

University of Ottawa Statement on Operations & Maintenance of Research Infrastructure Supported by the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI)

This document outlines the principles, decision-making and approval processes at the University of Ottawa relating to the operation and maintenance (O&M) of CFI-funded infrastructure.

The 2013 CFI Program and Policy Guide states:

“The eligible recipient, will operate and use the research infrastructure, exercise de facto control over the research infrastructure, including assuming responsibility for its access and for the associated scientific programming and where appropriate, hold a majority interest in the research infrastructure. The eligible institution will assume responsibility for insuring all CFI-funded research infrastructures, including powered vehicles. These responsibilities hold over the useful life of the research infrastructure and for a minimum of five years. The useful life of the research infrastructure is considered to be the period of time over which the infrastructure is expected to provide benefits and be usable for its intended purpose, factoring in normal repairs and maintenance”.

The CFI Infrastructure Operating Fund (IOF)

The 2013 CFI Program & Policy Guide further states:

“The Infrastructure Operating Fund (IOF) helps cover a portion of the operating and maintenance costs to ensure optimal use of CFI-funded infrastructure. It is nonetheless the institution’s responsibility to provide sufficient funds for the operation and maintenance of CFI-funded infrastructure.

Each institution is responsible for deciding how their funds will be divided among projects eligible to receive IOF. Institutions can distribute their IOF allocation based on actual operating and maintenance needs, as opposed to allocating the exact amount to the project that generated it. This offers institutions maximum flexibility to support projects with different needs and scope, while ensuring accountability”. Further details, including eligible IOF expenses, can be found in the Infrastructure Operating Fund section of the CFI Policy & Program Guide.

As such, and since IOF funding can only provide partial support at best, we also believe that needed O&M support should come from all levels of the institution, including the project leader(s), the relevant department(s), and relevant Faculty or Faculties and central administration, all as appropriate to each situation.

We reiterate our commitment to ensuring O&M support for the useful life of CFI-funded infrastructure that is meeting its intended purpose, through a combination of institutional support and institutional and investigator efforts to obtain such funds from external sources.

Developing O&M Plans

At the University of Ottawa it is the responsibility of the CFI Project Leader to identify and secure all necessary and appropriate O&M resources for the useful lifetime of the CFI-funded infrastructure. Each CFI application must contain a plan for the sustainable use of the proposed infrastructure, including projected O&M costs, for the first five years. Each plan should take into account the various funding sources including (revenue generated from user fees, institutional contributions, operating grant funds, etc.) required for the O&M of the related infrastructure. This plan is reviewed and approved at the departmental, faculty and institutional levels prior to submission of the application to CFI and, when an award is approved for funding by CFI, becomes part of the funding agreement between the University and the CFI.

The University of Ottawa will submit CFI Applications and make Finalizations that reflect the institution's best efforts and practices, to identify accurate and realistic O&M costs.

Administration of IOF Funds

The **VP Research** will manage the institution's IOF in ways that leverage common O&M needs across facilities, align with the efforts, investments and priorities of the investigator(s), department(s) and faculties to sustain the infrastructure.

The **Faculty** is recognized as the administrative home for the operation and maintenance of its research equipment and therefore it is intended **to consolidate an annual O&M plan** which oversees and encompasses all its needs in terms of operation and maintenance.

The **VP Research Office** developed a plan to ensure that the University's research Infrastructure is capable of supporting research consistent with University's goal of ranking among the top five Canadian universities in research intensity. We, at the VP Research Office, recognizes the need for integrated, multi-disciplinary proactive asset management system that involves the development of centralized share data repositories, given the current state of an aging infrastructure and fiscal challenges.

The mentioned "**Research Infrastructure Inventory: RII**" is used to identify infrastructure needs required to capitalize on major research opportunities, to conduct a gap analysis to meet our short-term and long-term infrastructure needs in order to support research at uOttawa and to help sustain the aggregate body of assets through planned maintenance, repair, and replacement (for more details regarding the RII, please refer to Annex 1).

The **RII** will be updated once a year by SDI and shared with faculties who in turn must consider it as a planning tool in consolidating their annual O&M plan.

The University of Ottawa allocates the CFI IOF awarded to the Faculties who are responsible for deploying IOF funds in support of their funded infrastructure so that O&M plans set out in the successful infrastructure applications can be fulfilled for each and every CFI project. Occasionally, a situation may arise where the CFI project is in need for extra operational funding for costs that are normally eligible under IOF terms and/or for a period which exceeds the original 5 year plan. In these cases, it is the responsibility of the faculty to identify these projects and to allocate its IOF envelope accordingly among its active CFI projects.

Each year, an IOF plan, approved by the Faculty, is submitted to the Strategic Development initiatives SDI bureau within the division of the Vice-President Research. Budgets and O&M plans will be subject to review and approval through the decision-making process outlined below.

The Faculties/Project leaders are responsible for adhering to both CFI and University of Ottawa guidelines in the use of IOF funds. There is no minimum or maximum number of years over which IOF can be claimed, as long as the infrastructure is being used for research purposes during the period claimed. Annual financial reports to CFI on the use of IOF funds are assembled and submitted by the Research Financial Resources, reflecting transactions processed by the Project Leader's administrative unit. Questions about eligibility of expenditures are raised for resolution with SDI, the Project Leader and/or the administering unit, on an ongoing basis and at the time of financial reporting.

Decision-Making Process

- SDI will review the faculties **O&M annual plan** which oversees and encompasses all their needs in terms of operation and maintenance in relation to their CFI projects.
- The AVP research will receive recommendation from the Director of SDI based on which O&M IOF annual plan will be allocated to faculties. The allocated amount will be based on eligibility and conformity to the Faculty-IOF remaining balance. The requested IOF funds and the proposed budget must show eligible expenses in accordance with CFI guidelines.
- Upon Approval, SDI will open accounts for the projects identified by the faculty and issue a Notice of Decision to the Projects Leaders.
- In like manner, annual claims will be reviewed and approved by SDI and once approved, the next faculty installment of IOF funds will be released. Faculties receiving IOF support shall be required to comply with the terms of the IOF award agreement. Use of these funds for O&M expenditures will be monitored regularly by the SDI office.

Issues Escalation

Unforeseen circumstances that adversely impact an approved O&M plan do not relieve the institution of the responsibility to maintain the CFI-funded infrastructure in a state of readiness for research for the period agreed upon with CFI. The Project Leader should bring any issues that threaten to interfere with the effective operation of the infrastructure to the attention of the head of the administering unit who, in turn, may contact the Dean or Principal of the academic division. Given the University's budget model, academic divisions must ultimately ensure that when an O&M plan is disrupted, financial and other resources are assembled to ensure the ongoing operation of the infrastructure.

Annexe 1

The “**Research Infrastructure Inventory: RII**” is used to:

- Identify infrastructure needs required to capitalize on major research opportunities and to conduct a gap analysis to meet our short-term and long-term infrastructure needs in order to support research at uOttawa.
- Insure future competitiveness within areas of current strength and areas of emerging importance. Determine how should future infrastructure needs be identified, evaluated, prioritized, and financed.
- Provide Department/Faculty with an up-to-date and readily accessible record of equipment within their department/Faculty.
- Assists departments, faculties and researchers in locating specific types of equipment on campus.
- Acquire replacement funding for capital equipment from the Federal/Provincial granting bodies.
- Help sustaining the aggregate body of assets through planned maintenance, repair, and replacement.
- Exercise de facto control and to demonstrate to granting bodies that uOttawa is holding a majority interest in the funded research infrastructure over its useful lifetime.

The immediacy of the need for this RII cannot be overstated, if we take into account:

- The economic downturn and continuing budget constraints at all levels of academic, federal and provincial entities.
- The CFI recommendations during the last monitoring visit.
- The looming prospect of policy change coming from granting bodies.
- Some challenges in addressing issues of complementarity, duplication and sharing of requested infrastructure.

Consistent with the growth of large, highly multidisciplinary groups, is the need for the growth and modernisation of a research infrastructure pool that goes beyond the capabilities of a single PI, or a department, or even a single faculty to support.

All Equipment purchased from uOttawa or University administered funds (trusts or grants) or donated to uOttawa, with a purchase / donation value of \$ 10,000 or greater, will be inventoried. The research Infrastructure must be moveable and not permanently affixed. Equipment constructed or assembled, and meeting the foregoing criteria is also to be inventoried.

Each Equipment record should contain information on the item including:

- Description (name of infrastructure).
- Model Number and Manufacturer's name.
- Original cost.
- Source of funds.
- Acquisition date.
- Department to which equipment is assigned
- Person to whom the equipment is assigned.
- Location: Building and room.
- Infrastructure quality: State of the art, Useful for supporting research and training, but not state of the art or Obsolete.
- Estimated Remaining Lifetime.