NDRIO | NOIRN

New Digital Research Infrastructure Organization | Nouvelle organisation d'infrastructure de recherche numérique

Researcher Council
Frequently Asked Questions

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EngageDRI.ca

About NDRIO

1. What is NDRIO?

The [New Digital Research Infrastructure Organization (NDRIO)](#) is a national not-for-profit membership-based organization playing a critical role helping to advance the establishment of a researcher-focused, accountable, agile, strategic and sustainable Digital Research Infrastructure (DRI) ecosystem for Canadian researchers.

Established in 2019, NDRIO works with other DRI ecosystem partners and stakeholders across the country to help provide Canadian scholars and scientists with the digital tools, services and infrastructure they need to support leading-edge research, innovation and advancement across all disciplines.

NDRIO's mandate is critical to all of Canada's academic researchers, our country's ability to remain globally competitive, and our collective ability to benefit society as a whole.

2. How is NDRIO funded?

The Government of Canada, through Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED), has set aside up to $375M over five years to establish NDRIO. This is part of the federal government's broader five-year commitment of $572.5M to develop a national Digital Research Infrastructure (DRI) strategy.

3. What is NDRIO's mandate?

The New Digital Research Infrastructure Organization (NDRIO) will coordinate and fund activities in advanced research computing (ARC), data management (DM) and research software (RS) components of the DRI strategy, working collaboratively with all stakeholders across Canada. Membership is not required to access the programs of NDRIO, which will be made available to eligible researchers and research institutions across Canada.

4. Why was the Researcher Advisory Group created?

NDRIO's Board of Directors announced the creation of the [Researcher Advisory Group](#) in June 2020 to undertake the following priority activities informed by comprehensive community consultations over the summer:

- Develop and propose the governance model for a permanent Researcher Council
- Launch the Researcher Council recruitment process
- Assess and recommend candidates for the inaugural Researcher Council to the Board for final approval for announcement at the fall general meeting
- Initiate the researcher needs assessment process to help inform the development of a new service delivery model and strategic plan for NDRIO

To deliver on its mandate, the Researcher Advisory Group held national consultations on the proposed governance model for the Researcher Council and launched a national recruitment process for the Researcher Council from August 4 to 23, 2020.

5. Who were the members of the Researcher Advisory Group?

The Researcher Advisory Group was composed of the following seven multi-disciplinary researchers:

Guillaume Bourque, Chair	Leads research in human genetics with McGill University
David Barclay	Leads research in oceanography and underwater acoustics with Dalhousie University
Matthew Choptuik	Leads research in numerical relativity with the University of British Columbia
Erin Dickie*	Leads research in the areas of the brain and therapeutics with the University of Toronto and works with the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
Catherine Middleton	Leads research in the development and use of new communication technologies with Ryerson University
Denis Thérien	Vice-President of Research and Partnerships at Element AI and NDRIO Board Director
Deb Verhoeven	Canada 150 Research Chair in Gender and Cultural Informatics at the University of Alberta (Edmonton) and NDRIO Board Director

*Erin Dickie was recused from the Researcher Advisory Group Selection Committee, replaced by Dr. Alexandra King, NDRIO Board member and internal medicine and Indigenous health researcher.

About the Researcher Council Governance Model

6. How did the Researcher Advisory Group develop the Researcher Council Governance Model?

The Researcher Advisory Group issued the draft Researcher Council Governance Model Consultation for stakeholder feedback from June 30 to July 10, 2020. Two webinars were also held with over 110 participants, and 25 submissions from stakeholders were received.

Overall, stakeholders were supportive of the Researcher Council governance model as set out in the consultation paper. Stakeholder feedback focused on the provision of further details on the operations of the Researcher Council and how it would work with the NDRIO Board and management. The key themes were related to:

- Role of the Researcher Council
- Governance and Operations of the Researcher Council
- Size and Composition of the Researcher Council

The Final Researcher Council Governance Model incorporates stakeholder feedback and final recommendations.

7.   What is the role of the Researcher Council?

The Researcher Council will make recommendations and provide strategic advice to the NDRIO Board of Directors and management on researcher needs for DRI infrastructure and services. The Researcher Council will ensure that the diversity of researcher voices is represented to NDRIO. Members of the Researcher Council do not advocate for their own interests or respective disciplines, but rather represent the interests of all researchers.

The Researcher Council is a critical component of NDRIO's commitment to involve the research community as it designs a new service delivery model supporting Canada's new Digital Research Infrastructure (DRI) Strategy. The Researcher Council will help assess the DRI landscape, summarize the research community's DRI needs, contribute to NDRIO's strategic vision and serve as ambassadors for NDRIO's mandate. The Researcher Council will make recommendations to the Board on researcher needs. It will not make operational funding decisions on the allocation of DRI resources.

8.   What is the researcher needs assessment?

The key initial deliverable of the Researcher Council is the researcher needs assessment. The needs assessment is a critical input into the development of NDRIO's first strategic plan that will be completed by fall 2021.

The researcher needs assessment is a systematic process for determining and addressing researchers' needs, or "gaps" between the current state and the desired state or "wants." The needs assessment determines "what" should be delivered to researchers; the "how" is defined by NDRIO's Service Delivery Model.

The Researcher Council will oversee the development of the researcher needs assessment. The needs assessment will be based on significant outreach and consultations with the researcher community.

9.   How will NDRIO's Researcher Council ensure that it represents Canadian researchers?

The Researcher Council serves as NDRIO's ambassadors for the research community. The Council will use various outreach activities and mechanisms to serve and engage researchers. The Researcher Council will develop processes to engage researchers across disciplines to identify, synthesize and validate current and future priorities. The Researcher Council will annually survey the researcher community to further understand its needs. To ensure the

transparency of its operations with stakeholders, the Researcher Council will publish an annual report for the research community on its activities.

10. What is the governance of the Researcher Council?

Dr. Guillaume Bourque has been appointed interim Chair by the Board of Directors for a six-month term to help establish the Council. After that time, the Researcher Council will elect its Chair and Vice-Chair from among its members. All other Researcher Council matters are determined by the NDRIO Board, including the approval of members.

To strengthen the linkage between the Researcher Council and the NDRIO Board, the inaugural Researcher Council will work with NDRIO to explore options, including the option of having the Chair as a voting member of the Board.

11. How will the Researcher Council be supported?

To help deliver on its mandate, the Researcher Council will be well supported by dedicated resources, including the NDRIO management team and staff, sector experts, specialized sub-committees and working groups that will be established as necessary. This will equip the Researcher Council with the support and expertise that it needs to help translate researcher needs into programs, services and infrastructure.

12. Who is eligible to be on the Researcher Council and how are they recruited?

The NDRIO Board is responsible for the recruitment of the Researcher Council. All qualified candidates will be considered for the Researcher Council. Candidates can apply directly through an open call application process or may be nominated by NDRIO's Primary Members. NDRIO's By-Laws allow for Primary Member nominations to the Researcher Council. This will ensure a diverse pool of candidates for Researcher Council vacancies. Vacancies will be posted on the NDRIO website and selection will follow a comprehensive and transparent process.

Researcher Council members are faculty researchers from post-secondary institutions, research hospitals and/or affiliated institutes that are eligible for Tri-Council grants. Non-faculty professionals, including technical staff, may participate in expert working groups that will support the work of the Researcher Council.

The Researcher Council will represent the diversity of the national research enterprise including research discipline, institution, geographic and linguistic diversity, and diversity between established and emerging researchers. NDRIO is committed to the principles of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). The Researcher Council is a work in progress, with an ongoing focus to ensure that its membership and the work of NDRIO truly reflect the diversity of Canada's research enterprise.

The Researcher Council does not include representation from large science and other DRI organizations. These organizations have an active role in helping to shape the Researcher Council findings and recommendations. The Researcher Council may seek to establish specialized committees and/or working groups with expertise from these organizations to provide expert advice on specific technical areas.

About Researcher Council Recruitment

13. What are the required skills and qualifications of Researcher Council members?

Researcher Council members have Digital Research Infrastructure (DRI) experience, can address and negotiate competing DRI interests, demonstrate strategic thinking and vision, and communicate effectively with internal and external stakeholders.

The Researcher Council will represent the diversity of the national research enterprise including research discipline, institution, geographic and linguistic diversity, and diversity between established and emerging researchers. The New Digital Research Infrastructure Organization is committed to the principles of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI).

14. Can you describe the Researcher Council recruitment process?

The Researcher Advisory Group Selection Committee launched the Researcher Council recruitment process on August 4, 2020. The deadline for Primary Member nominations and independent applications was August 23, 2020.

The Researcher Advisory Group Selection Committee undertook the review and evaluation process against selection criteria. Selection criteria included Digital Research Infrastructure (DRI) experience, ability to address and negotiate competing DRI interests, demonstrated strategic thinking and vision, and effective communication skills. The Researcher Advisory Group recommended a slate of Researcher Council candidates to the NDRIO Board of Directors, who made the final decisions on the inaugural Researcher Council membership. (*See question #17 for list of inaugural members.*)

In addition to Primary Member nominations, the recruitment of the Researcher Council took place through an open-posting process and targeted outreach to Member institutions, organizations and researchers.

15. How were Principles of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) handled in the recruitment?

Principles of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) were an important consideration throughout the selection process. The Researcher Advisory Group Selection Committee was tasked with striking a balance between all identified selection criteria and EDI considerations.

The following measures were taken to ensure EDI commitments were met:

- A recruitment consultant was engaged to undertake targeted outreach
- The deadline was flexible to accommodate potential EDI candidates
- The candidate selection process included EDI considerations throughout
- The application form used the latest Tri-Council EDI survey, based on the most-up-to date research and analysis of current approaches to self-identification

16.   What outreach activities were undertaken and how many applicants did NDRIO receive?

The recruitment process directly reached out to over 700 stakeholders with the posting and application, and leveraged NDRIO's relationships with its DRI partners including CANARIE, Portage and Colleges and Institutes Canada (CiCAN) who sent it to their members. Compute Canada shared it with their 12,000 researchers and members in their database. Proactive outreach to EDI target groups, including Indigenous researchers, was also undertaken.

These outreach efforts resulted in a strong pool of 137 candidates.

17.   Who is on the inaugural Researcher Council?

The following are the 22 members of the inaugural Researcher Council:

- Guillaume Bourque, McGill University, Interim Chair (six-month term)

Ontario

- Susan Brown, University of Guelph
- Anne Martel, Sunnybrook Research Institute
- Amol Verma, Unity Health Toronto
- Rebecca Pillai Riddell, York University
- Pekka Sinervo, University of Toronto
- Constance Crompton, University of Ottawa
- Erin Dickie, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
- Girma Bitsuamlak, Western University

Quebec

- Carolyn Côté-Lussier, Institut National de la Recherche Scientifique
- Philippe Després, Université Laval
- Bruno Blais, Polytechnique Montréal
- Benjamin Fung, McGill University
- Benoît Dupont, Université de Montréal

- Marie-Jean Meurs, Université du Québec à Montréal

West

- Karen Bakker, University of British Columbia
- Randall Sobie, University of Victoria
- Erik Rosolowsky, University of Alberta
- Rebecca Davis, University of Manitoba
- Carl D'Arcy, University of Saskatchewan

East

- Laura Estill, St. Francis Xavier University
- Erika Merschrod, Memorial University

18.   Is the inaugural Researcher Council representative of the diversity of the Canadian research enterprise?

NDRIO achieved the majority of its selection criteria for the Researcher Council: 11 are women; 13 speak both official languages; there is balance on a regional, DRI experience and discipline basis; four are early-career researchers and five identify as visible minorities.

The majority of Council members are from universities, with three from research hospitals. More work needs to be done to ensure colleges are represented on a go-forward basis. Despite proactive and targeted outreach to potential Indigenous candidates, none were able to apply in the current Research Council selection round. There will be future opportunities to invite Indigenous input to the work of the Researcher Council.