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Guidelines for the McDonald Institute's Advancing I-EDI Fund

Introduction

The Advancing Indigenization – Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (I-EDI) Fund supports efforts that strengthen community and build sustainable capacity in astroparticle physics training and research spaces across Canada. This program invites applications from undergraduate and graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, staff, research scientists, faculty, and community partners provided their proposed activities align with the [McDonald Institute's Research Strategy](#).

I-EDI is vital in physics as a framework of values, practices, and accountability mechanisms that shape how research environments function; supporting scientific progress by promoting fairness in organizational processes, fostering inclusive and innovative collaboration, and ensuring the field remains relevant and accessible to a wide range of talent. Funding across several streams is currently available to offset the real costs to applicants who seek to enhance I-EDI in physics training and research environments. These funds place resources directly with physicists and their partners to advance locally grounded I-EDI action.

Overview of the Fund

Preference will be given to activities that expand I-EDI action in HQP training and research environments in the field of astroparticle physics and related disciplines in one of the following five streams:

Stream 1 (up to \$1,000 CAD) – Seed funding for new initiatives that enhance I-EDI capacity in research labs, groups, and departments for starting novel programs, training opportunities, activities, or events.

Stream 2 (up to \$2,500 CAD) – Support funding for existing initiatives that advance I-EDI in the field for initiatives, programs, activities, or events.

Stream 3 (up to \$2,500 CAD) – Support funding for faculty members who are actively working towards goals using the [DEAP Tool for Researchers](#) (or an equivalent equity-based assessment tool). Advising support for the DEAP Tool is available.

NEW for Round 2 (2026):

Stream 4 (up to \$5,000 CAD) - Seed funding for advancing community partnerships that build relationships with equity-deserving groups, create pathways into physics degrees, or foster interdisciplinary collaborations that may lead to future advancements and sustainment (i.e., retention) in astroparticle physics training and research environments.

Stream 5 (up to \$12,000 CAD) - Seeding support for research projects that examine and advance our understandings of equity, diversity, inclusion, Indigenization, anti-racism, and accessibility (EDI/IAA) within the field of astroparticle physics. Funds may be used to conduct research, produce knowledge mobilization materials, or evaluate practices that strengthen inclusive participation in astroparticle physics research culture.

**Please note that if you are an astroparticle physics faculty member applying for any of these streams, it is expected that you are engaged with the [DEAP Tool for Researchers](#) (or an equivalent equity tool). Faculty have access to advising for the DEAP Tool for Researchers through the Manager for I-EDI Capacity Development (McDonald Institute).*

Who Can Apply?

Applicants must be enrolled or employed in a post-secondary institution or an aligned research facility in Canada. Community organizations may also apply if their proposed activities are conducted in collaboration with an eligible institution or directly support the McDonald Institute research or training environment.

Fund Expenditure Eligibility

Applications **cannot request retroactive coverage** for costs related to an activity. Purchases made prior to the start date of the award letter will not be accepted for reimbursement. The budget must be approved prior to starting the initiative.

Funds will be distributed across a cost-recovery model, upon receiving compliant invoices and a post-initiative report within 30 days of the activity proposed. The funds provided in this competition are sourced from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) and are subject to the eligibility restrictions outlined in the NSERC program guidelines. For guidance on eligible use of funds, please see the Tri-Agency Guide on Financial Administration: <https://nserc-crsng.canada.ca/en/funding/research-partnerships-and-collaborations/inter-agency/tri-agency-financial-administration-1>

Potential Ways to Use the Fund

Applicants are encouraged to propose initiatives that respond to their local contexts and advance I-EDI capacity in research and training environments in meaningful ways. The examples below are offered as guidance only:

- Host an I-EDI training event or workshop for your lab or research group, or student club. These professional development opportunities could span topics in decolonization, Indigenization, reconciliation, accessibility, inclusion, positive space, anti-racism, among other important topics. Open to Streams 1, 2, & 3.
- Start or support an existing mentorship program, inclusive of networking events, mentorship meetups, career workshops, lab tours, field trips, or similar activities. Open to Streams 1 & 2.
- Coordinate with a local STEM advocacy group on collaborative opportunities (for example, education and outreach activities supporting diversity in physics and related disciplines). Open to Streams 1, 2, 3, & 4.
- Purchase of an EDII and physics or STEM book (hardcopy, digital, audio) for a book/journal club. Open to Streams 1, 2, & 3.
- Food and non-alcoholic beverages to enhance lab or collaboration gatherings to participate in an in-person/hybrid/online EDII training, workshop, or speaker. Open to Streams 1, 2, & 3.
- Initiate a menstrual equity program in your building. Open to Stream 1.
- Book simultaneous ASL translation for a public education event. Open to Streams 2, 3, & 4.
- Host a conversation with potential Indigenous partner(s), in which costs for sacred tobacco, Elder or knowledge keeper fees, etc. would be incurred. Open to Streams 2, 3, and 4.
- Hire an accessibility consultant to do an assessment of a physical laboratory space for future upgrades and improvements. Open to Stream 3 & 4.
- Co-design a transition-to-university workshop(s) for equity-deserving high school students with a community partner organization to support students towards physics pathways. Open to Stream 4.
- Conduct a small-scale qualitative and/or quantitative study examining barriers and supports for equity-deserving students entering or participating in astroparticle physics research environments. Open to Stream 5.

Evaluation Criteria

- The proposal must align with [McDonald Institute's strategy](#).
- Proposals must establish a clear connection to advancing one or more of the principles of Indigenization – Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (I-EDI) which may also include

principles of anti-racism, accessibility, positive space, unconscious bias, and more within the astroparticle physics community.

- Proposals must demonstrate the details of the initiative, including a budget plan and justification for expenses, and considerations for the barriers in place to equity deserving participants.
- Proposals must include a plan to measure the impact of the initiative and ideas for how this impact could be sustained post-initiative.
- Proposed Budget and Budget Justification must match, be within the indicated funding Stream maximums, and be eligible expenses as outlined by Tri-Council (see link in earlier section).

Application Process and Post-Award Expectations

1. Ahead of submission, applicants are encouraged to contact Dr. Alexandra Pedersen (alexandra.pedersen@mcdonaldinstitute.ca) before submitting a proposal to confirm eligibility, alignment with the funding stream, and scope. This early conversation can help applicants ensure their proposal is a good fit before investing time in a full submission.
2. To submit an application, the application form and the budget form should be sent as one document to admin@mcdonaldinstitute.ca with “MI Advancing I-EDI Fund – {Applicant’s Last name}” as the subject line.
3. Applications are reviewed on a monthly basis following the closing of each month. Adjudication is carried out internally by McDonald Institute personnel trained in I-EDI principles, with advisory support from appropriate practitioners within Queen’s University’s Human Rights and Equity Office and/or Office of Indigenous Initiatives, where relevant. The adjudication process may require up to 15 business days after the end of the month. Applications will be assessed until program funds are exhausted.
4. Successful applicants will receive an award letter outlining terms and conditions, including eligibility for reimbursement. Unsuccessful applicants may be invited to revise and resubmit their application with additional information.
5. All funded initiatives must receive budget approval prior to commencing. Expenses incurred before the approved start date will not be eligible for reimbursement. Successful applicants are responsible for all aspects of planning, implementing, and managing their proposed initiative.
6. To receive funding, all successful applicants must satisfy NSERC requirements relating to e.g., research security, as well as reporting requirements from the McDonald Institute to ensure completion of the NSERC annual report. Reporting needs and templates will be provided at time of award.
7. Within 30 business days of completing the initiative, successful applicants must submit:
 - a. a short final report outlining the initiative’s activities and outcomes, and

- b. a final budget with actual expenditures and receipts.

Reimbursement will not be processed until all post-initiative reporting requirements are met. Final reports may be used, in whole or in part, for the Institute's publicly facing I-EDI reporting and communications. With applicant collaboration, the McDonald Institute also aims to highlight funded initiatives and their impacts on its website.

Incomplete applications will be returned for resubmission.