

## Canadian Cancer Society/University Health Network Research Grants on Neurofibromatosis and Cancer: Probing the Links

### Evaluation Criteria

#### Overall Scoring

Scores should be given on a scale of 0-5, to 1 decimal place. Only applications with final scores of >3.5 will be eligible for funding.

**Preliminary overall scores (pre-panel meeting)** will be used to rank order applications to allow for sorting applications to be discussed at the panel or triaged (not discussed). Applications with an average score of <3.5 will be triaged. For more details, please refer to the reviewer handbook. **The final average score for a given application (post-panel meeting)** will be used in the rank ordering of applications within the panel.

**Note:** Initial/preliminary scores given during the review process may not be the final scores, as reviewers may need more information to evaluate certain aspects of an application. **Reviewers are free to assess based on their own personal/intersectional expertise/experience and are expected to take the panel discussion into consideration and evaluate the application holistically to determine their final scores.**

#### Score Descriptions

Descriptor	Score range	Definition	Outcome
Outstanding	4.5 - 5.0	<u>All scoring criteria</u> have been met and some exceeded. Each item has been appropriately and thoroughly addressed. Very <u>minor improvements</u> are recommended.	Priority for funding
Excellent	4.0 - 4.5	<u>The majority (&gt;80%)</u> of scoring criteria have been met and some exceeded. The majority of items have been appropriately addressed. Some <u>minor changes</u> are recommended.	
Good	3.5 - 4.0	Many (60-80%) scoring criteria have been met. Most items have been appropriately addressed. There are <u>several minor or one moderate</u> areas for improvement, but no major weaknesses.	Fundable
Fair	3.0 - 3.5	Some (40-60%) scoring criteria have been met. Some items have been addressed but there are notable gaps. There is at least one major weakness <u>or</u> many moderate weaknesses.	Not fundable
Poor	2.0 - 3.0	Not enough (20-40%) scoring criteria have been met. Some items have been addressed but there are notable gaps. There is at least one major weakness <u>and</u> many moderate weaknesses.	
Incomplete	Below 2.0	Few (<20%) scoring criteria have been met. Multiple major weaknesses. The proposal needs significant development before being competitive in this program.	

## Criteria

The lists below show the criteria to be evaluated, and reviewers are asked to use these criteria to help them holistically assess each application. For example, weaknesses in some areas may be compensated for by strengths in other areas.

Initial/preliminary scores given during the review process may not be the final scores, as reviewers may need more information to review certain aspects of an application. Reviewers are free to assess based on their own personal/intersectional expertise/experience and are expected to take into consideration the panel discussion to evaluate the application holistically to determine their final scores.

### Proposal Merit Criteria (25% of score)

Rationale and evidence for the proposed project/approach is thorough, balanced, and compelling.
Aims are clearly articulated and well-conceived.
Approach and methods are well-described and justified.
Feasibility of the project is well-articulated, including identification of potential challenges and how they will be addressed, including risk mitigation and alternative approaches.
Key milestones and timelines are realistic. High likelihood that the project, as described, will generate the anticipated results.
Sex, gender, and other dimensions of diversity and determinants of health (e.g., race, ethnicity, education, economic status) and their intersectionalities are appropriately <u>addressed</u> and <u>incorporated</u> in the design, methods, analysis, interpretation, and dissemination/implementation of findings/outcomes.
The public summary is written in non-technical language and clearly describes the aim of the project, methodology, relevance and potential impact of the proposed project priorities.
Term and amount of support requested are appropriate, and relevant costs are accounted for, including remuneration of team members where eligible (i.e. budget requests for patient and participant-related expenses are reasonable and in line with CCS remuneration policy, trainee budgets are in line with CCS policy).
Where applicable, there is thoughtful consideration of barriers to recruitment and accrual, for example, number of hospital/clinic visits, number of tests, costs to get to treatment (i.e., travel and parking, etc.).

### Team & Environment Criteria (25% of score)

Research team members (including investigators, co-applicants, people affected by cancer, implementers and decision-makers, additional authors, and collaborators) collectively bring the appropriate qualifications and expertise to carry out the proposed project – in particular as it relates to expertise in NF1 and cancer. Team includes/works with new multidisciplinary collaborations, including from outside of the cancer field when relevant.
Equity, diversity, and inclusion considerations, in the context of the research team, are appropriate and well-described.



Meaningful involvement has been demonstrated with <u>all</u> members of the research team in the development of the research proposal (described in the Terms of Reference).
The environment in which the work will take place is suitable (appropriate equipment, support available, mentorship opportunities, etc.).
The team will help build sustainable capacity for future research by including early career researchers, trainees, clinicians, allied health professionals, etc.
People with lived experience of cancer and NF1 are or will be meaningfully engaged throughout the life of the research project (not mandatory).

<b>Relevance and Potential Impact Criteria (50% of score)</b>
Proposed project is clearly and directly related to NF1 and cancer.
Proposed project is original, innovative, and timely.
The potential impact (short- <u>or</u> long-term) of the proposed project is clearly described and will (ultimately) be meaningful to people affected by or at risk of NF1-related cancers
If successful, research will greatly enhance our understanding of a significant problem or barrier in NF1-related cancer prevention, detection, or treatment.
If successful, research will challenge and/or change current approaches to NF1-related cancer prevention, detection, or treatment.
The knowledge translation and mobilization plan is compelling, well described, integrated into the proposed project, and involves relevant parties at the outset to ensure utility of the proposed solution. Detailed potential next steps are provided (including collaborations and partnerships with other research institutions, networks, sectors, etc. as appropriate). Public and/or patient engagement strategies are encouraged and should be rewarded, if present. Equitable access to results is considered.