



Reviewer Assessment Form: Targeted Call 2021

Project Name

Project Connect II: Scaling Technology-Enabled Learning for Indigenous Communities Across Canada

Lead Organization

Royal Roads University

Name of Reviewer

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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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| <p>○ Shows little or no scope to address recognized systemic challenges about future skills in Canada.</p> | <p>○ Presents general but limited scope to address recognized systemic challenges about future skills in Canada.</p> | <p>○ Presents clear and relevant scope to address recognized systemic challenges about future skills in Canada.</p> | <p>⊙ 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.</p> |
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A3: Demand for service

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| <p>○ Demonstration of the demand for this service is irrelevant or poorly articulated.</p> | <p>○ Demonstrates that there is some demand for this service but explanation lacks clarity.</p> | <p>○ Clearly demonstrates that there are high levels of demand for this service and explains how the project adequately fulfills this demand.</p> | <p>⊙ 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.</p> |
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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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| <p>○ It is not innovative, seeks funding for business as usual and, if applicable, is not informed by evidence.</p> | <p>○ While it is a departure from business as usual, interventions proposed are not particularly novel and, if applicable, are only vaguely informed by evidence.</p> | <p>○ Proposes clearly innovative solutions and, applicable, articulates how the novel interventions are adequately informed by evidence.</p> | <p>⊙ 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.</p> |
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B2: Evidence generation and new knowledge

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| <p>○ Presents unclear or no plan to generate insights or to advance knowledge.</p> | <p>○ Demonstrates intent to generate insights and advance knowledge that can benefit the skills ecosystem but the plan lacks clarity.</p> | <p>○ Presents a clear and adequate plan to generate insights and advance knowledge that will clearly benefit the skills ecosystem at large.</p> | <p>⊙ 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.</p> |
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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 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 checked="" 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 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 checked="" 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 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 checked="" 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 type="radio"/> Project practices and activities somewhat support but are only | <input type="radio"/> Project is clearly grounded in EDI policies, | <input checked="" 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.

I would recommend this project for funding because the proposal clearly demonstrates how Royal Roads will continue to help address systemic challenges facing Canada’s future skills development ecosystem. A major challenge faced by Indigenous people is unequal access to training opportunities because of cost, geography, background, and other barriers. The Professional Project Administrator (PPA) program is a fully online, low barrier-to- entry program, that provides extensive supports for student success. Students are provided with computers, digital literacy training, one-on-one tutoring and coaching support throughout the duration of the program. Cultural components are embedded in the program and play a central role in the delivery. A program Elder shares both cultural knowledge and and provides additional support to students as required. The program builds hard skills in areas such as project and data management, as well as human skills such as communication and teamwork.

The one piece of information I'm curious about is the role of Elders. Throughout the proposal, the role of the elders is clearly identified as fundamental to the success of the program. However, I'm curious how they are planning on expanding services from elders from a diversity of Indigenous communities, since it appears a Métis elder was incorporated into the program for the Métis clients.

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

The following is the strongest aspect of this project: Royal Roads believes the PPA program is a successful model for online skills-based training for Indigenous communities. They need to replicate it to prove it. Implications for the skills training ecosystem as it relates to the needs of Indigenous learners may be significant. Despite efforts to increase the inclusion of Indigenous workers in the workforce, labour market outcomes and employment rates for Indigenous people continue to lag significantly behind non-Indigenous workers. Addressing this gap is not only an equity issue to ensure Indigenous people have the skills to share in Canada's prosperity, but it is also imperative to help address labour shortfalls for sectors of the economy.

Where do you think the project has gaps or challenges?

One of the challenges with this project is the number of participants. The applicants mentioned that the number of students recruited for the program is lower than anticipated. However, they also mentioned that their completion rate is on track to surpass their goal by a significant margin.

Comments

There are really relevant goals for this project that align with FSC's strategic priorities and Northern strategy. However, some more details need to be discussed before funding this project.

Please share any other comments.