, particularly in the region around Churchill.

## 1.2. Funding

Grants available through the NRF are predominantly matching, in-kind support. In-kind support consists of "user-days" (accommodation and meal services for one person for a 24 hour period), "vehicle-days" (vehicle and/or equipment support from the CNSC fleet, exclusive of fuel charges). The total funding available for the each competition, and the composition of that total, is established annually by the CNSC Board of Directors (BoD).

## 1.3. Special Calls

*Please note this discussion reflects information found in the Board policy entitled: "Provision for Sponsored Research Activities through the Churchill Northern Studies Centre"*

From time-to-time, the NRF may issue Special Calls for proposals. The Special calls are typically funded by external organizations, and generally have a specific focus (e.g. polar bears, or tourism). Special calls share the same timing (or deadline), and general application process as the NRF. A project may be simultaneously considered for the NRF and special call(s).

However:

1. Please submit only one application. There is now space on the NRF application form (Section 13) to identify if you wish to be considered for special call(s)
2. Depending on the call, additional information may be required. This will be specified (the type of information, the space provided to discuss this information) in the special call.
3. The External Funding Agency may have additional reporting requirements. Successful applicants are expected to meet these reporting requirements (in addition to those specified for the NRF)
4. Special calls are not subject to the Funding discussion outlined in section B. in addition to in-kind support (which may or may not be "matching"), special calls may include monetary support (depending on the specifications of the arrangement with the external funder). We would remind researchers, then, to

pay particular attention to **Section 8** of the **NRF Application**, which asks not only about the budget request from the NRF, but also the **project as a whole**.

## **2.0 Application procedures**

### **A. Application deadline**

There will normally be one annual competition for grants from the NRF. Completed forms for any NRF competition must be e-mailed, postmarked or faxed to the CNSC no later than the November deadline provided on the CNSC's website. The preference is for a submission by e-mail.

### **B. Eligibility**

All researchers and all disciplines are eligible but no more than one application for the same project will be funded in the same year. The Committee will not consider more than one application per individual researcher per competition, but an individual may apply for two research grants when 1) the second project is collaborative, and 2) another individual is principal investigator of that project. All projects will be assessed equally but applications for projects concerned with topics outlined in CNSC's "Operational Mandate" are particularly welcomed.

Ineligible or unacceptable applications include those that are:

- a) postmarked or received or after the application deadline.
- b) incomplete.
- c) submitted by researchers with outstanding, unsettled accounts at the CNSC.
- d) submitted by researchers funded by the NRF in a previous competition who failed to submit a summary report with original invoices and receipts.

### **C. Nature, levels and limits of support**

Available cash (provided in the form of travel vouchers) will be distributed among successful researchers or projects. Values of in-kind services will be determined from the CNSC Fee Schedule (see the CNSC's webpage). Vouchers for return air or rail travel to Churchill, when available, will be allocated to projects where, in the opinion of the Committee, they will be most beneficial. Total support to a project will not normally exceed, in dollar equivalent, other forms of income available to the researcher or project in that field season.

Applicants may apply for any level of support from among the types of funding available to a maximum of 50% of the expected total project budget. For example, if the project is expected to cost \$4,000 in equipment and supplies, and to require 20 user-days and 8 vehicle days, then an applicant can apply to the NRF for up to 10 user-days and 4 vehicle days. Travel vouchers will be considered part of the cash category of funding

but may occasionally contribute to an award that comprises more than half of the project's total cash value.

As noted above, Special Calls are not required to adhere to the funding formula detailed above. See Section 1.3.

#### **D. Assessment criteria**

All eligible applications will be assessed. The principal criterion used to determine the level of funding will be the stringency of the proposed research and its potential for the advancement of knowledge, particularly as it pertains to our understanding of life in the north. However, in an effort to effectively distribute limited funds, the following applications will be given priority to applications:

- a) from first-time applicants.
- b) from or involving students.
- c) for projects where total NRF funding is a small part of the whole project budget.
- d) from researchers who have disseminated the results of previous work through presentations and peer-reviewed publications.
- e) for projects to be conducted in the shoulder and off seasons (November 30 to April 30).

Applications that will be given a lower priority include those:

- a) for projects continued into their second and subsequent years. Regardless of the length of any one project, continued support beyond one competition is not guaranteed.
- b) for projects that duplicate research previously conducted
- c) for projects which do not include a residency component at the CNSC.

In assessing applications, the Research and Education (R&E) Committee will generally follow the guidelines established by other federally funded granting agencies (i.e., NSERC and SSHRC). Applicants should therefore produce reasoned, clearly written, well-organized proposals that attempt to answer questions and solve problems inherent to northern areas. While it is not necessary that applicants have previous research experience in the North, they should demonstrate an understanding of the issues relevant to the proposed research and an awareness of available comparative data. All items in the proposed budget must be justified fully and their need explained in the application.

For Special Calls, eligible applications will be evaluated for academic merit by the Research and Education Committee using the above criteria. Applications deemed to contribute to the advancement of knowledge, and meet the needs of the sponsor, will be forwarded to the sponsor for consideration.

## **E. Application process**

All applications must consist of the following:

- a) a covering letter, addressed to the Research Manager, at the Churchill Northern Studies Centre.
- b) a completed NRF application form (available on the CNSC's webpage)
- c) a list of the permits required for the proposed research project and details regarding the status of any permit still pending. Photocopies of permits that have been obtained must be sent to Research Manager before the application deadline.

## **F. Acceptance and duration of awards**

Applicants receiving a NRF grant must formally accept the terms and conditions of the NRF program described in a letter of notification by returning a signed and dated copy of their acceptance form to the Research Manager.

Researchers must expend their NRF grant for the fiscal year it was awarded. Cash, travel vouchers, user-days and vehicle-days may not be carried forward to a second field season. Researchers must notify the Research Manager in writing of any portion of an award (cash, travel voucher or in-kind services) they are unable to expend so that these funds can be reallocated to other projects with demonstrated need. Researchers will be billed for the value of any unused portion of their NRF grant that they fail to return.

Unused NRF awards, either in part or in whole, will revert to the CNSC. The Executive Director and Research Manager, in consultation with the Chair of the R&E Committee, may distribute unused portions of the NRF to other currently funded projects with a demonstrable need for additional support.

## **G. Reports, invoices and receipts**

A completed NRF Research Grant Report (forms are available on the CNSC's webpage) summarizing research conducted during the tenure of the award must be submitted to the Research Manager by 31 March of the following year. Cash award recipients are required to submit original invoices and receipts (up to a maximum of the cash award amount) for reimbursement to the Research Manager by 31 March of the following year.

All NRF award recipients are expected to acknowledge the support provided in any publication or technical report resulting from the funded research.

The CNSC appreciates receiving copies of any published papers, reports or theses based on NRF supported research, and is willing to accept donations of research and teaching materials. Donations can include copies of unpublished or published research

articles, newly published or used books, maps, undergraduate or graduate level poster presentations, course reports, presentation materials related to Churchill and other northern regions, photographs, slides or digitized images, and newsletters and promotional materials relevant to northern research.

As noted in Section 1.3, special calls may include additional reporting requirements (with external donors). Successful applicants are expected to meet these reporting requirements (in addition to those specified for the NRF).

### **3.0 The decision making process**

The members of the R&E Committee will receive copies of all eligible applications, the values of funds to be disbursed in the current competition, and a summary document prepared by the Research Manager noting projects that 1) are new and previously funded or ongoing, 2) may impact the functioning of CNSC, and 3) duplicate research conducted previously at the CNSC.

If further information is required regarding a project, either the Research Manager or the Chair of the Committee, or his/her delegate, has the authority to seek it from the project's principal investigator or to consult with experts in the field.

To avoid misunderstandings, discussions about proposals should be first with the Research Manager. Should additional clarification be necessary, only the Chair of the Research and Education Committee will discuss proposals with applicants and the nature of the discussion will be explanatory. Applicants should contact the Research Manager for information regarding the facilities and services provided by the CNSC.

The allocation of available NRF funds to successful applicants will be discussed by the members of the R&E Committee and finalized at the meeting of the CNSC BoD. A list of award recipients that is acceptable to the majority of the members of the committee will be sent to the Research Manager. The Research Manager will prepare letters to be signed by the Executive Director notifying each applicant of the results of the competition. In-kind support will become available immediately. All awards will become available for use upon notification.

The Chair of the R&E Committee with support of the Research Manager will provide a brief report on the year's NRF activities and the allocation of the grants to the BoD at the May meeting. A final report summarizing the NRF competition and any reallocation of funds will be prepared by the RM for the May meeting of the BoD of the year following the competition.