

Capstone consultations

Key messages

Research Canada welcomes the government modernizing and strengthening Canada's research and innovation system through Budget 2024 investments and measures that respond to key findings of the report of the [Advisory Panel on the Federal Research Support System](#).

We support the government's assurances that NSERC, SSHRC and CIHR will continue to exist within the new organization and that CIHR's linkage with the Health Portfolio will be protected. This will ensure that these organizations can continue to do what they do best: support excellence in disciplinary investigator-initiated research.

The promise of the capstone organization is greater coordination and impact of research supported by NSERC, SSHRC and CIHR and advancement of Canada's leadership in internationally collaborative, multidisciplinary and mission-driven research.

The capstone organization, if implemented effectively and refined with input from stakeholders, will strengthen the linkages between basic research, clinical research, and commercialization of research for better health and economic outcomes.

With the capstone organization implementation, the government has an opportunity to maximize previous and ongoing infrastructure investments and grants for all types of research and innovation and in so doing pave the way for a modernized and highly productive research and innovation engine in Canada.

Research Canada urges that capstone implementation be pursued with due regard for continuity of the research enterprise and ongoing stakeholder engagement to address gaps, avoid or mitigate risks, and maximize desired outcomes.

To realize the promise of modernization, the multi-year and ongoing investments earmarked in Budget 2024 for the granting agencies and talent must flow, even as the new capstone structure, harmonization and governance changes are considered and pursued.

A clear and appropriate budget for mission-driven, multi-disciplinary and international research and capstone operations, over and above funds earmarked for investigator-initiated research and under the purview of the granting agencies, is essential.

The importance and maintenance of peer-reviewed, investigator-initiated research supported by the granting agencies must be enshrined in the new capstone structure. This would ensure the future base and strength of Canadian research.

The new capstone agency should have policies that ensure that support to the granting agencies will grow proportionally with inflation, global peers, and overall increases in federal research.

It is critical that the capstone organization be governed by independent assessment and the guidance of a diverse scientific advisory body of appointed national and international members that protects the principles of excellence and peer-review.

We encourage using the shift to capstone to create mechanisms that better support research conducted in the context of healthcare delivery at academic medical centres, hospital research institutes, and allied health practices, including support for clinician scientists.

If less fragmentation is a key overarching goal, then how capstone will incorporate other research funding programs and organizations, many of which have been designed to tackle mission-driven, international, and multi-disciplinary research efforts, is critical.

In addition to fueling and focusing Canada's approach to mission-driven, international, and interdisciplinary research, the capstone is an opportunity to strengthen Indigenous Science and to further the work of each federal research granting agency on equity, diversity and inclusion.

Research Canada appreciates being consulted on behalf of its members across the health research and innovation ecosystem (universities, colleges, hospitals, academic health science centres, research institutes, private companies, health charities).

Research Canada looks forward to continuing to work with government as a trusted partner as we take Canada's research and innovation system to ambitious new heights.

Other resources

The health research and innovation ecosystem has submitted principles to uphold and key risks to mitigate in response to the [questions posed to the granting agency presidents in the letters](#) from Ministers Champagne and Holland on June 17, 2024. This submission can be found on [our website](#).

For more information

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