POLICY

Project Review, Funding and Appeals

Policy ID	RMC-POL001	Revision	4
Responsible Committee	Research Management Committee	Approver	Board
Effective Date	Oct. 1, 2024	Approval Date	Dec 9, 2024
Related Policy, Procedures and/or Additional Information	• *Policy - Conflict of Interest* • *Policy - Intellectual Property* • *Policy - Attribution Policy* • *Policy - Official Languages* • *Research Security Plan* • *Policy - Cybersecurity Policy* • *Policy - Delegation of Authority and Table – Delegation of Authorities*		
Review Cycle	Annual	Next Review Date	

Braiding Knowledges Canada (BKC) is proud to be part of a rich history of Indigenous knowledges and cultures, including Indigenous ways of knowing, doing and being. We recognize the historical trauma and the triumphs that many different cultures, lands and Nations have continuously faced within Canada. We acknowledge that we are on the treaty lands and territory of numerous and diverse Indigenous Nations and pay tribute to their heritage and legacy, as we strengthen ties with the communities we serve while taking concrete actions towards meaningful reconciliation. We are grateful to have the opportunity to work with Indigenous communities on this land. We pay respect to all Indigenous people from all Nations across Canada, acknowledge the traditional Knowledge Keepers and honour their leaders.

BKC recognizes and honours the vital role Indigenous knowledges, principles, and ways of being, bring to research, operations, and governance as we work together to develop a better understanding of our shared mountain ecosystems and beyond. BKC commits to braiding ethical space and Indigenous principles in everything we do, emphasizing the interconnectedness of our society, nature and our collective place in the environment. BKC affirms the rights-based self-determination of Indigenous Peoples and commits to upholding the United Nations Declaration

on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action commitments in all BKC Undertakings.

Context

The Strategic Science Fund (SSF) aims to mobilize the expertise and resources of independent science and research not-for-profit organizations to enhance Canada's science, technology and innovation (ST&I) excellence. SSF investments will achieve results for Canadians by addressing critical needs, such as supporting Canada's knowledge economy, in areas or in ways that advance federal objectives. The SSF program is jointly administered by Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED) and Health Canada, via a Program Management Committee and Steering Committee.

Beginning April 1, 2024, the Canadian Mountain Network (CMN) was awarded $30.4 M over 5 years under the SSF to continue its work as Braiding Knowledges Canada (BKC), focused on braiding Indigenous and Western Knowledges to advance environmental conservation, restoration, adaptation and well-being expanding beyond mountain ecosystems. BKC goal as stated in its Strategic Plan (2024-2029) is to significantly enhance the impact of self-determined, place-based, and co-produced knowledge within Canada's science culture such that, over time and on a path towards reconciliation, Indigenous and local knowledge approaches equitably contribute to public policy, decision-making, and the advancement of federal science priorities.

The adjudication of proposals and the evaluation of progress for subsequently funded projects must adhere to all aspects of the SSF Program Guide and the Contribution Agreement between the Canadian Mountain Network (Braiding Knowledges Canada) and ISED (Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada). Ensuring adherence to SSF funded research initiatives is the responsibility of the Research Management Committee (RMC) supported by the Executive Director, Co-Research Directors and staff.

Financial decisions related to project funding must adhere to BKC's Board-Approved Delegation of Authorities. If there are discrepancies between this policy and the Delegation of Authorities, the Delegation of Authorities will apply.

Purpose

This Project Review, Funding and Appeals Policy (the "Policy") outlines the process, criteria, and roles and responsibilities associated with evaluating proposed initiatives against merit-based criteria and funding requirements. It also includes a process for appeal to ensure open and transparent decision-making, a process to evaluate the performance of ongoing initiatives relative to proposed objectives and the BKC organizational Strategic Plan (2024-2029), and a process by which applicants will be notified of successful and unsuccessful proposals.

This policy generically applies to the different types of BKC research initiatives. Details describing the different initiatives (e.g., Knowledge Hubs, Impact Connectors, Training & Capacity Building, etc.) and any initiative-specific considerations are attached as Appendices to this policy.

Scope

This Policy applies to all BKC's directors (collectively, the "Board" and individually, a "Director"), officers, members of Board committees and other advisory bodies, contractors, and staff, including without limitation the RMC, the Network Investigators, the Indigenous Circle of Advisors, Executive Director, Co-Research Directors and any independent reviewers. This Policy also applies to any applicant who submits a proposal for consideration and funding including annual evaluations for possible renewal of funding for multi-year initiatives.

Principles

Impartiality: BKC will receive, review and consider proposals for funding and renewal and that such proposals will be assessed and selected in an open, impartial and fair manner through the process set out herein.

Integrity: BKC strives to ensure that its decisions are fair and objective and that they are seen as such. No committee member with a conflict of interest may participate in the review of a proposal. Please see Appendix "A" hereto for a non-exhaustive list of specific examples of what would constitute a conflict of interest.

Accountability: BKC strives to ensure that its selection process is clearly set out in this Policy so as to be held accountable by its internal checks and balances and by applicants who submit proposals for consideration.

Desired Outcomes of Initiatives

BKC's Strategic Plan outlines Immediate, Intermediate and Ultimate Outcomes. While each initiative may not achieve each outcome in its own right, the collection of cumulative effort and impact of BKC's research initiatives must drive towards these broader programmatic outcomes. Hence, BKC Adjudicators should consider the outcomes as repeated below in its evaluations, given their organizational responsibility to the Board, the Strategic Plan, BKC's vision, and its funders.

Immediate Outcomes

- Advance and connect place-based and Indigenous-led and co-led research to federal priorities to increase influence and impact.
- Improve ways of working towards the braiding of knowledges.
- Advance equity, diversity, inclusion and opportunity in research.
- Model knowledge braiding, advance TRC Calls to Action, and UNDRIP and the Equity, Diversity, Interdependence & Justice principles for all equity groups within BKC's culture.

Intermediate Outcomes
- Build knowledge braiding capacity across diverse learning pathways (youth, students, Guardians, Indigenous scholars & Leaders).
- Significantly enhance the influence of BKC research within Canada's science culture and its translation into practice, policy, regulation, and decision-making.

Ultimate Outcomes
- Increase the contribution of Indigenous and local knowledge approaches to public policy and decision-making.
- Foster greater reciprocity between Indigenous and local knowledge approaches and federal science priorities.
- Advance Canada's commitments towards reconciliation.
- Expand Canada's knowledge economy.
- Ensure the sustainability of BKC to enable its continued work into the future.

In addition to considering how proposed initiatives contribute to BKC's outcomes, Adjudicators should also consider how the initiatives contribute to the performance of BKC as an organization and relative to the performance metrics BKC is evaluated against. Please refer to BKC's Strategic and Operational Plans for further detail.

Primary Evaluation and Assessment Criteria

The below evaluation criteria **will be applied in the adjudication and evaluation processes regardless of the type of program/initiative being considered.** In addition, criteria specific to particular initiatives are included in the attached appendices.

Braiding Knowledges

Proposals, plans, materials and annual reports submitted for evaluation should be considered as a whole and assessed for their alignment with BKC's mission and the descriptions and goals of the initiative (e.g., 'Knowledge Hubs' as further set out in Appendix "B", 'Impact Connectors' as further set out in Appendix C). Evaluations may consider the degree to which the application will (or has):

1. enable research and knowledge braiding that contribute to conservation, restoration, adaptation, and well-being;

2. mobilize knowledges to advance self-determination in environmental, economic, and social decision-making;
3. support talent & builds capacity through knowledge braiding between established leaders, Knowledge Keepers, Indigenous guardians, community members, emerging scholars, students, trainees, and youth; and
4. lead in culture by building relationships within and across knowledge practices, communities, and generations to uplift Indigenous ways, advance reciprocity, and transform how we work together.

All Our Relations

Proposals, plans, materials and annual reports submitted for evaluation should be considered as a whole and assessed for their mutual benefit to all our relations. Evaluations may consider the degree to which the application will (or has):
1. prioritize the well-being of all our relations;
2. benefit everyone involved (e.g., team members, communities, elders, youth, next generations, decision-makers, the land, elements, more-than-human, other-than-human);
3. elevate under-represented knowledge systems; and
4. evidence the ability to build reciprocal, trusting relations of respect.

People of Place

Proposals, plans, materials and annual reports submitted for evaluation should be grounded in place and respect, and ultimately support Indigenous ways as well as strive to enable better ways for Indigenous and Western knowledge systems to work well together.

Evaluations may assess the degree to which the expected outcomes:
1. are relevant to Indigenous community needs and priorities;
2. articulate a clear process for ongoing local engagement and outreach;
3. commit to engage and co-create with local communities;
4. considers the complexity of community connections and representation;
5. allow Indigenous, Inuit, and Métis peoples to define their terms of involvement;
6. uplift Indigenous languages and place names; and
7. be informed by and respect local customs, protocols, and codes.

Mutual Benefits

Proposals, plans, materials and annual reports submitted for evaluation should demonstrate an understanding of and respect for the importance of local capacity building and mutual benefit.

Evaluations may assess the degree to which the initiative:

1. involves local communities in decision-making from project conception to dissemination and beyond;
2. is mutually and equitably beneficial to local communities and researchers;
3. demonstrates feasibility and equitable distribution of capacity building (i.e., training, local hiring);
4. prioritizes youth involvement and opportunity; and
5. leverages matching funds (cash and in-kind as specified in the Ultimate Recipient Agreement) to support the initiative.

Recognition of Gifts

Proposals, plans, materials and annual reports should reflect and prioritize how the research outcomes are geared towards use by Indigenous peoples and in Indigenous communities. Evaluations may assess the degree to which the initiative:
1. clarifies how researchers will maintain local relations beyond the initiative's term;
2. explains how research will give back to the community;
3. ensures Indigenous data sovereignty; and
4. has mechanisms for the repatriation of knowledge, data, and samples to communities.

Rating the Objectives

BKC Adjudicators will assign a rating (EXCEPTIONAL (6), OUTSTANDING (5), VERY STRONG (4), STRONG (3), MODERATE (2), INSUFFICIENT (1)), followed by explanatory comments, evaluating the extent to which the proposed initiative meets the five objectives (Braiding Knowledges, All Our Relations, People of Place, Mutual Benefits, Recognition of Gifts).

Criteria to Meet SSF Requirements

In addition, BKC Adjudicators will review each research initiative to assess whether the proposed application meets requirements related to Environmental Impact, Knowledge Transfer and Feasibility of Implementing the Proposal as below. BKC Adjudicators will also consider the research initiative's activities and process for any potential points of ineligibility in relation to the SSF Program Guide.

BKC Adjudicators will assess each initiative in relation to these requirements as: No Concern, Minor Concern or Uncertainty, Major Concern or Uncertainty, followed by explanatory comments.

Environmental Impact

Proposals, plans, materials and annual reports must assess the potential environmental impact of the initiative. Evaluations must assess the degree to which the initiative may cause significant adverse environmental effects in areas within federal jurisdiction contrary to the *Impact*

Assessment Act and any mitigation measures to any adverse environmental effects. A proposal must self-identify any activities that may require an impact assessment under the *Impact Assessment Act* and must complete and include with their proposal an Environmental Impact Declaration.

The impact of a proposal on the environment will be considered by the BKC Adjudicators, who may request further information from the applicant. A proposal may be successful but conditional upon a favourable environmental review.

BKC Adjudicators must assess any environmental mitigation measures included in a proposal, and can include recommendations to the applicant on additional mitigation measures or make a successful proposal conditional upon the implementation of certain mitigation measures that must be implemented and adhered to throughout the duration of the project.

Any proposal for a project that is or would be considered a 'designated project' as defined in the *Impact Assessment Act* must be revised by the applicant so as to not fall under this designation, or else it shall not be awarded with funding.

Knowledge and technology transfer

Proposals, plans, materials and annual reports should reflect and prioritize the transfer of knowledge by Indigenous peoples and in Indigenous communities. Evaluations may assess the:

1. prospects for innovation and the implementation of effective decision-making and public policy of a proposal; and
2. the potential to improve the impact of knowledge transfer on the policy and practice capabilities of partner organizations.

Feasibility of Implementing the Proposal

Proposals, plans, materials and annual reports should set out the logistics of implementing the proposal, including:

1. justification for the level and duration of funding requested vis-à-vis the stated objectives;
2. appropriateness of the overall budget, which includes funds requested from BKC and the cash and in-kind contributions from other sources; and
3. the adequacy of both physical and human resources needed to support the proposed research.

Finally, BKC Adjudicators will ensure each funding proposal adheres to the SSF rules and eligibility (as outlined by the SSF Program Guide and Contribution Agreement) and comment on its alignment with Federal Science Priorities (as outlined in BKC's application to the SSF).

Points of focus for SSF requirement consideration include but are not limited to:
1. data management
2. matched funds
3. stacking provisions
4. equity, diversity and inclusion

In addition to the above criteria, any assessment, evaluation and review of proposals must consider the overhead percentage and carry-over restrictions that are required to be met by BKC as per the Contribution Agreement and SSF Program Guide. For example, if BKC is only permitted to carry over 10% per year, any decision hereunder must account for this requirement when determining funding levels among proposals as well as be taken into consideration during an annual review of a funded project.

Criteria to Contribute to Federal Science Priorities

The SSF aims to enhance Canada's ST&I excellence, including supporting Canada's knowledge economy, in areas or in ways that advance federal objectives. Evaluations and assessments may comment on the degree to which the whole proposal:
- offers strategic value aligned with core federal responsibilities and priorities, including federal commitments to reconciliation and UNDRIP implementation;
- contributes added value to federal science, technology and innovation investments;
- helps to advance BKC's long-term goal of ensuring that Indigenous and local knowledge approaches contribute more to public policy and decision-making and are more fully and equitably reciprocal with federal science priorities, including through the advancement of local and regional decision-making and governance.

BKC Adjudicators will comment on the potential for each of the initiatives to contribute to these Federal Science Priorities.

SSF Program Guide Open Access and Research Data Management Requirements

As part of its responsibility to SSF, BKC must ensure the proposed research project complies and aligns with federal open access policy on publications[1] and the research data management policy[2]. BKC should adopt Open Science principles that maximize the value of all research activities, including by making negative research findings accessible where possible. All BKC members reviewing and evaluating proposals must review the two policies referenced herein on a regular basis to ensure awareness and compliance with these requirements.

Review Process for New Proposals

New Proposals

Based upon BKC's Strategic Plan, BKC will solicit proposals for new research projects in accordance with the timeframe of funding agreements. Each proposal must identify the Ultimate Recipient who will hold and be accountable for the research funds and associated deliverables and identify a Project Lead for the project who will have certain rights set out herein.

Review of New Proposals

BKC receives the proposals and verifies them for completeness. Each proposal will be sent to the appropriate adjudication body of BKC for evaluation as specified in the Appendices hereto. BKC Adjudicators may determine that external reviewers are required to effectively evaluate certain proposals depending upon the expertise required for an independent, merit-based evaluation.

Review Procedure for Initiatives Requiring a Call for Proposals

As per BKC's Delegation of Authorities, certain activities require Committee-level adjudication (e.g., Knowledge Hub Calls for Proposals- see Appendix A). In preparation for the review, BKC Adjudicators are expected to read all the material associated with the proposals to allow a comprehensive assessment of each proposal. It is also the responsibility of the Adjudicators to understand the BKC SSF proposal and the requirements of BKC as outlined in the Contribution Agreement between BKC and ISED and the SSF Program Guide (as updated over time). Finally, all initiatives must deliver to BKC's Strategic Plan (2024-2029) and the RMC holds accountability within the context of this policy to ensure strategic alignment.

---

[1]
https://science.gc.ca/site/science/en/interagency-research-funding/policies-and-guidelines/open-access/tri-agency-open-access-policy-publications-2015

[2]
https://science.gc.ca/site/science/en/interagency-research-funding/policies-and-guidelines/research-data-management/tri-agency-research-data-management-policy

During the evaluation meeting, the evaluations proceed according to the agenda prepared by the Committee Chair supported by the Co-Research Directors, Executive Director and Governance Manager. The Chair may invite proposal or theme leaders to initiate the discussion of each proposal within a given theme, followed by discussion of the proposal by the RMC as a whole. The envelope of funds available for distribution are taken into consideration in these discussions.

Following the general discussion, the Committee Chair seeks a consensus to place each proposal into one of three categories: a) proposal recommended for funding b) funding not recommended or c) proposal recommended for funding contingent upon additional conditions being met (in accordance with BKC's Delegation of Authorities).

For proposals recommended for funding, the committee proposes a funding level. If the total recommended funding exceeds the allocated budget, the committee may proceed with reallocations across proposals or an across-the-board percentage cut to the preliminary funding allocations. Past performance of principal investigators with respect to research outcomes and funding use/allocation/carry-over should be considered in any further funding allocations.

After discussing each proposal, the committee's consensus comments (strengths and weaknesses) will be summarized in a written report (point form or otherwise). The Project Lead for each proposal may request this report from the Committee Chair.

A review of the process, results, non-consensus items and funding recommendations will be prepared by the RMC and submitted to the BKC Board for discussion and to seek approval or further direction. Based on Board direction, revisions to proposals and recommendations to funding may be required. Successful applicants will receive a notice of award setting out the level of funds provided to them by BKC.

While proposals may include a multi-year budget for approval, funding is awarded on a yearly basis subject to progress review. Awards may be granted with conditions, which will be communicated to the Project Lead by the RMC. Successful applicants are required to sign an Ultimate Recipient Agreement prior to release of funds. Applicants not recommended for funding will receive a letter from the Co-Research Directors & Executive Director on behalf of the RMC indicating the results of the review. If appropriate, this document will encourage the applicants to participate in other relevant BKC activities.

Review Procedure for Initiatives Not Requiring a Call for Proposals

As per BKC's Delegation of Authorities, certain activities do not require Committee-level adjudication (e.g., Impact Connectors- see Appendices B & C) but Committee awareness. Regardless, a similar process applies. Adjudicators are expected to read all the material associated with the proposals to allow a comprehensive assessment of each proposal. It is also the responsibility of the reviewers to understand the BKC SSF proposal and the requirements of BKC as outlined in the Contribution Agreement between BKC and ISED and the SSF Program

Guide (as updated over time). Finally, all initiatives must deliver to BKC's Strategic Plan (2024-2029).

The evaluations proceed and the envelope of funds available for distribution are taken into consideration. Depending upon conditions as outlined in the Delegation of Authorities, the adjudication results in a decision or a recommendation for different levels of BKC's governance structure. BKC's RMC and Board are informed of any decisions again, within the parameters as outlined in the Delegation of Authorities. Adjudication results are shared openly and transparently.

While proposals may include a multi-year budget for approval, funding is awarded on a yearly basis subject to progress review. Awards may be granted with conditions, which will be communicated to the Lead Applicant. Successful applicants are required to sign an Ultimate Recipient Agreement prior to release of funds. Applicants not recommended for funding will receive a letter from the Co-Research Directors & Executive Director indicating the results of the review. If appropriate, this document will encourage the applicants to participate in other relevant BKC activities.

Role of the Indigenous Circle of Advisors (ICA) in Evaluation Process

BKC's ICA holds exceptional knowledge and wisdom and, when required and asked by the adjudicators, will provide:
- Advice about the process and interpretation of review criteria with regard to Indigenous Knowledges, intellectual traditions, methodologies and research practices, protocols, and customs to ensure overall alignment with BKC goals;
- Input and advice for assisting adjudicators in the review, assessment, and recommendation of individual proposals to select Indigenous community collaborators and co-development of initiatives; and
- Guidance and suggestions about post initiative-approval follow-up and support for Indigenous leaders, Knowledge Keepers, Indigenous guardians, community members, emerging scholars, students, trainees, and youth.

Review Process for Funded Projects

Annual Review of Funded Projects

Once funded, BKC research initiatives and associated budgets are assessed semi-annually through progress reviews. Even though most research initiatives are funded under a one- to three-year window, funds are awarded on an annual basis with projects and associated budgets subject to an annual progress review prior to renewal. The progress of each funded project is monitored on an ongoing basis with a semi-annual review. Each Project Lead completes a BKC

Interim Project Progress Report and Annual Project Progress Report. Financial reporting is also required for the funds under their control as specified in Ultimate Recipient Agreements.

BKC receives the progress reports, verifies them for completeness, and forwards them to the RMC for review. The semi-annual review may be in the form of an update to the RMC on program status including financial status. A briefing note is produced for the RMC highlighting any projects with significant areas of concern as well as those with major achievements.

Conflicts of interest must be identified in this review process. When identified, the conflicted member is excused from both the review procedure and any discussions or decisions regarding funding. If quorum cannot be met as a result of several members being in a conflict, external scientific reviewers may be invited to review progress reports and submit their comments and recommendations for consideration. Please see BKC's Conflict of Interest Policy for more information.

The RMC, supported by the ICA, evaluates reports according to the original proposals and any revisions thereto submitted, the evaluation criteria for research initiatives, SSF compliance and BKC strategic goals and objectives. Following discussion, the Chair of the RMC seeks a consensus to place projects into one of three categories: (a) continued funding at the requested level; (b) continued funding with modifications to the budget and/or work plan; or (c) termination of the project. The Governance Manager is responsible for documenting the RMC's comments.

The review process must also consider the economic impact of a funded project, and whether the funded project is complying with all federal, provincial, territorial, municipal and other applicable laws, including but not limited to statutes, regulations, by-laws, rules, orders, ordinances and decrees governing the funded project relating to environmental protection and the successful implementation of and adherence to any mitigation measures and monitoring or follow-up program that has been prescribed for the funded project.

Based on the RMC's recommendation, the Co-Research Directors and Executive Director present the results of the review to the Board for final approval. Once approved, the RMC's decision is communicated to the Project Lead of each initiative. Projects which have their funding terminated, modified, or have other restrictions or measures imposed will receive a letter from the Co-Research Directors & Executive Director, on behalf of the RMC, indicating the results of the review.

This process may vary slightly for projects not involving a Call for Proposals. Regardless, the intent is to be inclusive and considerate of a diversity of input in the review.

Appeals Process

The procedures for appealing a decision of the annual review of a funded project are the same as an appeal of an unsuccessful proposal (i.e. a proposal was not chosen to receive funding).

These procedures are based on NSERC's appeal procedure. An appeal of a decision on a BKC proposal must be based on compelling evidence of error or discrimination in the review process. The appeal procedure is designed to ensure that the applicant has been treated fairly and consistently in the context of a program that has limited funds. BKC strives to provide equitable treatment of applications and fair assessments in accordance with the selection criteria, and judges each case on its merits.

Grounds for Appeals

BKC does not restrict the grounds for appeal. However, they generally fall into the following Categories:

Procedural Grounds
- Relevant information not provided to the RMC or relevant information not considered by the RMC;
- Conflict of interest rules not followed;
- Proposal improperly rejected as not appropriate to the program;
- Proposal reviewed by an inappropriate committee;
- Violation of SSF funding policies.

Other Grounds
- Evidence of bias against a "school of thought" or philosophy of approach.

The above examples are not exhaustive and are used only by way of illustration.

Appeal Process

The onus is on the Project Lead to demonstrate that a procedural error was made or that there are other grounds for appeal in the review of the proposal. Appeals are reviewed by external consultants who are senior members of the research community but who do not sit on the RMCnor currently receive BKC funds. This ensures an arm's length review by the applicant's peers.

No new "source" material or information (e.g. papers published since the deadline date, illness or other extenuating circumstances) may be submitted by the applicant. The appeal process is as follows:
- Appeal letters must be received by the BKC Co-Research Directors & Executive Director within one (1) month of receipt of the decision letter.
- If an appeal is submitted, the Co-Research Directors & Executive Director conduct a preliminary analysis to ensure that a sufficient case has been made.
- If the Co-Research Directors & Executive Director judge that a sufficient case has not been made, a recommendation to dismiss the appeal (without sending it to an outside

consultant) is made to the Board. The final decision to dismiss the appeal is made by the Board.

- For those appeals in which the Co-Research Directors & Executive Director judge that a sufficient case has been made, the case is forwarded to an external consultant and the Board is informed that an appeal process is underway. The appeal letter, original proposal, RMC's adjudication comments, and any other relevant material or past correspondence will be sent to the consultant for review.
- The consultant sends a written report and recommendation to the Co-Research Directors & Executive Director within thirty (30) days. The report includes an analysis that addresses the main arguments of the applicant(s), and the main elements leading to the consultant's recommendation. At a duly called meeting the RMC will provide comments on the consultant's report within two (2) weeks of receipt. The consultant report and RMC comments will be communicated to the Board by the Co-Research Directors & Executive Director.
- The Board reviews the appeal, analysis, recommendation from the consultant and RMC comments and makes a final decision regarding the appeal. The Board's decision is final and no further appeals will be granted.
- The Co-Research Directors & Executive Director sends the appeal decision, along with any related material, to the applicant. Depending on the result, the level and/or duration of a grant may be subject to modification.

Intellectual Policy Contained in a Proposal

For the purposes of this Section, "**Intellectual Property Rights**" means any and all rights existing from time to time under patent law, copyright law, trademark law, or trade secret law and all rights in patents, designs, copyrights, copyrightable works and works of authorship, moral rights, trademarks, trade names, service marks and other proprietary trade designations, trade secrets, know-how, methodologies, techniques, specifications and any other intellectual rights of any nature, whatsoever throughout the world, registered or unregistered, and any and all applications, compilations, improvements, modifications or new developments of any of the foregoing.

The applicant is the sole owner of all Intellectual Property Rights in a proposal and project, and nothing herein shall be construed as transferring, assigning, or otherwise conveying to BKC the Intellectual Property Rights in a proposal or project. The Ultimate Recipient Agreement will set out terms and conditions of Intellectual Property Rights between BKC and successful applicants. BKC will keep the contents of each proposal and project strictly confidential, including for certainty Intellectual Property Rights disclosed at any time during an annual review of a project.

Management of Project Assets

Where BKC has purchased any assets, including those for a project, with funds contributed by the Minister of Industry (the "Minister") pursuant to the Contribution Agreement it must retain title to and ownership of such asset. BKC further cannot sell, assign, transfer, encumber, pledge, grant a security interest or otherwise dispose of such asset, unless (a) it has first obtained the written consent of the Minister, (b) the asset was purchased for less than $1,000, or (c) the asset is worn or outdated and is sold, transferred or disposed of in order to be replaced and the proceeds of the sale of the asset are used to purchase the replacement asset.

Policy Violation

Directors, officers, members of Board committees and other advisory bodies, contractors and staff should be aware that conduct that violates this Policy is always considered outside the scope of their position. Violating the Policy could significantly damage BKC and expose it to unacceptable levels of risk and unintended legal and/or commercial liabilities.

Individuals who violate this Policy are subject to appropriate disciplinary action, including possible:

- termination of employment agreements or independent contractor agreements, as applicable; or
- removal of Directors or officers in accordance with the bylaws of the BKC and the *Canada Not-for-Profit Corporations Act*.

All breaches of delegated authority will be reported to the Board in writing at the next Board meeting. If a serious breach of delegated authority occurs, the Executive Director of the BKC or another officer or member of a Board committee who becomes aware of the breach will immediately report the alleged breach to the Board.

APPENDIX A - CONFLICT OF INTEREST

BKC will strive to ensure that its decisions are fair and objective, and that they are seen as such. No committee member with a conflict of interest may participate in the review of a proposal.

Conflict of interest occurs whenever a committee member:
- is the project leader or a co-investigator on the proposal;
- is at the same institution as the project leader on the proposal;
- is in a position to gain or lose financially from the outcome of the project;
- is a relative or close personal friend of the project leader on the proposal;
- has had long-standing scientific or personal differences with the project leader on the proposal;
- feels, for any reason, that she/he cannot provide an objective review of the proposal.

Any committee member who has such a conflict in regard to a proposal must declare a conflict of interest and leave the room for the duration of discussion and decision on that proposal. The Chair is responsible for resolving any areas of uncertainty. The above list is non-exhaustive, though the occurrence of any of the above will prima facie constitute a conflict of interest.

Please refer to BKC's Conflict of Interest Policy, the SSF Program Guide and the Contribution Agreement.

APPENDIX B - APPLICATION OF POLICY TO KNOWLEDGE HUBS

BKC Knowledge Hub Description

Knowledge hubs are Indigenous-led or co-led collaborations that promote conservation, restoration, adaptation, and well-being. In their work, the Hubs will:

1. co-produce braided knowledges by caring for all our relations and respectfully engaging community members, including Elders, Knowledge Keepers, Guardians, and Youth;
2. strengthen local capacity for research, training, and knowledge-application to empower self-determination among First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples; and
3. promote multi-stakeholder and participatory approaches through co-learning and partnerships between communities, governments, and NGOs.

BKC Knowledge Hub Goals

BKC Hubs should advance BKC's overarching objectives through place- or theme-based initiatives that:

- enable research and knowledge braiding that contribute to conservation, restoration, adaptation, and well-being;
- mobilize knowledges to advance self-determination in environmental, economic, and social decision-making;
- support talent & build capacity through knowledge braiding between established leaders, Knowledge Keepers, Indigenous guardians, community members, emerging scholars, students, trainees, and youth; and
- lead in culture by building relationships within and across knowledge practices, communities, and generations to uplift Indigenous ways, advance reciprocity, and transform how we work together.

Based on the SSF proposal, BKC Knowledge Hubs may be funded to a maximum of $125,000 per year for 3 years based upon performance, progress and impact relative to proposed objectives. Availability of SSF funds is a consideration for funding renewal. This level of funding does not preclude the opportunity for acquiring additional funding from other sources for Knowledge Hub research.

As identified in BKC's SSF application, 11 projects or hubs and 2 Co-RD projects, previously funded by the Canadian Mountain Network, were invited to submit proposals for funding under BKC's Knowledge Hub program.

Knowledge Hubs Proposed by BKC's Co-Research Directors
BKC's Co-Research Directors are provided the opportunity to submit proposals for Knowledge Hubs to be evaluated against the criteria above holding the same expectations for compliance, reporting and evaluation as all other projects and programs funded by BKC.

BKC Co-Research Director Knowledge Hubs may be funded to a maximum of $150,000 per year for 5 years based upon performance, progress and impact relative to proposed objectives. Availability of funds is also a consideration for funding renewal.

Provision of a Co-Research Director research grant, including a Knowledge Hub proposal is contingent upon adequate performance of the Co-Research Director serving in the role as outlined in the Position Description.

APPENDIX C - APPLICATION OF POLICY TO IMPACT CONNECTORS

The primary objective of BKC's Knowledge Mobilization and Networking (KM) Program is to mobilize braided, co-produced knowledges that advance equity, self-determination, reconciliation, and transformation in environmental, social, and economic policy and decision-making in Canada, including and especially federal policy

BKC Impact Connector Description

Braiding of knowledges is best served through place-based research. However, to have impact beyond a place-based context, BKC's KM Program will support "Impact Connector" (IC) initiatives that integrate the common threads, practices, methodologies, and lessons learned to have broader application to federal science priorities, policies, and programs. The ICs will provide the critical conduits required for place-based knowledges and initiatives to impact provincial, territorial, and national outcomes and, at the same time, for regional-to-national initiatives to achieve meaningful local-level involvement, support, and impact.

Impact Connectors will mobilize braided knowledges and advance policy and decision-making by ensuring that place-based Knowledge Hubs are reciprocally connected to each other and to federal science priorities, enabling expanded impact and learnings over time and space.

We will measure success by:

• The percentage of Knowledge Hubs connected to Impact Connector Initiatives; and
• The number of products co-authored or co-produced by more than one Knowledge Hub or initiative working collaboratively per year, and/or including federal researchers, end users and/or decision-makers.

BKC Impact Connector Projects should advance BKC's overarching objectives through initiatives that:
- enable research and knowledge braiding that contribute to conservation, restoration, adaptation, and well-being;
- mobilize knowledges to advance self-determination in environmental, economic, and social decision-making;
- support talent & build capacity through knowledge braiding between established leaders, Knowledge Keepers, Indigenous guardians, community members, emerging scholars, students, trainees, and youth; and
- lead in culture by building relationships within and across knowledge practices, communities, and generations to uplift Indigenous ways, advance reciprocity, and transform how we work together.

Based on the SSF proposal, BKC Knowledge Hubs may be funded to a maximum of $125,000 per year for 3 years based upon performance, progress and impact relative to proposed objectives. Availability of SSF funds is a consideration for funding renewal. This level of funding does not preclude the opportunity for acquiring additional funding from other sources for Knowledge Hub research.

Impact Connector Scope of Funding

BKC's SSF application identified broad areas for which knowledge braiding is especially critical in achieving environmental and societal objectives. These areas emerged as locally-identified priorities within the place-based Indigenous-led and co-led initiatives and are recognized as provincial, regional, and federal science priorities. Impact Connector themes include, but are not limited to, cumulative effects assessment, environmental monitoring, established parks and braided futures, plant knowledge and biocultural protection and cultural landscapes and place names. The key factor in determining an IC initiative is its ability in time and space to connect across initiatives because of common need, understanding and learnings.

$1,500,000 is available for IC initiatives over the 5 years, typically staged over the five-year period and implemented as three-year projects operating at approximately $50-100K/year. Funding available by year (based on SSF funding levels as proposed) is as follows:

Year 1 (24/25): $262,420
Year 2 (25/26): $450,000
Year 3 (26/27): $326,260
Year 4: (27/28): $287,060
Year 5: 28/29): $174,260

Impact Connector Proposal Process

Impact Connectors are strategic, integrative opportunities that emerge. The funding envelope for these initiatives is much smaller than for the Knowledge Hubs and given the nature of these initiatives, they may originate mid year and as single proposals for adjudication. These are not large, multi-proposal calls for proposal submissions like the BKC Knowledge Hubs or Land-based learning initiatives.

Given the time for turnaround and the fact that these are typically single, strategic submissions at time intervals that may or may not coincide with Research Management Committee Meetings, Impact Connectors will be submitted to the Executive Director for adjudication in accordance with the Delegation of Authorities. The Executive Director will consult with the Co-Research Directors. The proposal and adjudication result will be completed by the Executive Director and provided to the Research Management Committee for information in accordance with the Delegation of Authorities. If the proposal involves conditions that fall outside of current operational parameters (i.e., not within the

board approved budget) or involve complexities such as managing potential risk due to a potential perceived conflict of interest, the RMC will be consulted prior to a decision being made.

APPENDIX E - APPLICATION OF POLICY TO BKC's NURTURING TALENT & GROWING CAPACITY PROGRAM

The primary objective of BKC's Talent and Capacity Building Program (T) is to Nurture talent and grow capacity in knowledge braiding across a learning continuum (that includes youth, students, Indigenous Guardians, early career researchers, and knowledge leaders) and towards a diversity of leadership pathways and networks.

BKC's Talent and Capacity Building Program Description

Five activities deliver to his objective:

1) **Develop talent and build capacity in knowledge braiding through a Youth Development Pathway.**

   We will accomplish this by:
   - Having youth enabled and empowered through Land-Based Learning of research methods through the braiding of knowledges; and
   - Having youth acquire new skills for development, advancement along the training continuum, and employment.

   We will measure success by:
   - The number of youth trained in Land-Based Learning camps/year; and
   - The number of youth participating in BKC-supported skills development, certificate, or certification courses.

2) **Develop talent and build capacity in knowledge braiding through a College and University Students Training Pathway.**

   We will accomplish this by:
   - Students gaining improved understanding in the braiding of knowledges through on-line instruction; and
   - Students being supported in their BKC-funded research through stipends.

   We will measure success by:
   - The number of students completing the Braiding Knowledges Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) per year; and
   - The amount of funding allocated to trainees through stipends.
.
3) **Develop talent and build capacity in knowledge braiding through a Guardian Training Pathway.**
   We will accomplish this by:
   - Indigenous Guardians participating, leading, mentoring, and learning through BKC-funded research, training and knowledge mobilization activities.

We will measure success by:
- The number of Indigenous Guardians participating in BKC-funded research and training activities/year.

4) **Develop talent and build capacity in knowledge braiding through an Emerging Indigenous Scholars Pathway.**

We will accomplish this by:
- Supporting Indigenous scholars throughout their academic careers;
- Supporting Indigenous graduate students to complete their doctoral studies; and
- Ensuring Indigenous researchers are supported by a community of practice in Indigenous research methods.

We will measure success by:

- The number of Chair allotments per year (matched with partners);
- The number of dissertation scholarships allocated to trainees per year; and
- The number of researchers participating in the Indigenous Research Methods Network.

5) **Develop talent and build capacity in knowledge braiding through a Knowledge Braiding Leaders Initiative**

We will accomplish this by:
- Leaders gaining an understanding through Land-based Learning of research methods through the braiding of knowledges;
- Supporting professional development focused on ethical space, knowledge braiding, and knowledge inclusive governance for leaders; and
- Leaders gaining improved understanding in the braiding of knowledges through on- line instruction.

We will measure success by:
- The number of leaders participating and contributing to Land-Based Learning camps per year;
- The number of leaders participating in these events; and
- The number of leaders completing the Braiding Knowledges Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) per year.

BKCTalent and Capacity Projects should advance BKC's overarching objectives through initiatives that:
- enable research and knowledge braiding that contribute to conservation, restoration, adaptation, and well-being;
- mobilize knowledges to advance self-determination in environmental, economic, and social decision-making;

- support talent & build capacity through knowledge braiding between established leaders, Knowledge Keepers, Indigenous guardians, community members, emerging scholars, students, trainees, and youth; and
- lead in culture by building relationships within and across knowledge practices, communities, and generations to uplift Indigenous ways, advance reciprocity, and transform how we work together.

Talent and Capacity Scope of Funding

Funding available by pathway and by year (based on SSF funding levels) is as follows:

Pathway	Year 1 (24/25)	Year 2 (25/26)	Year 3 (26/27)	Year 4 (27/28)	Year 5 (28/29)
T1: Youth Development Pathway	$50,000	$800,000	$450,000	$450,000	$650,000
T2: Student Pathway	$300,000	$200,000	$125,000	$100,000	$125,000
T3: Guardian Training	$75,000	$75,000	$75,000	$75,000	
T4: Emerging Indigenous Scholars	$1,040,000	$860,000	$860,000	$520,000	$580,000
T5: Leaders Initiative	$175,000	$0	$0	$0	$200,000

Talent and Capacity Proposal Process

Talent and Capacity initiatives are strategic, and largely partnership based. Given the nature of these initiatives, they may originate mid year and as single proposals for adjudication. These are not large, multi-proposal calls for proposal submissions.

Given the time for turnaround and the fact that these are typically single, strategic

submissions at time intervals that may or may not coincide with Research Management Committee Meetings, Impact Connectors will be submitted to the Executive Director for adjudication in accordance with the Delegation of Authorities. The Executive Director will consult with the Co-Research Directors. The proposal and adjudication result will be completed by the Executive Director and provided to the Research Management Committee for information in accordance with the Delegation of Authorities. If the proposal involves conditions that fall outside of current operational parameters (i.e., not within the board approved budget) or involve complexities such as managing potential risk due to a potential perceived conflict of interest, the RMC will be consulted prior to a decision being made.

MODIFICATION/REVISION HISTORY

Rev No	Approval Date	Effective Date	Key Updates
1	June 17, 2019		Original CMN Policy: Research Project Funding Review and Appeals.
2	June 25, 2024	Oct 1, 2024	Transitioned policy to BKC template. Added adjudication criteria for Knowledge Hubs and revised process to comply with SSF requirements.
3	September 20, 2024	Oct 1, 2024	Amended policy to add criteria and application to impact connector projects and training and capacity building initiatives. Added adjudication authorities.
4	Dec 9, 2024	Oct 1, 2024	Updated it to include open access on publications and research data management. In addition, the requirements for Environmental Assessment tied to research have now been built into the policy and the old CMN policy dissolved.