

## **Competitive Grants Program Assessment Report 2009**

A total of 148 applications in the form of 110 expressions of interest and 38 full proposals were received. From the expressions of interest, 21 applications have been asked to submit full proposals. The Board Standing Committee approved nine full proposals for funding and two applicants have been asked to re-submit to Round 2. A minimum of \$1.5 million is available for the expressions of interest resubmitted as proposals in Round 2 and for any re-submitted proposals from Round 1.

The assessment of full proposals was based on the following criteria, defined in the program guidelines, using a scale of 1- 5 (where 5 is the highest):

- Project outcomes and rationale
- Approach
- Value and need for the project
- Value for money and project management
- Capacity of project team to deliver proposed outcomes

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- Proposed outcomes and rationale
- Approach of the proposed project
- Value and need for the project

### **General comments about the applications:**

- The overall quality of applications was rated medium or good by 18 of the 20 assessors.
- Among the applications were good, innovative ideas that address areas of real importance to the sector and build on existing work. There appears to be greater appreciation of the need for innovation that is sustainable and for outcomes that are portable across the sector.
- There were useful research methods articulated and well-justified implications for teaching and learning.
- Evaluation is built into many applications (in a way it was not a few years ago) and many have embedded and highly effective approaches to dissemination.
- The concept of evaluation has been interpreted differently by applicants. Some applications failed to distinguish between evaluation of the project outcomes or deliverables (when required as an integral project component) and actual project evaluation.

- A weakness of some applications is a reliance on outcomes that demonstrate scholarship rather than change in strategy, teacher behaviour or expectations about the role of the student in assuming greater responsibility for learning.
- Many proposals include preliminary literature reviews and sector consultations that should be carried out in the phase of establishing the viability or need for the project – that is, before the proposal is submitted.
- Some applications are too broad (and thus unlikely to produce a targeted outcome that could be taken up and embedded in practice) or are actually two projects in one (and typically too large and too thinly spread to do full justice to either).
- In many cases, dissemination was narrowly focused and involvement of other institutions was limited. There was little recognition that many projects could, with some planning, be developed to allow more generic use across disciplines and the sector.

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