

**Churchill Northern Studies Centre**

**Northern Research Fund (NRF)**

**Guidelines**

**Revised October 2006**

# Introduction

## A. Objective

The goal of the Northern Research Fund (NRF) is to enhance research conducted by researchers using the facilities and services of the Churchill Northern Studies Centre (CNSC). The fund is available to assist researchers in meeting the financial needs of projects that will lead to increased knowledge relevant to the people living in the north, particularly in the region around Churchill.

## B. Funding

Grants available through the NRF represent a combination of cash and in-kind support. In-kind support consists of "user-days" (accommodation and meal services for one person for a 24 hour period), "vehicle-days" (vehicle and/or equipment support from the CNSC fleet, exclusive of fuel charges) and vouchers for return air and rail travel (Winnipeg to Churchill). The total funding available for the each competition, and the composition of that total, is established annually at the August meeting of the CNSC Board of Directors (BoD).

## Application procedures

### A. Application deadline

There will normally be one annual competition for grants from the NRF. Completed forms for any NRF competition must be e-mailed, postmarked or faxed to the CNSC no later than the November deadline provided on the CNSC's website. The preference is for a submission by e-mail.

### B. Eligibility

All researchers and all disciplines are eligible but no more than one application for the same project will be funded in the same year. The Committee will not consider more than one application per individual researcher per competition, but an individual may apply for two research grants when 1) the second project is collaborative, and 2) another individual is principal investigator of that project. All projects will be assessed equally but applications for projects concerned with topics outlined in CNSC's "Operational Mandate" are particularly welcomed.

Ineligible or unacceptable applications include those that are:

- a) postmarked or received or after the application deadline.
- b) incomplete.
- c) submitted by researchers with outstanding, unsettled accounts at the CNSC.
- d) submitted by researchers funded by the NRF in a previous competition who failed to submit a summary report with original invoices and receipts.

## **C. Nature, levels and limits of support**

Available cash will be distributed among successful researchers or projects. Values of in-kind services will be determined from the CNSC Fee Schedule (see the CNSC's webpage). Vouchers for return air or rail travel to Churchill, when available, will be allocated to projects where, in the opinion of the Committee, they will be most beneficial. Total support to a project will not normally exceed, in dollar equivalent, other forms of income available to the researcher or project in that field season.

Applicants may apply for any level of support from among the types of funding available to a maximum of 50% of the expected total project budget. For example, if the project is expected to cost \$4,000 in equipment, supplies and travel, and to require 20 user-days and 8 vehicle days, then an applicant can apply to the NRF for up to \$2,000 in cash, 10 user-days and 4 vehicle days. Travel vouchers will be considered part of the cash category of funding but may occasionally contribute to an award that comprises more than half of the project's total cash value.

## **D. Assessment criteria**

All eligible applications will be assessed. The principal criterion used to determine the level of funding will be the stringency of the proposed research and its potential for the advancement of knowledge, particularly as it pertains to our understanding of life in the north. However, in an effort to effectively distribute limited funds, the following applications will be given priority to applications:

- a) from first-time applicants.
- b) from or involving students.
- c) for projects where total NRF funding is a small part of the whole project budget. However, the allocation of cash to these projects will be considered carefully.
- d) from researchers who have disseminated the results of previous work through presentations and peer-reviewed publications.
- e) for projects to be conducted in the shoulder and off seasons (November 30 to April 30).

Applications that will be given a lower priority include those:

- a) for projects continued into their second and subsequent years. Regardless of the length of any one project, continued support beyond one competition is not guaranteed.
- b) for projects that duplicate research previously conducted.

In assessing applications, the Research and Education (R&E) Committee will generally follow the guidelines established by other federally funded granting agencies (i.e., NSERC and SSHRC). Applicants should therefore produce reasoned, clearly written, well-organized proposals that attempt to answer questions and solve problems inherent to northern areas. While it is not necessary that applicants have previous research experience in the North, they should demonstrate an understanding of the issues

relevant to the proposed research and an awareness of available comparative data. All items in the proposed budget must be justified fully and their need explained in the application.

## **E. Application process**

All applications must consist of the following:

- a) a covering letter, addressed to the Scientific Coordinator, at the Churchill Northern Studies Centre.
- b) a completed NRF application form (available on the CNSC's webpage)
- c) a list of the permits required for the proposed research project and details regarding the status of any permit still pending. Photocopies of permits that have been obtained must be sent to Scientific Coordinator before the application deadline.

## **F. Acceptance and duration of awards**

Applicants receiving a NRF grant must formally accept the terms and conditions of the NRF program described in a letter of notification by returning a signed and dated copy of their acceptance form to the Scientific Coordinator.

Researchers must expend their NRF grant for the fiscal year it was awarded. Cash, travel vouchers, user-days and vehicle-days may not be carried forward to a second field season. Researchers must notify the Scientific Coordinator in writing of any portion of an award (cash, travel voucher or in-kind services) they are unable to expend so that these funds can be reallocated to other projects with demonstrated need. Researchers will be billed for the value of any unused portion of their NRF grant that they fail to return.

Unused NRF awards, either in part or in whole, will revert to the CNSC. The Executive Director and Scientific Coordinator, in consultation with the Chair of the R&E Committee, may distribute unused portions of the NRF to other currently funded projects with a demonstrable need for additional support.

## **G. Reports, invoices and receipts**

A completed NRF Research Grant Report (forms are available on the CNSC's webpage) summarizing research conducted during the tenure of the award must be submitted to the Scientific Coordinator by 31 March of the following year. Cash award recipients are required to submit original invoices and receipts (up to a maximum of the cash award amount) for reimbursement to the Scientific Coordinator by 31 March of the following year.

All NRF award recipients are expected to acknowledge the support provided in any publication or technical report resulting from the funded research.

The CNSC appreciates receiving copies of any published papers, reports or theses based on NRF supported research, and is willing to accept donations of research and teaching materials. Donations can include copies of unpublished or published research articles, newly published or used books, maps, undergraduate or graduate level poster presentations, course reports, presentation materials related to Churchill and other northern regions, photographs, slides or digitized images, and newsletters and promotional materials relevant to northern research.

## **The decision making process**

The members of the R&E Committee will receive copies of all eligible applications, the values of funds to be disbursed in the current competition, and a summary document prepared by the Scientific Coordinator noting projects that 1) are new and previously funded or ongoing, 2) may impact the functioning of CNSC, and 3) duplicate research conducted previously at the CNSC.

If further information is required regarding a project, either the Scientific Coordinator or the Chair of the Committee, or his/her delegate, has the authority to seek it from the project's principal investigator or to consult with experts in the field.

To avoid misunderstandings, only the Committee Chair will discuss proposals with applicants and the nature of the discussion will be explanatory. Applicants should contact the Scientific Coordinator for information regarding the facilities and services provided by the CNSC.

The allocation of available NRF funds to successful applicants will be discussed by the members of the R&E Committee and finalized at the December meeting of the CNSC BoD. A list of award recipients that is acceptable to the majority of the members of the committee will be sent to the Scientific Coordinator by January 15. By January 30, the Scientific Coordinator will prepare letters to be signed by the Executive Director notifying each applicant of the results of the competition. In-kind support and travel tickets will become available immediately. All awards will become available for use upon notification.

The Chair of the R&E Committee will provide a brief report on the year's NRF activities and the allocation of the grants to the BoD at the May meeting. A final report summarizing the NRF competition and any reallocation of funds will be prepared by the SC for the May meeting of the BoD of the year following the competition.

## **NORTHERN RESEARCH FUND SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES**

August	Board of Directors (BoD) determines NRF funding allocation and finalizes composition of the Research and Education (R&E) Committee and sets the application deadlines for the upcoming competition
September	NRF Competition advertised on website
November	Deadline for NRF applications Scientific Coordinator (SC) forwards copies of all eligible NRF applications to members of the R&E Committee and notifies its members of relevant previous project histories
December	R&E Committee reaches a consensus on NRF awards
January 15	R&E Committee Chair recommends NRF awards to the SC
January 31	Executive Director (ED), on behalf of BoD, notifies applicants regarding NRF awards
February-October	ED, SC and R&E Chair reallocate any funds returned by applicants
May	BoD confirms allocated awards R&E Committee Chair gives brief progress report to BoD
March 31	Deadline for receipt of invoices and Research Grant Reports
May	SC submits final report on previous year's NRF competition to BoD