

Completing a Risk Assessment Form for projects funded through the Canada Foundation for Innovation's 2023 Innovation Fund competition

Who should use this document and for what purpose?

This document is intended to provide guidance for completing a [Risk Assessment Form \(RAF\)](#) to researchers and research administrators at institutions that have received funding through the Canada Foundation for Innovation's (CFI) 2023 Innovation Fund competition.

The 2023 Innovation Fund competition requires the recipient institution to submit an RAF before the contribution is finalized for all awarded projects that involve a private-sector partner that:

- Has an active role in the research activities described in the funding proposal (e.g., sharing of intellectual property, providing expertise, actively participating in research activities, contributing financially to the research activities); or
- Houses all or part of the research infrastructure; or
- Contributes more than \$500,000 to the infrastructure through a cash or in-kind contribution to any single item.

This document provides clarification for how to complete certain sections of the RAF to better reflect the reality and requirements of CFI-funded infrastructure projects.

You can find the RAF on the [Safeguarding Your Research](#) website hosted by the Government of Canada.

What is a Risk Assessment Form (RAF)?

A Risk Assessment Form (RAF) is a tool to identify and assess potential risks that research partnerships may pose to Canada's national security as outlined in the Government of Canada's [National Security Guidelines for Research Partnerships](#) (NSGRP) and to develop effective mitigation measures.

The CFI encourages institutions to use the [NSGRP](#), as well as the guidance provided on the [Safeguarding Your Research](#) website, to assess research partnerships and undertake due diligence with any partner or funder.

In answering the Risk Assessment Form questions, institutions will provide information that is specific to the area(s) of research the CFI-funded research infrastructure will enable, as highlighted in the funding proposal, and to prospective private-sector partners. This information will be used to assess national

security risks where the proposed research partnerships could expose the research project to foreign interference, espionage or theft from foreign governments, militaries, and other organizations, and pose potential risks to the wider Canadian research enterprise.

As mentioned in the [NSGRP](#), national security risks may be described as, but are not limited to, circumstances where there are potential instances of foreign interference, espionage, intellectual property theft or unauthorized knowledge transfer that:

- Contribute to the advancement of military, security, and intelligence capabilities of states or groups that pose a threat to Canada; and/or,
- Disrupt the development of Canadian research and innovation, weaken the resiliency of critical infrastructure, or jeopardize the protection of sensitive data of Canadians.

The Risk Assessment Form is only used to collect information and assess risks related to the research partnerships.

Institutions are encouraged to conduct open-source research to complete the Risk Assessment Form and to consult with their partner organization(s), where appropriate, to validate the information. For more information, consult the comprehensive guide [Conducting Open Source Due Diligence for Safeguarding Research Partnerships](#).

Additional guidance and resources that may assist you in the completion of this form can be located on the [Safeguarding Your Research](#) portal, including Public Safety Canada's [Safeguarding Science workshop](#) and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service's [threat briefing and checklist](#).

What should institutions consider when filling out the RAF for a research infrastructure project?

The RAF is split into five sections: Know Your Research; Know Your Partner Organization; Risk Identification; Risk Mitigation Plan and Additional Requirements. Complete each section as instructed and keep the following points in mind regarding the research infrastructure:

- Fill out Section 1, Know Your Research, according to the research that the CFI-funded infrastructure will enable, as highlighted in your funding proposal.
- When filling out Section 3, Risk Identification, consider potential additional risks associated with the use of the research infrastructure by private-sector partners, especially if partners are expected to have access to the CFI-funded infrastructure.

When do institutions need to update the RAF?

Following award finalization and until they submit the final financial report, institutions are asked to notify the CFI of any changes to a funded project that would impact the national security risk under the [NSGRP](#) by submitting an updated RAF.

Examples of situations warranting an updated RAF include:

- The development of new partnerships.
- An increase in a partner's financial contribution to the project as per the threshold above.
- The relocation of research infrastructure to the premises of a private-sector partner.