



OFFICE of RESEARCH

AGRI-FOOD PARTNERSHIP

Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance

Tier 1 Program Guide

August 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance Tier 1 Overview	4
Tier 1 Research Funding	4
Program Timelines	4
Research Priorities	5
Ontario Agri-Food Research Centres	6
Proposal Review Process	6
Indigenization, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion	7
How to Apply	7
Single Stage Call and Intent Process.....	7
Online Application System – Research Management System (RMS)	8
Lead Applicants and Co-Applicants.....	8
Full Proposal Application	9
Support for Applicants	9
Full Proposal Template.....	10
Research Priority Selection.....	10
Research Team and Invitation Process.....	11
Highly Qualified Personnel (HQP)	12
Knowledge Translation and Transfer (KTT).....	13
Value Assessment Plan	14
Supporting Documentation.....	14
Peer Reviewers	14
OR-5 Form	15
The RMS Budget and Leverage Guidelines.....	16
Budget Limits.....	16
Eligible and Ineligible Expenses	16
Leverage / Partner Funding	17

Overhead/Indirect Costs	19
Building a Project Budget	19
Budget for Collaborating Researchers	20
Sub-Awards (for U of G Collaborating Researchers)	20
Collaborative Research Agreements (for non-U of G Collaborating Researchers)	21
Ontario Agri-Food Research Centre Use and Access Fees.....	21
Data	22
Research Security.....	23
Intellectual Property (IP) and Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDA).....	23
Application Checklist and Post Award Processes	24
Full Proposal Checklist	24
Full Proposal Decision Notification and Award Phase.....	24
Data Management Plans	25
Post Award-Reporting	25
Non-Compliance with the Terms of the Award Agreement.....	26
Acknowledging Alliance Research Funding.....	26
Appeal Process	27
APPENDIX: Review Committee Scorecard	28

ONTARIO AGRIFOOD INNOVATION ALLIANCE TIER 1 OVERVIEW

The priority-driven Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance Research Program, a collaboration between the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness (OMAFRA, the Ministry) and the University of Guelph (U of G), supports leading research aligned to support strong rural communities, keep our food safe, and develop a prosperous, environmentally sustainable agri-food sector in Ontario.

Tier 1 Research Funding

The Tier 1 Research Program provides project operating funding for research related to current Ministry research questions, as well as subsidized access to Ministry -funded resources, such as Ministry-supported technicians and [research centres](#).

Research centre access for Tier 1 projects is subsidized at a rate of 89%. External (non-Alliance) partner funding is required to cover 11% of the total annual cost of research centre usage for the approved project.

Project specifications:

- **Duration:** up to 36 months (3 years)
- **Maximum Funding Request:** up to \$240,000
- **Project Start Date:** on or after May 1, 2025

The duration of the proposed projects and the size of the budget request must be commensurate with the nature of the research proposed.

Please note that the Tier 1 Research Program budget available for projects in this current call is 34% lower than last year's budget.

Program Timelines

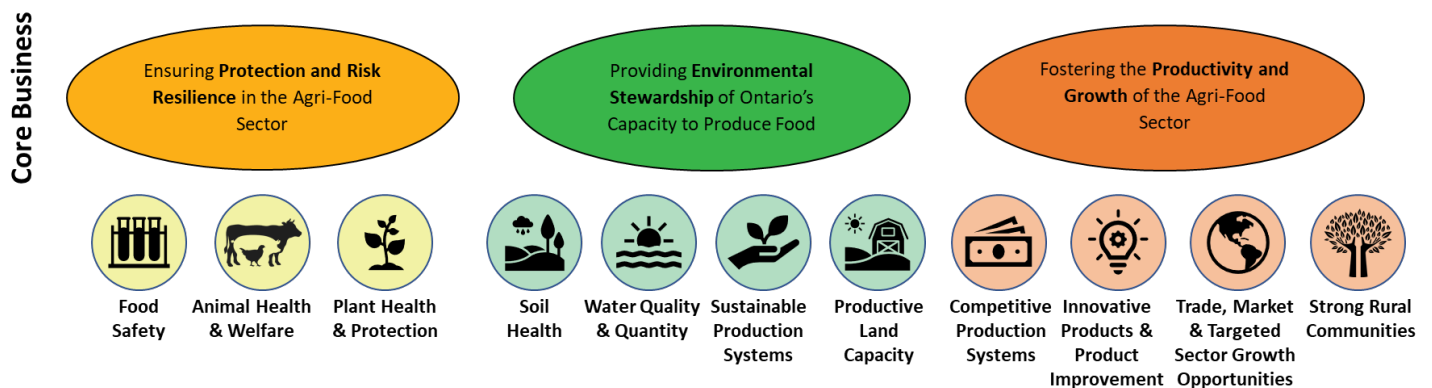
- Program Launch: August 15, 2024
- [Intent](#) fields due: Thursday, October 10, 2024
- Full Proposal submission deadline: Tuesday, November 5, 2024, at 1:00 pm
- Anticipated award notification: March 2025

This guidance document is focused on program details and the application process for the Tier 1 Research Program. Details about the other Alliance programs will be available when their respective program launches.

Research Priorities

Each year the Ministry undertakes a research priority setting process. Research priorities for the Alliance Research Program are aligned within the Ministry's core businesses and objectives: Protection and Risk Resilience, Environmental Stewardship, and Productivity and Growth as illustrated in the following image.

OMAF Research Priorities by Core Business



Each of these research priorities has a set of goals and research focus areas, in addition to five cross-cutting focus areas. Specific research questions, together with the research problem/information gap and desired outcomes of the research, have been identified for the Alliance Tier 1 Research Program. These questions are outlined in the Appendix of the full Research Priorities document which is available on the [Priority-Driven Programs Support World-Class Research and Training webpage](#) and available in the online application system.

Program applicants must clearly demonstrate that their proposal is within scope of the Ministry's research priorities and **addresses a specific research question in the Appendix of the priorities document.**

A number of the research questions are identified as requiring a Value Assessment Plan (VAP) as part of the research proposal (see the Appendix of the priorities document). In addition, any project proposing product development research requires a VAP. The VAP template is posted on the [Alliance Tier 1 program webpage](#) and available in the online application system (RMS).

Researchers are strongly advised to read through the entire Research Priorities document, including the Appendix, as some research topic areas and related questions may be identified under several

different Focus Areas throughout the document. Researchers are also encouraged to search the document electronically (using the Find function) for key words that are of interest to them.

Ontario Agri-Food Research Centres

Through the unique partnership between the University of Guelph and the Ministry, crop and livestock research centres located throughout Ontario drive research support for the agri-food industry. The centres are owned by the Government of Ontario through its agency, the Agricultural Research Institute of Ontario, and managed by the University of Guelph through the Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance. Centre access is obtained through an application to one of the Alliance Research Programs, most commonly Tier 1 or Tier 2.

For a complete list of research centres and associated access fees, please view the [Research Centre Fee webpage](#).

It is the responsibility of the Lead Applicant to ensure the work at a research centre(s) is covered by a fully awarded Alliance project to avoid being charged the unsubsidized rate. The Research Centre Manager will confirm award status before research centre access is permitted.

Proposal Review Process

All proposals will be reviewed by external peer reviewers, as well as a review committee consisting of subject matter experts from academia, government, and industry. Proposals will be reviewed against established criteria including:

- Fit with priorities. Projects must demonstrate how the project addresses a specific research question;
- Strength of the project lead(s) and research team;
- Benefits to client groups and contribution to Ontario's agri-food sector and rural communities. End users should be engaged early on wherever possible;
- Quality and clarity of the experimental design;
- Deliverables that are clear, tangible, measurable and achievable;
- Strength of the Knowledge Translation and Transfer (KTT) plan;
- Value for money; and
- Evidence of involvement of relevant partners through leverage and partnerships.

The scorecard used by the review committees is provided in the [appendix](#) to this program guide.

Additional elements may be considered during the review process if a need is identified (e.g., for trans-disciplinary projects, indigenous projects, etc.)

Review committees will make funding recommendations to the Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance Research Program Management Committee. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of the Ministry.

Timely review and awarding of projects is important to support effective program management. Unless alternate arrangements are made with Alliance program staff, proposal revisions requests and/or responses to a conditional offer of funding should be submitted on time to avoid withdrawal of the proposal or the offer of funding.

Indigenization, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

The University of Guelph is committed to the principles of indigenization, equity, diversity and inclusion (IEDI). All applicants to Alliance funding programs are encouraged to review the [EDI Resource Document for Researchers](#) developed by the U of G Office of Research Services.

A general question about IEDI is included in the proposal. This question is not part of the proposal evaluation.

HOW TO APPLY

Single Stage Call and Intent Process

The Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance research program awards operating (Tier 1) funding annually via a competitive, peer-reviewed call for proposals process.

The Tier 1 program is administered using a **single stage call** (Full Proposals only). The call cycle has been designed to address researchers' needs for earlier award notification that is supportive of graduate student recruitment at a more appropriate time in the academic cycle, as well as permits advanced planning for field work in year one of the projects.

An **Intent process** is used to support peer review and review committee planning in advance of the submission deadline.

The Intent process requires that all applicants complete the 'General' and 'Peer Review' tabs in the RMS Application by October 10, 2024. There is no 'submit' button or formal submission process for the Intent process. Simply ensure required content for those two tabs are complete by this date, to signal your intent to submit a Full Proposal to the program.

Online Application System – Research Management System (RMS)

All Alliance programming is administered in the RMS. Log in to the RMS through the [RMS Log In webpage](#). Please contact rescoord@uoguelph.ca if you experience any difficulties logging in.

To open an application, select the 'Alliance Tier 1 Research Program' under 'Invited Calls' and click on 'Determine Eligibility'. Confirm your eligibility to apply for funding to access an application.

For the best experience we suggest using the latest version of Chrome, Firefox or Safari. Internet Explorer is no longer supported by the RMS platform provider.

Lead Applicants and Co-Applicants

The **Lead Applicant** is the primary award holder and is accountable for project management and compliance with any reporting requirements, including management of project funding and financial reporting.

A **Co-Applicant** (optional) is a researcher that plays an important and ongoing role in the development and implementation of the project. Co-Applicants are identified and invited from the Invitations tab in RMS. There can only be one Co-Applicant. Co-Applicants have the same editing capabilities on applications and reports as the Lead Applicant.

Current University of Guelph faculty members (UGFA Unit 1 or 2) are eligible to be the Lead Applicant and/or a Co-Applicant on any Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance Research Program project. Retired faculty members holding Professor Emeritus status are eligible to be the Lead Applicant or a Co-Applicant, as long as they are eligible to hold research funding at the University of Guelph. Adjunct faculty members may also apply as a Lead Applicant or Co-Applicant (using their @uoguelph.ca email address and their U of G department for their RMS login credentials) if all of the following conditions are met:

- They are eligible to hold research funding at the University of Guelph. This status is verified by the Chair/Director and Dean through the approval of the OR-5 form;
- They are not employed by or have a financial interest in any of the collaborating organizations or co-funders; and
- Their adjunct position permits them to engage in research-related activities that are not under the direction of another individual.

Non-faculty team members are not eligible to be either a Lead or Co-Applicant.

Prior to a new proposal being reviewed in any Alliance program, the Lead Applicant and Co-Applicant (if applicable) must be in 'good standing' for all existing Alliance


projects – including up-to-date reporting, Data Management Plan submissions, and current with recovery all outstanding Research Centre fees and other financial obligations.

The Lead Applicant and the Co-Applicant will have 30 days from the submission deadline to complete any outstanding compliance requirements). If the Lead Applicant or Co-Applicant remain non-compliant 30 days past the submission deadline, the submitted proposal will be withdrawn from the review process and declined. Likewise, prior to being awarded any new project(s) under the Alliance, Lead Applicants and Co-Applicants must be in 'good standing' (as described above) for existing Alliance projects at the time of award.

FULL PROPOSAL APPLICATION

Support for Applicants

The following supports are available to assist researchers in the application process:

- This program guide;
- Instructions and tool tips (denoted by ) in the RMS application template;
- Tier 1 RMS Application Tip Sheet available on the RMS Researcher Workbench Home page ('Help' icon);
- [Preparing your Tier 1 Proposal](#) Quick Tips document on the Alliance website; and
- Microsoft Word version of the application template and an Excel version of the budget template are available as optional resources on the [Alliance Tier 1 program webpage](#). Please note all project and budget content must be entered in the RMS prior to submission.

Optional Compliance Check. Office of Research, Agri-Food Partnership staff are offering to complete a compliance check of proposals in advance of the submission deadline. The compliance check does not assess overall quality or scientific merit, but will review the proposal for issues that are not caught during the system validation checks in the RMS, including issues identified by reviewers (e.g., congruence between team/HQP tables and the budget, eligibility of budget items etc.). Please email rescoord@uoguelph.ca on or before the intent deadline (October 10) if you want program staff to complete a compliance check of your proposal. The compliance checks will occur between October 14 to 25 and proposals should be at or near completion.

If you experience technical difficulties or need support with the RMS application template, please contact our Research Programs Coordinators at rescoord@uoguelph.ca.

Proposal documentation is provided to panel members and peer reviewers for review purposes only and is treated as strictly confidential. Basic project information from awarded projects, including the project description, may be shared publicly.

Full Proposal Template

The Full Proposal application consists of several sections that are navigated via tabs across the top of the on-line application in the RMS. All tabs must be completed. The majority of the proposal instructions are provided in the RMS, but some additional guidance is provided below.

A validation process will take place upon submission to ensure all mandatory fields are complete and the budget balances.

Research Priority Selection

Identify the **specific research question** your proposal will address from the Appendix of the [Research Priorities document](#). Select the Research Priority and Research Focus Area associated with that question from the drop-down lists in the RMS.

Please ensure you are selecting the correct Research Priority and Research Focus Area based on the research question you selected from the Appendix of the priorities document.

Identify the primary research question you are addressing in the 'Research Question ID' field and provide the complete text of your research question from the priorities document in the 'Research Question' field. This field is used to assist reviewers in assessing your proposal. Clearly describe how the project addresses the research question in the 'Alignment with OMAFRA Priorities' field in the 'Proposal Details' tab of the RMS application.

It is essential that proposals align with a specific research question outlined in the research priorities document. Proposals will be pre-screened by the Ministry for fit with program priorities and projects that do not address a specific research question will not advance further in the review process.

Please reach out to the relevant Ministry Research Priority Contacts outlined in the [Research Priorities document](#) if assistance is needed in selecting a Research Question or assessing alignment.

Research Team and Invitation Process

Team members and Highly Qualified Personnel are identified in their respective tables in the Team tab in the RMS. The **research team member invitation process** is described in the application template and in the tip sheets (accessible under the 'Help' icon on the RMS home page). Co-Applicants, Delegates (described below), and all Collaborators should confirm their participation in the project and be registered in the RMS by the Full Proposal submission date. Confirmed Collaborators will have read-only access to the proposal (except for the Expenditures of Project Funding table within the Budget tab and the Data, IP, and Research Security tabs). Co-Applicants and Delegates (both optional) will have the ability to edit the proposal.

A **Delegate** (optional – limit of one) is an individual whose only role is to assist the Lead Applicant in the creation and editing of the proposal and progress reports (for awarded projects). A Delegate must be from U of G. A Delegate, while not formally a team member, is identified and invited from the team member tab in the RMS. Delegates that play an active role in the research project must also be identified and invited as a Collaborator or identified in the HQP table in the RMS (this is important for performance indicator reporting for Alliance programs).

Collaborative and multi-disciplinary projects are encouraged. There is no limitation placed on the balance of the team composition, but all team members should play an active role as collaborators in the implementation of the project (advisory, researcher or knowledge broker). The team may include individuals from:

- U of G (researchers and other support staff e.g., technicians);
- Other University or research institutions in Canada or globally;
- Private businesses;
- Industry / commodity organizations;
- Non-governmental organizations; and
- Provincial, federal or municipal government departments (e.g., Ministry staff).

Students and Post-Docs should not be included as members of the Research Team. Please see the Highly Qualified Personnel section below.

The project team composition should ensure that research expertise from all relevant disciplines and broad perspectives are brought to bear on the research objective(s) to be addressed. Where applicable, team members responsible for KTT should be identified in the team table. **A team member's expertise and their role in the project should be clearly described in the team member table.**

A **Funding Source** field captures the funding source for team members to help support the evaluation of the budget. This field applies primarily for team members working at the U of G (e.g., Research

Technicians, Research Associates, etc.) who are funded as part of the project, other Alliance/Ministry funding, or from partner funds. Select one of the following for each team member as appropriate:

- **This project (in whole or in part)** – for team members who will be supported directly with project funds. At least a portion of their salaries need to be **identified in the “Request from Program” table in the budget.**
- **Another OMAFRA program** – for Research Technicians etc. who are supported through other funding from the Alliance (e.g., base funded Technician) or Ministry programs. This not to be used for Ministry staff whose salaries **should not** appear in the budget, as they are paid regardless of project funding.
- **Other funding source** – for team members supported under this project through partner funds. These expenses, and the relevant co-funder(s), need to be **identified in either the “Cash from Partners”** (if funds are coming into the University) **or “In-kind Support from Partners” tables in the budget.**
- **N/A** - for all other team members (U of G faculty, Ministry staff, collaborating researchers etc.). Their salaries **should not** appear in the budget, as they are paid regardless of project funding.

The **FTE** (full-time equivalent) you report in the team member table should reflect the total average annual time that each individual will contribute to the project. An FTE is 1.0 is a full-time commitment to the project (e.g., 35 hours per week) and an FTE of 0.1 is equivalent to 3.5 hours per week (for a 35-hour week). Documenting FTE contributions are important to support Alliance Programs performance indicator reporting.

The involvement of all team members (including their estimated actual FTE contributions to the project) will be reported on in annual and final reports.

Highly Qualified Personnel (HQP)

The training and development of Highly Qualified Personnel is an important objective of the Alliance and is an Agreement performance indicator. Effort should be made wherever possible to engage HQP in Alliance-funded research projects.

HQP are students (undergraduate, graduate, or diploma) or post-doctoral scholars receiving training through the proposed research. These HQP are captured separately from team members in the RMS. Please provide details on **all** HQP that will be involved in the project, regardless of their stipend/salary funding source.

Unlike Team Members, Highly Qualified Personnel do not need to be invited to the project through the invitations process. Proposals can move forward without specific persons identified as HQP if the positions are not yet filled. If specific people are not identified, use “TBD” as a placeholder for the first and last name within the HQP table and complete all other fields except for e-mail address. An individual record is needed for each individual student/Post-Doc to be hired. Similar to the Team Member table, identify the HQP Funding Source as either ‘This project (in whole or in part)’, ‘HQP Scholarship Program’, ‘Other funding source’, or N/A (if the student will not receive compensation, e.g., coursework Masters students).

Ensure that all personnel that will be supported through the project, either through program or partner funds, are reflected in the Team Member and HQP Tables and are clearly identified in the budget.

Knowledge Translation and Transfer (KTT)

The Alliance is committed to ensuring connections between researchers and research users. It is important to the program to demonstrate how research knowledge will be disseminated. The KTT tab in the application consists of two tables: KTT User Audiences and the KTT Plan. Instructions for completing these two tables are in RMS. The KTT Plan asks you to estimate costs for your KTT activities. Please ensure the costs for KTT activities are reflected in your proposal budget using either program funds (Request from Program) or partner funds (Other Sources of Project Funding).

There are several resources available to assist you in creating your KTT plan. Visit the [KTT Services and Resources webpage](#) to access these resources.

- [Growing Knowledge Translation and Transfer in Ontario: A Manual of Best Practices \(PDF 1.58 MB\)](#): This manual outlines a collection of best practices in agri-food and rural KTT that can help guide you through the development of your KTT plan.
- [KTT Plan Checklist \(PDF 189 KB\)](#): A practical tool based on the Alliance KTT plan template. These guidelines, prepared by Alliance funding program reviewers, ensure your proposal covers key aspects of KTT planning.
- [KTT Example Plans \(PDF 1.26 MB\)](#): Examples of complete KTT plans to help provide ideas of innovative KTT activities as well as questions to consider as you answer each section.
- [Knowledge Translation and Transfer \(KTT\) Plan Appraisal Tool \(PDF 105.68 KB\)](#): This tool is a decision aid / rubric to help reviewers appraise and assess KTT Plans in the Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance’s research project proposals.

In addition to these resources, Alliance staff are available to help guide you in the creation of your KTT Plan. Contact kttadmin@uoguelph.ca for guidance around the KTT section of your proposal or if you have any questions about these resources.

Value Assessment Plan

Proposals that involve the development of a product or service must include a Value Assessment Plan (VAP). The VAP is a short series of questions to guide and define product development considerations related to your proposal. Research questions requiring a VAP are identified in the Appendix of the research priorities document. Projects addressing other priorities that have a product development component should also submit a VAP. The VAP template is accessible from the [Alliance Tier 1 program webpage](#) and the top of the application in RMS. Upload the VAP in the Documentation tab under Other Supporting Documentation in RMS. It must be in PDF format.

Supporting Documentation

Supporting documentation must be in PDF format in order to be appended to the proposal and may include:

- Team Member Supporting Documentation
 - CV's of the Lead Applicant and Co-Applicant (mandatory)
- Proposal Details Supporting Documentation
 - References for your Literature Review (mandatory)
 - Relevant articles demonstrating industry needs
 - One-page diagram which illustrates the methods described in the proposal
- Other Supporting Documentation
 - Letters of support. **Note: Letters of support from the Ministry are not admissible**
 - Confirmation of leveraged funding (a letter confirming the nature and value of cash and in-kind support is required before the project can be awarded)

Additional information, included in the supporting documentation fields, beyond what is listed here, will not be assessed as part of your proposal.

Peer Reviewers

In order to support our review process, which includes peer review and panel review, applicants are required to provide the contact information for peer reviews. We require a minimum of five suggestions, although ten is preferred. Peer reviewer suggestions must not be in a conflict with the

proposal as described below, and have appropriate expertise to provide an objective review of the proposal.

Conflict of interest is defined as a conflict between the suggested peer reviewers' duties and their responsibilities with regard to the review process and that person's private, professional, business or public interests. Specifically:

- They are not from U of G or the Ministry;
- They are not a relative, employer or employee of the Lead Applicant, Co-Applicant, or a project team member or in a conflict with any one of these individuals in any way;
- They will not benefit monetarily or in any other way from the funding of this project;
- They have not helped to shape the proposal under review;
- They do not represent an industry, organization or company where there is or is likely to be a financial, intellectual, professional or personal advantage directly to them or their organization;
- They have not been actively engaged in developing, conducting or publishing research with the Lead Applicant, Co-Applicant, or any project team member during the last two years.

Researchers may be contacted if more suggested peer reviewers are required to meet the required number of reviews for the proposal. When identifying suggested researchers, please ensure their e-mail addresses are up to date (e.g., federal employees, including those at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, have transitioned to using @canada.ca instead of @agr.gc.ca) and avoid using personal e-mails (e.g., Gmail addresses).

Please ensure peer review emails are accurate. This is critical to ensure our invitation processes function properly.

OR-5 Form

OR-5 fields are completed on-line by the applicant on the OR-5 tab within the RMS. Departmental and College approval will be obtained electronically following proposal submission. No further action is needed from the applicants.

Be sure to identify if there are external sources of cash funding, use of ARIO (Agricultural Research and Innovation Ontario) research centres, and declare any financial interest in any project partners on the OR-5 Form.

THE RMS BUDGET AND LEVERAGE GUIDELINES

Budget Limits

Projects can be up to 36 months (3 years) with a maximum request of \$240,000. The duration of the proposed projects and the size of the budget request must be commensurate with the nature of the research proposed.

Eligible and Ineligible Expenses

The following provides a guideline of direct project expenses that are eligible under the Alliance Tier 1 Research Program. It is not an exhaustive list. Please contact rescoord@uoguelph.ca with any questions regarding eligibility of budget items (either as direct project expenses or as matching contributions).

Eligible project expenses (can also be provided by funding partners):

- Salaries of scientific or technical staff employed on a contract basis or hired specifically for the purposes of this project (including those at U of G if **not** funded by the Alliance). Value should be based on their FTE contribution to the project;
- Graduate student stipends;
- Goods and services necessary for the project (e.g., supplies, disposables, sampling, lab testing, etc.);
- Equipment purchases (generally not exceeding \$10,000 per item). Alliance funding is limited and not intended for significant equipment purchases with a useful lifespan beyond the duration of the project. However, a larger equipment purchase (exceeding \$10,000) that is fundamental to the research project may be eligible with a strong rationale. The review committees will consider these purchases on a case-by-case basis. Please contact rescoord@uoguelph.ca if you have any questions about equipment purchases.
- Equipment leases/rentals (should be identified as 'Operating – Other' in the budget);
- KTT and technology transfer related costs such as the organization of workshops (venue, meals etc.) and communication materials;
- Publication costs (e.g., page charges for academic journals);
- Travel necessary to carry out the project (e.g., to research centres and field plots); and
- Travel to conferences where project information is being presented.

Ineligible project expenses:

- The salary of the Lead Applicant or Co-Applicant;
- Ministry staff time or resources;

- Salaries of permanent staff whose compensation is not specifically dependent on on-going research project funding; and
- Support for meetings/events that would occur regardless of project funding.

Leverage / Partner Funding

Funding partners are individuals or organizations that contribute cash and/or in-kind support to the project. These partners are captured under the 'Other Sources of Project Funding' section within the Budget tab in the RMS.

All cash leverage from partners must come through the Office of Research Services and have a separate OR-5 associated with it.

In-kind contributions are non-cash contributions providing a direct, tangible benefit to the project. The donated asset or contribution must be essential to the project's success and if not donated, would need to be purchased and paid for from approved project funds. In-kind contributions must be in lieu of eligible project expenses only.

All cash and in-kind contributions must be fully explained in the RMS budget Justification text boxes. The value of the in-kind assets or services donated must reflect fair market value for the time period it is donated. The eligibility and value of in-kind contributions will be assessed by the review committee.

The Alliance Tier 1 Research Program does not have prescribed matching or partner funding requirements. This approach recognizes that this program funds a broad diversity of research that spans the continuum from discovery research through to applied and pre-commercialization research, as well as policy and 'public good' research that is less likely to attract third party investment. Furthermore, there are significant differences in the ability of different end users to financially support research projects (e.g., smaller vs. larger industry groups).

The Ministry wants to understand how their investment is used to leverage research capacity and other supports, as leverage is a key performance indicator for Alliance Programs. So, while Tier 1 projects do not *require* matching funding, funding partners show industry and end user pull/support for a project, which helps build a strong rationale for the research. **Effort should be made to secure partner support wherever possible.**

When documenting your leveraged funding in the RMS, funding partners may have both an Organization and Funding Program (for example NSERC Discovery has the Organization 'NSERC' and Funding Program 'Discovery'). Please ensure you correctly

identify these as independent entries (for example do not input the Organization as 'NSERC Discovery').

Review committees will take into account the level and nature of partner support that could reasonably be expected for particular types of projects. All partner support, whether cash or in-kind, needs to be fully documented/justified and considered essential to directly carry out the work of the project.

Funding partners can include:

- U of G (Lead Applicant organization) cash support only (e.g., scholarships, start-up funds etc.);
- Federal (including tri-council), provincial (including non-Alliance Ministry funding), or municipal governments;
- Other universities / research Institutions;
- Business and Industry;
- Non-governmental organizations; and
- Individual donors, private foundations.

Ineligible partner cash and in-kind:

- In-kind support from the Ministry (time, resources, supplies, materials, etc.);
- In-kind support from U of G including use or provision of existing supplies, materials, and equipment belonging to the Lead Applicant, Co-Applicant, or U of G collaborators and their departments;
- In-kind support from existing agreements with U of G to provide researchers with reduced cost access to equipment or services (e.g., rental car agreements);
- Salaries for individuals that are 'regular, base-funded' positions within the applying or donating organization (e.g., government scientists). These individuals, if involved in the project, should be identified on the 'Project Team Members' table and invited to participate in the project. Their Funding Source in the Team Members' table should be identified as "N/A". Time of staff at partnering organizations can be considered in-kind support when it is non-advisory service type work (e.g., data/sample collection or provision of analytical services);
- Teaching assistantships, unless they are part of the base stipend of the student and are identified in their offer letter;
- Other Alliance funding, including graduate student stipends awarded under the HQP Scholarship Program (however, these HQP must still be identified the HQP table); and
- Alliance-funded Technician time (however, Alliance-funded Technicians must be identified on the team member table to support performance indicator reporting, and their Funding Source should be identified as "Another OMAFRA Program").

If your proposal depends on leveraged funding (cash or in-kind support), please ensure you select "Yes" on this field in the OR-5 tab in the RMS.

Overhead/Indirect Costs

Request from Program: Indirect Costs for Alliance-funded research are integrated into the overall OMAFA-U of G Agreement. No indirect costs are identified at the project level. The overhead percentage identified in the Budget tab should always remain at 0%.

Cash from Partners: Indirect Costs must be included at the applicable rate on partner cash contributions from government and industry sponsors when those contributions leverage Ministry funding. **Identify these costs in the 'Operating-Other' category in the 'Cash from Partners' expenditure table and describe them in the budget justification text box.** More information is available through the [Research Services Office webpage about Indirect Costs of Research at the University of Guelph](#).

Ensure indirect costs on partner funds are captured in the budget in the Operating - Other category in the Cash from Partners budget table.

Indirect costs levied by a collaborating institution receiving transfers of Alliance project funds are eligible up to 25% and must be included in the budget under 'Operating-Other' in the 'Funds Requested from Program' expenditure table and described in the budget justification text box (see Collaborative Research Agreement section below).

Building a Project Budget

An Excel version of the budget template is available on the [Alliance Tier 1 program webpage](#) as an optional tool to draft and plan your budget. This is for planning purposes only. **DO NOT** upload this Excel budget to your application. You are required to complete and submit the budget outline provided in the application in the RMS.

1. **Amount Requested from the Program** – identify the funding requested from the Alliance Tier 1 Program for this proposal with a maximum request of \$240,000.
2. **Other Sources of Project Funding** - identifies cash and in-kind support from partners. This table will appear after indicating 'Yes' for 'Are there any other sources of project funds?' Click 'ADD Funding Source' and provide the details requested for each funding partner supporting the project.

3. **Expenditures of Project Funds** - There are three tables to be completed in the Budget tab (will appear in a pop-up window):
- Request from Program;
 - Cash from Partners (appears if you have indicated there are other sources of funding for the project); and
 - In-kind Support from Partners (appears if you have indicated there are other sources of funding for the project).

The use of research centres requires cash support from partners (non-Alliance sources) to cover the portion of research centre access fees that is not subsidized by the Ministry.

Use of program and partner funds should be allocated across budget categories and fiscal years. Each row in the budget corresponds to a U of G fiscal year (May 1 – April 30) that the project will take place. E.g., A 3-year project beginning November 1st would require 4 budget periods (fiscal years) – the first and last periods covering 6 months only.

Use of projects funds must be fully explained in the budget justification text boxes provided. Your justifications are necessary for reviewers to determine whether your expenses are eligible, commensurate with the nature of your proposed research, and are valued appropriately.

Insufficient justification can create uncertainty in the likelihood of project success during panel review; as such, researchers are highly encouraged to fully explain proposed expenditures.

Budget for Collaborating Researchers

Sub-Awards (for U of G Collaborating Researchers)

If required for the project, a sub-award, with a separate FRS grant number, can be set up upon request to allow for a collaborating U of G faculty member to manage a distinct portion of the project budget. Otherwise, U of G Researchers are expected to manage their project spending collaboratively within a single FRS account.

- A separate budget worksheet which provides the details of the sub-award must be uploaded with the proposal. The budget worksheet is available on the [Alliance Tier 1 program webpage](#).
- In addition, a *Letter of Agreement for Internal Transfer of Funds* will be required at the time of award.

- It is the Lead Applicant's responsibility to report on all project activities, including the work of collaborating team members, regardless of the presence of a sub-award or a Collaborating Research Agreement.

Collaborative Research Agreements (for non-U of G Collaborating Researchers)

Alliance project funding awarded for an approved project can be transferred to another organization for use by a team member via a Collaborative Research Agreement (CRA). Typically, CRAs are greater than \$10,000 per year and require the completion of a legal agreement between the University of Guelph and the collaborating institution. It is expected that CRAs will not encompass more than 50% of the Amount Requested from the Program. Although CRAs are created post-award, they must be identified at the proposal stage with the following budgetary information:

- If a CRA is required, a separate budget worksheet which provides the details of the budget for the CRA must be uploaded with the proposal. The budget worksheet is available on the [Alliance Tier 1 program webpage](#).
- Any **overhead/indirect costs** levied by the receiving institution on such fund transfers of Alliance project support must be included in the amount identified and budgeted for transfer, as there is no other mechanism by which such indirect expenses can be paid. The maximum overhead rate allowed is 25%.

It is the Lead Applicant's responsibility to report on all project activities, including the work of collaborating team members.

Ontario Agri-Food Research Centre Use and Access Fees

U of G faculty have access to a number of Ontario Agri-Food Research Centres at highly subsidized rates. If you intend to use a research centre(s), please ensure this is identified in the 'General' Tab and the 'OR-5' tab under the Resource Use section in the RMS. This will create a section on the Budget tab where you identify the specific research centre services you require. Full instructions are available in the RMS application.

Visit the [Alliance Tier 1 program webpage](#) for a complete list of Ontario Agri-Food Research Centres and access fees.

Third party (non-Alliance) funding is required to cover the non-subsidized portion of the fee.

A fully awarded Alliance project is required before research centre access can commence.

Data

A few key questions regarding data sharing and access are included in the proposal under a Data tab. Please consider your responses to these data sharing questions as you complete the [intellectual property](#) section of the proposal.

A Data Management Plan is a condition of funding for all projects (see the [Data Management Plan](#) section below).

As per the Ministry's Data and Intellectual Property Licence described in the OMAFA-University of Guelph Agreement, please be aware that the Ministry can request and use project-generated Data, Records and Intellectual Property (IP) internally for educational use and for use in informing government policy. The Ministry cannot share data with third parties or use it for commercial benefit without written consent. The Data and IP Licence does not give the Ministry the right to access Background or Third-Party Data for any purpose other than the sole purpose of exercising its limited rights under the Data and IP Licence. Please reach out to a Research Program Coordinator at rescoord@uoguelph.ca if you have any questions.

Please note there is an expectation that any third-party agreements related to your project include, and do not limit, the provisions of the Ministry's Data and Intellectual Property Licence.

Research Security

The University of Guelph recognizes that its research reputation is founded on open and collaborative partnerships with national and international partners in the academic, government, industry and non-profit sectors. These play a key role in research advancements and addressing social, technological and economic issues, and require the research community to take steps to ensure their research is protected.

As required under the OMAFA-UofG Agreement, the University will perform a research security assessment prior to awarding Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance Research and Innovation Funds or allowing activities to be carried out at an ARIO Research Centre.

Applicants are required to identify, mitigate, and manage research security risks in accordance with the Alliance's research security risk management policies and processes. To support this objective, applicants will provide information on the RESEARCH SECURITY tab in the proposal template in RMS. The Research Security Checklist is based directly on the Federal Government's [National Security Guidelines for Research Partnerships Risk Assessment Form](#).

For more information about research security for Alliance programs, including what information is collected and how it is used, please visit the [Alliance Research Security webpage](#).

Please note that the Government of Ontario has the right to decline participation of any person, organization, company, or entity in your project, prior to or after the commencement of the project, on the basis of research security concerns, issues related to the privacy of personal information, confidentiality of confidential information, conflict of interest or a requirement of law.

If you have concerns about the security of your research, including after award, please contact a Research Program Coordinator as soon as possible at rescoord@uoguelph.ca.

Intellectual Property (IP) and Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDA)

Under the Intellectual Property tab identify if any background (pre-existing) IP will be used in the project, particularly if it requires a confidentiality or material transfer agreement. Also indicate whether any foreground (new/arising) IP is expected or anticipated to be developed from the project and identify how it will be managed. Please reach out to the Research Innovation Office if you have any questions about IP ownership or management for Alliance funded projects.

If there is any data or other information that is coming into the project or will be generated during the project that will or may be confidential and require an NDA please clearly describe it, including implications for data sharing and dissemination of results.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST AND POST AWARD PROCESSES

Full Proposal Checklist

- Read the current Research Priorities document. Please be sure to **read the entire Appendix** as some topic areas are not intuitively located within the document.
- Select a specific research question you wish to address with your project.
- Attend the U of G Research Program Town Hall (program information session).
- Develop project concept. If needed:
 - Reach out to the appropriate Research Analyst identified in the Research Priorities document for more detail on Ministry research priorities and research questions.
 - Visit the [University of Guelph Program Directors \(RPDs\) webpage](#) to connect with your Research Program Director (RPD).
 - Connect with your College Research Manager, Alliance Research Program Coordinators and program support staff such as U of G Knowledge Mobilization staff (kttadmin@uoguelph.ca) for support in preparing a strong proposal.
- Assemble project team that includes your researchers, advisors, stakeholders (including Ministry staff if applicable), and technicians. Team members must be confirmed through an invitation process. HQP are identified in a separate table (no invitation needed).
- Complete Intent fields in the RMS (General and Peer Review tabs) **by October 10, 2024**.
- Develop a proposal by completing all tabs in the RMS. Ensure the proposal is complete, well-written and clearly demonstrates how it addresses a specific research question in the priority document. Additional guidance is available on the '[Preparing your Tier 1 Proposal](#)' quick tips document.
- Append all required documents (e.g., Lead Applicant and Co-Applicant CVs, literature review references, Value Assessment Plan if applicable) and other supporting documentation as described above.
- Submit your Full Proposal in the RMS by the **submission deadline (November 5, 2024 at 1:00 pm)**.
- You can access a **PDF version of your proposal** any time using the View Application button within the project record. Note, if your proposal is under review, the project record is not editable, but the View Application button is present on the dashboard under the Current Applications>Under Review table.

Full Proposal Decision Notification and Award Phase

- Researchers will be notified of the outcome of the review and approval process via the RMS.

- Conditionally approved proposals must address any conditions of award described in the notification email through the RMS.
- All projects are awarded subject to conditions. Standard conditions for all projects include confirmation of funding, submission of a Data Management Plan (DMP), and confirmation that Lead Applicants are in good standing with the Alliance. Award Agreements are issued for projects once the response to conditions of funding have been addressed and approved by the Research Program Director and Alliance staff. Execution of Award Agreements will occur by an online 'DocuSign' process. The Lead Applicant and the Department Chair will receive notification via email that there is an Agreement to sign.
- **FRS grant numbers** are accessible on the Award Agreement and on the General tab in the RMS.

Data Management Plans

The Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance is committed to fostering sound data management practices to facilitate new agri-food and rural research. Researchers awarded funding through the Alliance research program must complete a U of G library-endorsed Data Management Plan (DMP) as a condition of award for their approved project(s). A DMP summarizes how data generated over the course of a research project will be stored, shared and maintained. It can help improve the effectiveness and efficiency of a research project as well as help prepare data for preservation and sharing. Visit the [Data Management Plans webpage](#) for more details on how to complete a DMP.

Data Management Plans are a condition of funding for all Alliance research projects. All DMPs must be reviewed and endorsed by the U of G library. Submit your DMP to library@uoguelph.ca. The library will forward the endorsed DMP to the Alliance.

Post Award-Reporting

- Annual progress reports are due 30 days after the anniversary of the project start date (with budget reporting for each fiscal period) and must include reporting on all KTT activities related to the project and a financial update, including on any sub-award and/or CRA agreements.
- Annual reports will be reviewed and approved if acceptable or revisions may be requested. Funding for the following year of the project will only be released once the report has been approved.
- Final reports are due 60 days following the conclusion of the project.
- Annual and final reports become available 45 days before the due date. Timely and quality reporting by faculty is an important obligation and expectation under the Alliance.

- Some of the summary fields will be published publicly in a search portal and most of the report can be shared upon request to the program.
- Reports are reviewed and approved on completeness and merit by Alliance staff and Ministry Research Analysts. Visit the Alliance website for [tips on preparing a high quality report](#).
- Any changes to the start and end dates, objectives, deliverables or budget in an awarded project, must be requested and approved by the Ministry through the amendment request process.
- If you have questions about the amendment or reporting process, please contact rescoord@uoguelph.ca.

Alliance program staff should be notified of any issues affecting project progress as soon as they are identified. Project extensions should be requested at least three months prior to the project end date.

The Key Summary Statements from the final report, along with the Project Description and Objectives, will be publicly available on the [Ontario Agri-Food Research & Innovation Portal](#) on the Government of Ontario website. Items in the Publications Table are also available in the portal.

Non-Compliance with the Terms of the Award Agreement

If there is a failure to comply with the terms of the Award Agreement, including reporting requirements, or if there are substantial unresolved issues related to project progress, the Alliance has the right to withhold funds, deny access to the research centres and/or the right to terminate the project.

ACKNOWLEDGING ALLIANCE RESEARCH FUNDING

Recipients of funding must acknowledge Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness (OMAFRA) support in all public communications products, including news releases, web copy, magazine stories, public-facing reports, interviews, journal articles, conference posters and oral presentations. Visit the Alliance website for more details on [acknowledging OMAFA Funding](#).

APPEAL PROCESS

To ensure the transparency and rigour of the processes involved in the review and selection of proposals, the Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance Research Program has established a policy to guide the appeals process.

The primary purpose of an appeal is to correct errors or omissions made by the review committees during the review of a proposal. These errors are rare, however, in order to maintain fairness and equity to all applicants, the Program does permit appeals under the specific circumstances outlined below.

Appeals are heard only where the researcher demonstrates that an error of fact or process, or inadvertent omission of information has been made by the review committees. A researcher who has had a proposal rejected, or an active project terminated prior to its normal end date, may request a review or appeal of the specific process used in the evaluation or assessment of the proposal or project. All researchers are entitled to receive a written communication indicating the decision regarding the approval or decline of the funding for their proposal or active project, which will include the rationale behind that decision.

For more information about the Appeal Process and/or to request an appeal, please contact Laurie Halfpenny-Mitchell, Director, OMAFA-U of G Agreement and Research Programs at laurieha@uoguelph.ca.

APPENDIX: REVIEW COMMITTEE SCORECARD

The criteria used by review committee members to assess proposals is provided below.

1. RESEARCH TEAM (see Team section of the proposal)

Evaluate the qualifications and suitability of the Lead Applicant, Co-Applicant (if applicable) and team members to conduct the research proposed and to achieve the project outcomes and KTT. Are there gaps in the expertise required to complete the project? Are the roles clearly articulated?

- **Outstanding:** Lead Applicant is a leader in the field. Exceptional expertise from all necessary disciplines represented and contribution of each is fully defined and appropriate.
- **Very Good:** Lead Applicant is highly regarded in the field or has the potential to be a field leader. The research team is complete and has a proven track record in the proposed research area. Roles and responsibilities are clearly articulated.
- **Good:** Lead Applicant is appropriate to lead the study. The research team has experience in the proposed research area. Some revision needed: either additional expertise or better description of team member roles and responsibilities.
- **Sufficient:** The Lead Applicant and research team have some experience in the proposed research area. Key areas of scientific or technical expertise or industry collaboration are deficient. Roles and responsibilities are not well defined.
- **Marginal:** The research team lacks the breadth of experience in the field(s) outlined in the proposal. Project outcomes may be compromised by the lack of experience.
- **Unsatisfactory:** Significant weakness in the research team composition. Project outcomes will be compromised by this weakness.

2. HIGHLY QUALIFIED PERSONAL (HQP) (see Team and Budget section of the proposal)

The training of HQP is an important objective of the Alliance Research Program. The role of HQP in the project should be meaningful and clear. Evaluate the training and development of HQP. HQP includes undergraduates, graduate students and post-doctoral scholars.

The HQP training as described is:

- **Outstanding:** HQP training exceeds expectations for a project of this nature and includes graduate students and/or post-doctoral scholars. The role of HQP in the project execution is fully described, with leadership over key elements of the project.

- **Good:** Makes an appropriate contribution to HQP development for a project of this nature. Role of HQP in the project is sufficiently described.
- **Marginal:** HQP development is less than expected for a project of this nature. Role of HQP in project not well described.
- **Unsatisfactory:** No HQP trained.

3. OBJECTIVES (see Objectives section of the proposal)

Evaluate the project objectives: Are the objectives clear and well developed? To what extent will the project address the research question(s) identified and realize the intended benefits of the project?

The project objectives are:

- **Outstanding:** Objectives are detailed, realistic and very well developed. All project elements fall within the identified research question(s). Anticipated project outcomes and benefits are very likely to be achieved.
- **Very Good:** Clear and detailed description of objectives. All project elements fall within the identified research question(s). Anticipated project outcomes are likely to be achieved.
- **Good:** Objectives are appropriate and fall within the identified research question(s) but minor deficiencies are observed (e.g., lack of clarity, or 1 or 2 project elements out of scope and/or are not in full alignment with the research question(s) identified).
- **Sufficient:** Objectives are reasonable but lack detail, requiring moderate revisions. Project is limited in scope and/or has some elements that do not fall within the identified research question(s). The anticipated benefits of the project may not be fully realized.
- **Marginal:** Objectives are vague or not well developed. Many project elements are out of scope and/or marginally fall within the identified research question(s).
- **Unsatisfactory:** Objectives are vague and poorly developed. Objectives do not fall within the identified research question(s) and the intended benefits of the project are unclear.

4. RESEARCH IMPACT/BENEFIT (see Project Description, Alignment with Ministry Priorities, Objectives, Benefits & Rationale and Deliverables sections of the proposal)

Evaluate the likelihood of this proposal generating a positive impact on the Ontario agri-food sector or rural communities. Is the rationale for the study clearly articulated and does it provide sufficient justification for the project (e.g., knowledge gap to be addressed, problem to be solved)?

The potential impact/benefit of the project is:

- **Outstanding:** Project is very likely to advance the field. Project will contribute significant, lasting benefits to Ontario's agri-food sector/rural communities. Very clear and compelling description of expected benefits that are realistic and exceptional in their potential for impact on the sector.
- **Very Good:** Project will provide significant new knowledge that contributes to Ontario's agri-food sector/rural communities. Benefits for the project are realistic and clearly described.
- **Good:** Project will provide incremental or temporary benefits for Ontario's agri-food sector/rural communities. The benefits are reasonable.
- **Sufficient:** Project will provide limited benefits for Ontario's agri-food sector/rural communities. The benefits are not fully described or are under or overstated.
- **Marginal:** Extent of the potential impact of the project is not clear. A description of the benefits is lacking.
- **Unsatisfactory:** Little benefit evident for Ontario's agri-food sector/rural communities.

5. EXPERIMENTAL PLAN (see Methodology and Milestone sections of the proposal)

Evaluate the quality and clarity of experimental design: Are the methods clear and do they provide sufficient detail to determine the course of the project? Do the methods support the project plan (objectives, milestones and deliverables)? Can these methods realistically achieve the deliverables within the stated timeframes? Are the milestones sufficient in number and detail to understand the project plan and track project progress?

The experimental plan as described is:

- **Outstanding:** Approach is very well developed and is highly innovative and/or original. Methods and milestones are sound and designed to deliver on the project objectives and deliverables. The probability of success is very high.
- **Very Good:** Approach is clear and detailed. Methods and milestones are appropriate to complete the project objectives and deliverables. It is likely the project and milestones will be completed successfully and on time.
- **Good:** Approach is reasonable. Methods and milestones appear appropriate to complete the project objectives and deliverables. The project should be completed on time however minor

revision (additional detail or clarity) of the methods or milestone timing/details may be required.

- **Sufficient:** Project may be completed successfully but the approach lacks clarity or some detail. Some aspects of project timing may be unrealistic and additional detail or clarity of the methods or milestones is required to be confident project objectives and deliverables will be met.
- **Marginal:** Approach is vague and/or is unlikely to produce the planned results. The project timing appears unrealistic and significant additional detail or clarity of the methods and/or milestones are required.
- **Unsatisfactory:** Insufficient detail to assess approach. Unlikely that the project can be completed successfully.

6. DELIVERABLES (See Deliverables section of the Proposal)

Evaluate the project deliverables: Are the deliverables clear, tangible, measurable and achievable within the project timeframe? If fully achieved, will the deliverables result in the outcomes and impact described in the proposal?

The deliverables are:

- **Outstanding:** Deliverables are comprehensive, fully detailed, measurable and clearly achievable. Anticipated outcomes and impact are very likely to be achieved.
- **Very Good:** Clear and concise description of project deliverables resulting in tangible outcomes. Anticipated outcomes and impact likely to be achieved.
- **Good:** Deliverables are clear and appropriate, but weaknesses observed. Minor revision is required to improve clarity and detail or ensure deliverables are tangible.
- **Sufficient:** Deliverables are reasonable but not clearly defined. Moderate revision required to ensure project deliverables are tangible and linked to desired outcomes.
- **Marginal:** Deliverables are not well described or vague and are unlikely to produce the planned results. Major revision required.
- **Unsatisfactory:** Deliverables poorly developed or unrealistic. Project will not result in tangible outcomes.

7. KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION AND TRANSFER (KTT) (see KTT Plan section of the proposal)

Using the [KTT Plan Appraisal Tool](#), evaluate the quality of the KTT Plan. What is your overall assessment of the KTT Plan for this project given the robustness of the KTT approach, the project team's capacity to implement the plan, and the audiences identified as end users of project knowledge? Consider the engagement methods, feasibility, and resources allocated (personnel and money) for the plan. Please provide feedback on specific gaps or strengths in the plan.

The KTT Plan is:

- **Outstanding:** The KTT Plan components are fully, clearly, and comprehensively described with excellence/innovation of approach. Research knowledge will be effectively mobilized to maximize project impact.
- **Very Good:** The KTT Plan components are fully, clearly, and comprehensively described.
- **Good:** The KTT Plan components are well described with most details and the plan is mostly clear.
- **Sufficient:** The KTT Plan components are described without elaboration and some points are unclear.
- **Marginal:** The KTT Plan components are vaguely mentioned or mainly unclear.
- **Unsatisfactory:** The KTT Plan components are missing or not present.

8. BUDGET (see Budget section of the proposal)

Evaluate the budget: Is the budget appropriate for the work proposed? Does the amount of funding requested seem appropriate and expenditures linked to the outcomes described? Are all budget items sufficiently described/justified and valued appropriately?

The budget as presented is:

- **Outstanding:** Budget is clear, very well developed and represents great value for money. All items are fully described and justified in the budget notes and valued correctly.
- **Very Good:** Budget is clear, appropriate for the scale of the proposed research and represents good value for money. All items are sufficiently described and justified and valued correctly but may require minor revisions.
- **Good:** Budget is reasonable for the scale of the proposed research but requires moderate revisions (such as additional clarity and justification for items or more appropriate valuation of some budget items).

- **Sufficient:** Budget is acceptable for the scale of the proposed research but requires moderate revisions (such as additional clarity and justification for items or more appropriate valuation of some budget items). Alignment of expenditures with project outcomes not fully clear.
- **Marginal:** Budget is somewhat appropriate but requires major revisions. Budget items are not sufficiently described or justified or are valued improperly. Alignment of expenditures with project outcomes not fully clear.
- **Unsatisfactory:** Budget is disproportionate to the work proposed or insufficiently described to assess. Budget items not valued appropriately (clearly unrealistic or over- or under-estimated) and/or inadequately justified (poorly explained). Budget does not represent good value for money.

9. LEVERAGE AND PARTNERSHIPS (see Budget and Team sections of the proposal)

Evaluate the leverage and partnerships: Is the level of partnerships and external support (letters of support, expertise, facilities, equipment, cash, in-kind) adequate? Where appropriate, is there evidence that relevant partners are contributing to the project or will be contacted?

Note: While projects do not require matching funding, funding partners show end-user pull/support for a project, which helps build a strong rationale for the research. The appropriate level of leverage funds and partnerships will vary by project depending on the nature of the study. **Please focus on the appropriateness of both cash and in-kind leverage and other evidence of end user support for the type of project.**

The leverage and partnerships are:

- **Outstanding:** Project significantly exceeds the leveraged funds and/or partnerships expected given the type of research. The funds and partnerships are confirmed by documentation (letters of support, in-kind and cash contributions).
- **Very Good:** Project has a high level of leveraged funds and/or partnerships given the type of research. Most stakeholder support is confirmed (letters of support, in-kind and cash contributions) and plans for gaining unconfirmed support are provided.
- **Good:** Project has the adequate level of leveraged funds and/or partnerships given the type of research. It has some stakeholder support confirmed (letters of support, in-kind and cash contributions) or plans for gaining such support are provided.
- **Sufficient:** Project has nearly adequate level of leveraged funds and/or partnerships. It has limited stakeholder support confirmed (letters of support, in-kind and cash contributions) or plans for gaining such support.
- **Marginal:** Project has limited leveraged funds and/or appropriate partnerships given the type of research. There are no letters of support and/or in-kind contributions. Essential facilities and/or access to equipment may be lacking.
- **Unsatisfactory:** Project does not have adequate levels of leveraged funds and/or appropriate partnerships. It has no industry or stakeholder support or plans for gaining support. Essential facilities and/or access to equipment are lacking.

10. OVERALL COMMENTS

Please summarize your overall assessment of the project and any comments you feel will support decision-making. Please provide any feedback you would recommend for the researchers (e.g., conditions of funding if the proposal is funded).

Your overall evaluation for this project is:

Outstanding; Very Good; Good; Sufficient; Marginal; Unsatisfactory