



Reviewer Assessment Form: Targeted Call 2021

Project Name

Strength In Structure

Lead Organization

Canadian Council For Youth Prosperity

Name of Reviewer

Stefany Hanson Strength In Structure

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Conflict of Interest Verification

Conflict of Interest Verification : I have acknowledged and agreed to follow FSC-CCF's Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest Policy and I have no Conflict with this grant application.

A. Relevance

Project aligns with FSC's priorities, addresses recognized systemic challenges about future skills in Canada, and demonstrates demand for service.

A1: Alignment with FSC's strategic priorities

Displays little or no alignment with FSC's Strategic Priorities.

Pursues FSC's Strategic Priorities, but alignment lacks clarity.

Adequately aligns with FSC's Strategic Priorities.

Presents outstanding alignment with FSC's Strategic Priorities in a way that demonstrates that FSC should not miss the opportunity to partner

with this project.

**FSC's Strategic Plan for your reference*

A2: Addressing systemic challenges

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| <input type="radio"/> Shows little or no scope to address recognized systemic challenges about future skills in Canada. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Presents general but limited scope to address recognized systemic challenges about future skills in Canada. | <input type="radio"/> Presents clear and relevant scope to address recognized systemic challenges about future skills in Canada. | <input type="radio"/> Demonstrates outstanding potential to address recognized systemic challenges about future skills in Canada with a strong and well-defined scope that sets this project aside from other initiatives. |
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A3: Demand for service

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| <input type="radio"/> Demonstration of the demand for this service is irrelevant or poorly articulated. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Demonstrates that there is some demand for this service but explanation lacks clarity. | <input type="radio"/> Clearly demonstrates that there are high levels of demand for this service and explains how the project adequately fulfills this demand. | <input type="radio"/> Articulates a deep understanding of the high levels of demand for this service and makes a strong case for how providing this service is timely. |
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B. Innovation and Evidence

Project pursues a new way of doing things that can advance knowledge and/or is an evidence-informed model.

B1: Innovative nature

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| <input type="radio"/> It is not innovative, seeks funding for business as usual and, if applicable, is not informed by evidence. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> While it is a departure from business as usual, interventions proposed are not particularly novel and, if applicable, are only vaguely informed by evidence. | <input type="radio"/> Proposes clearly innovative solutions and, applicable, articulates how the novel interventions are adequately informed by evidence. | <input type="radio"/> Proposes solutions that are without a doubt one of a kind and highly innovative and, if applicable, makes a strong case for how the interventions are grounded on evidence that is relevant and applied in a novel way. |
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B2: Evidence generation and new knowledge

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| <input checked="" type="radio"/> Presents unclear or no plan to generate insights or to advance knowledge. | <input type="radio"/> Demonstrates intent to generate insights and advance knowledge that can benefit the skills ecosystem but the plan lacks clarity. | <input type="radio"/> Presents a clear and adequate plan to generate insights and advance knowledge that will clearly benefit the skills ecosystem at large. | <input type="radio"/> There are strong and well-designed strategies in place to generate insights and advance knowledge in a way that sets this project aside from other initiatives. |
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C. Learning

Project has already generated learning that informed the additional scope and identifies concrete problem statements and learning questions to address in the next phase.

C1: Application of learnings from current project

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| <input type="radio"/> Does not demonstrate how learning generated from the current project informed additional scope. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Presents general but limited connection between learning generated from the current project and additional scope. | <input type="radio"/> Presents a clear and relevant connection between learning generated from the current project and additional scope. | <input type="radio"/> Makes an outstanding case for how the additional scope is grounded on learning generated from the current project and expertly demonstrates ability to continue to pursue learning. |
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C2: Problem statements and additional learning questions

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| <input checked="" type="radio"/> Presents vague or no concrete additional learning questions. | <input type="radio"/> Somewhat defines concrete and additional learning questions but the connection between questions and the problem statements lacks clarity. | <input type="radio"/> Clearly identifies additional learning questions that are concrete and relevant to address the problem statements. | <input type="radio"/> Articulates well-defined and concrete learning questions that will without a doubt contribute to addressing the problem statements within and beyond the scope of the project. |
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D. Equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI)

Project incorporates the perspectives of end-users and other stakeholders, particularly groups facing barriers, in the design and execution of the project, presents practices grounded in EDI principles, and shows potential to further EDI.

D1: Incorporation of the perspectives of end-users and other stakeholders

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| <input type="radio"/> Does not incorporate the perspectives of end-users and other stakeholders in the design and execution of the project. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Shows that end-users and other stakeholders are somewhat involved in the design and execution of the project, but lacks clarity around the effective incorporation of their perspectives. | <input type="radio"/> Presents clear evidence that end-users and other stakeholders are involved in the design and execution of the project in effective and relevant ways. | <input type="radio"/> There are strong and well-designed strategies in place to involve end-users and other stakeholders, demonstrating an outstanding commitment to incorporating their perspectives at every stage of the project. |
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D2: EDI practices & activities

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| <input type="radio"/> Project practices and activities do not directly support and are not | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Project practices and activities somewhat support but are only | <input type="radio"/> Project is clearly grounded in EDI policies, | <input type="radio"/> Project is clearly grounded in EDI policies, practices or activities and |
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explicitly grounded in EDI principles.	loosely grounded in EDI principles.	practices or activities.	clearly demonstrates commitment to EDI and potential to be a leader in promoting EDI in the skills ecosystem.
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D3: Impact on furthering EDI

○ Anticipated impact on furthering EDI under the project scope is irrelevant or vague.	⊙ Demonstrates intent to further EDI under the project scope, but rationale lacks clarity.	○ Anticipated impact on furthering EDI under the project scope is clear and relevant.	○ Presents promising and strong strategies to further EDI in the field or sector with potential to impact the skills ecosystem at large.
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E. Capacity

The lead organization (and partners if applicable) have the skills, experience and resources to execute the project successfully and hold a good track record with FSC.

E1: Skills, experience & resources

○ Project team lacks skills, experience and resources needed to execute the project.	○ Project team has some of the skills, experience and resources needed to execute the project.	⊙ Project team clearly demonstrates adequate skills, experience and resources to execute the project.	○ Project team demonstrates strong skills, experience and resources to succeed in the project and to be a leader who influences the skills ecosystem.
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E2: FSC track record

○ Presents little or no evidence of a good track record with FSC and of addressing challenges faced during the current project, indicating that the organization may struggle to manage the new project effectively and responsibly.	⊙ Presents somewhat adequate evidence of a good track record with FSC and of addressing challenges faced during the current project, indicating that the organization may have limited capacity to manage the new project effectively and responsibly.	○ Presents adequate evidence of a good track record with FSC and of addressing challenges faced during the current project, indicating that the organization will manage the new project effectively and responsibly.	○ Shows clear evidence of an impeccable track record with FSC and has expertly addressed challenges faced during the current project, indicating that the organization has strong project and risk management systems in place to take on the new project.
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F. Coherence

Project displays a logical connection between proposed activities and project objectives with a work plan and a budget that are reasonable, appropriate and aligned.

F1: Connection between activities & objectives

- Lacks logical connection between activities and objectives.
- Activities and objectives are somewhat connected, but the link lacks clarity.
- Presents a clear and logical connection between activities and objectives.
- Activities and objectives are without a doubt strongly connected in a thoughtful way.

F2: Budget

- Budget is not reasonable, appropriate or aligned with workplan.
- Budget is somewhat reasonable and appropriate, but is only loosely aligned with workplan.
- Budget is clearly reasonable, appropriate and aligned with workplan.
- Presents an outstanding value for money and strong alignment with workplan.

Reviewer overall recommendation

Considering the proposal as a whole, do you think FSC should fund this project as a worthwhile contribution to the skills ecosystem?

Overall Recommendation:

- I recommend this project for funding
- I recommend this project for funding conditional on changes and/or more information
- I do not recommend this project for funding

Explain your reasoning for this recommendation.

The project did not articulate enough evidence to scale and or expand its work, unfortunately, in strong alignment with FSC strategic priorities. Under the Innovation and Evidence Section of the proposal, there was no hard evidence brought about the utility of more training and or implementation needs. I think there may need to be innovation here to embolden the additional request being made here. Maybe this was in their initial proposal but I missing a clear identification of the pain points in workforce development for Black Youth and Indigenous Youth and organizations that seek to support this demographic.

I am not sure the broader contexts are understood and if for youth unemployment i.e. potential change in service system management, a stronger focus on outreach and having impact on Black & Indigenous youth with complex life circumstances, and the "bums in seats" sector problem.

Furthermore, the issue of trying to engage Black and Indigenous organizations is that the already may have issues and challenges with low capacity. The main issues is funding and organizations have a circular problem of designing successful programs, while trying to meet budgetary requirements and sometimes impossible targets and outcomes. Supporting BIPOC youth with complex lives is expensive. Limited funding the for the wraparound supports that are necessary to make workforce development viable are hard to secure. The proposal seems to gloss over this, possibly, inadvertently.

I think there is great ideation in the proposal but I am not sure about the timelines for execution or if the correct steps have been identified in the work plan. I was anticipating a stronger alignment to the FSC strategic priorities.

Also, I am not clear on the learning questions per se.

The role of the project advisory remains unclear.

I am sure I understand the CAMH connection but it would seem to be the research arm of the project and I am not sure about how their mandate relates to workforce development. Also, the processes and products have no clear dissemination plan. How do we credential for B3 (Black led, serving and focused) organizations given their ongoing capacity challenges, particularly in the Covid-19 context.

Also, ethics approval has not been provided for the first FSC project. Concrete learnings may not adequately be incorporated at this point to warrant an additional application. They is a delay on the current project which may compound timelines for a new leg of work.

What do you think are the strongest aspects of this project?

The strongest part of the proposal is the advocacy for improved intermediaries workforce development for Black and Indigenous youth. Also, intermediaries in this context assumes that an organization has the capacity, willingness and Board support to transform the current work organizational polices, use of resources and responsiveness to workforce development. There needs to be consideration about the assessment of readiness for an organization to become an intermediary. Especially, since many Black and Indigenous-led organizations are multi-service and social service mandates which may not necessarily be conflated with employment and or workforce development.

Where do you think the project has gaps or challenges?

Strong aspects of the proposal is the focus on the demographic of Black youth. While it is admirable to have the expanded scope of Indigenous youth I have not seen any strong Indigenous partnership that would help the work to get going in the right direction, with even preliminary Indigenous knowledge. Seems like an after thought.

I think the proposal needs to cite confronting anti-Black Racism and anti-Indigeniety in the sector as it relates to funding specific Black and Indigenous youth employment programs.

Also, end-users are the most lowly compensated throughout the project which is unfortunate.

Comments

I really like this organization and love the work they are doing but it is hard to endorse an application like this when there are gaps in reasoning, sequencing and logic.

Please share any other comments.