Canadian Cancer Society/Lotte and John Hecht Memorial Foundation Disruptive Innovation Grants in Cancer Research – 2025

Rating Scales

Overall Scoring

Criteria (weight)
Merit Score (40%)
Innovation, Relevance, and Impact Score (60%)

There are two rating scales reviewers will use to score applications. A Merit rating and an Innovation, Relevance, and Impact (IRI) rating should be provided separately, resulting in two scores. Ratings should be given on a scale of 0-5, to 1 decimal place. Only applications with final scores for **each** rating (Merit and IRI) of **>3.5** will be eligible for funding. Once these scores are submitted into EGrAMS (CCS's grants management system), an overall score will be automatically calculated using the above percentages of the two scores.

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 Merit and/or IRI score of <3.5 will be triaged. For more details, please refer to the reviewer handbook. **The final overall 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	All scoring criteria have been met and some exceeded. Each item has been appropriately and thoroughly addressed. Very minor improvements are recommended.	Priority for funding
Excellent	4.0 - 4.5	The majority (>80%) of scoring criteria have been met and some exceeded. The majority of items have been appropriately addressed. Some minor changes are recommended.	
Good	3.5 - 4.0	Many (60-80%) scoring criteria have been met. Most items have been appropriately addressed. There are several minor or one moderate 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 or 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 and 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.	

Merit – Criteria

The **Merit** rating scale is to be used by reviewers to assess the scientific merit of the proposed research strategy, investigator(s), and environment in which the research will take place. The list below shows 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.

Reviewers are asked to use this scale to assess each application, assign a preliminary **Merit** score (0-5, to 1 decimal point), and **record this score in EGrAMS prior to the panel meeting**. If any major weaknesses are identified, this rating should **not** be above 3.5.

Merit Criteria – Proposal (50% of Merit score)	Scientific	PSC
Rationale for the proposed project/approach is thorough, balanced, and compelling.	x	
Aims are clearly articulated and well-conceived.	x	
Approach and methods are well-described.	x	
Feasibility of the project is well-articulated, including identification of potential problems and how they will be addressed, including risk mitigation and alternative approaches.	x	x
Key milestones and timelines are realistic, relative to the innovative nature of the project.	x	x
Term and amount of support requested are appropriate (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, etc.).	x	x
Sex, gender, and other dimensions of diversity and determinants of health (e.g., race, ethnicity, education, economic status) and their intersectionalities are appropriately addressed and incorporated in the design, methods, analysis, interpretation, and dissemination/implementation of findings/outcomes.	x	x
Knowledge translation and mobilization strategy provide detailed potential next steps (including collaborations and partnerships with other research institutions, networks, sectors, etc. as appropriate).	x	x

Merit Criteria – Team & Environment (25% of Merit score)	Scientific	PSC
Investigator(s) and other team members have appropriate qualifications and expertise in the field of research.	x	
Equity, diversity, and inclusion considerations, in the context of the research team, are appropriate and well-described.	x	x
Meaningful involvement has been demonstrated with all members of the research team in the development of the research proposal (described in the Terms of Reference).	x	x
The environment in which the work will take place is suitable (appropriate equipment, support available, mentorship opportunities, etc.). This includes the identification of relevant collaborators with complementary resources, when needed. ***Note: care should be taken to mitigate for potential bias in the evaluation of this criterion***	x	x

Merit Criteria – Application Accessibility (25% of Merit score)	Scientific	PSC
The public summary is written in non-technical language and clearly describes the aim of the project and alignment with the CCS goals/priorities and the goals of the disruptive innovation grants program, methodology, relevance and potential impact of the proposed project, methods and approach and the process for engaging patient, caregivers, end-users and other stakeholders in design, implementation and results dissemination.	x	x
Patients/survivors/caregivers (PSCs) and clinicians/end-users have been and/or will be engaged throughout the life of the research project. There is appropriate representation of PSCs on the research team, or a description of how deficits will be addressed. ***Note: This criterion is not mandatory but should be rewarded if addressed appropriately.***	x	x

Note: *The goal of varying types of reviewers is to bring multiple perspectives and balance to the review process, so this is why there are a few criteria you will see on one scale and not the other.*

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Innovation, Relevance, and Impact – Criteria

The **Innovation, Relevance, and Impact (IRI)** rating scales are to be used by reviewers to assess the novelty of the application, as well as the likelihood that the project will disrupt existing approaches in cancer prevention, detection, or treatment. The table below shows 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.

Reviewers are asked to use this scale to assess each application, assign a preliminary **IRI** score (0-5, to 1 decimal point), and **record this score in EGrAMS prior to the panel meeting**.

Innovation Criteria (50% of IRI score)	Scientific	PSC
Proposed project is original, unique, innovative, and timely.	x	x
If successful, research will radically challenge and/or change current approaches to cancer prevention, detection, or treatment.	x	x
If successful, research will greatly enhance our understanding of a significant problem or barrier in cancer prevention, detection, or treatment.	x	x
Team includes/works with new multidisciplinary collaborations, including from outside of the cancer field when relevant.	x	x

Relevance & Potential Impact Criteria – (50% of IRI score)	Scientific	PSC
The potential impact (short- and long-term) of the proposed project is clearly described, compellingly relevant to cancer, and timely.	x	x
The knowledge translation and mobilization plan is well described, integrated into the proposed project, and involves relevant parties at the outset to ensure utility of the proposed solution. Public and/or patient engagement strategies are encouraged and should be rewarded, if present. Equitable access to results is considered.	x	x
The project has the potential to generate outcomes that will ultimately be meaningful to people affected by or at risk of cancer.		x

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