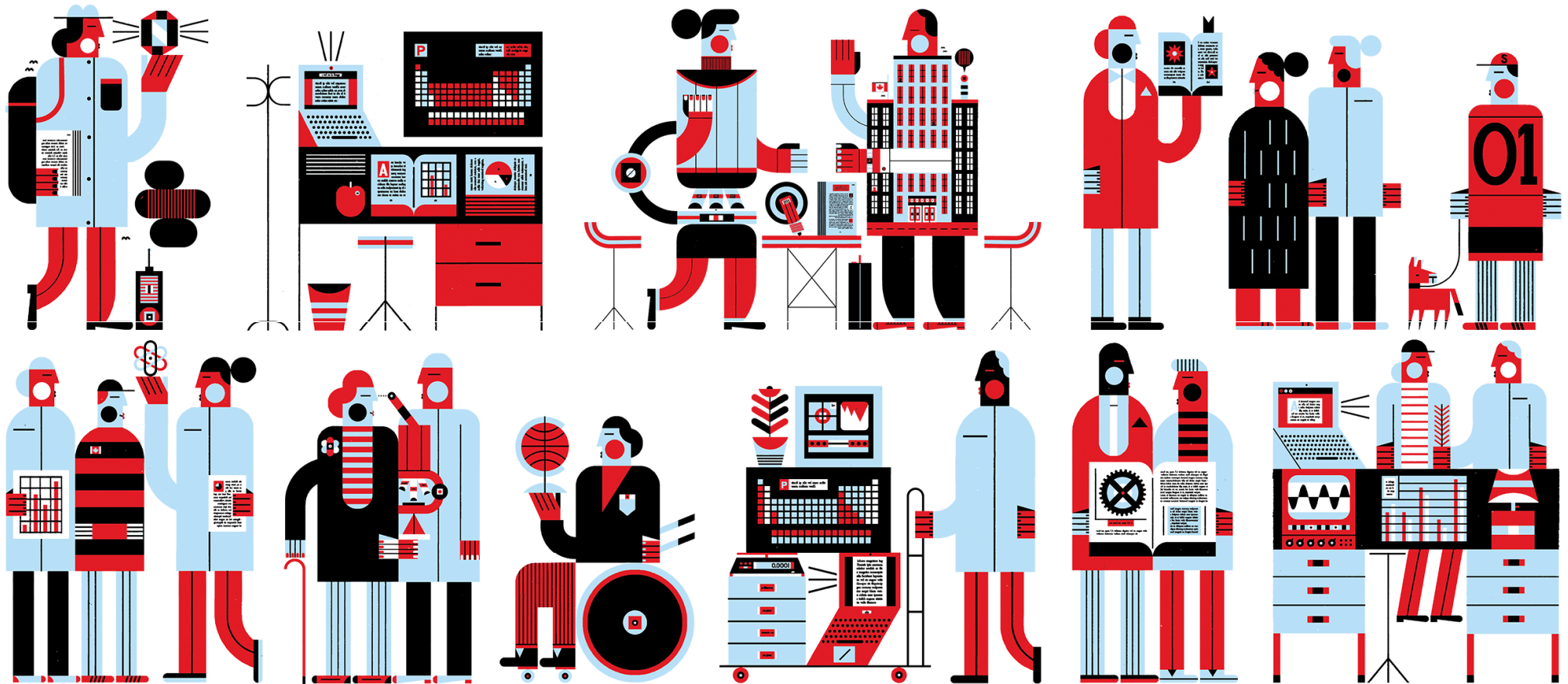




Breakthrough answers  
to timeless questions

Des réponses innovantes  
à de grandes questions



Natural Sciences and Engineering  
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en sciences  
naturelles et en génie du Canada

Canada



# Alliance grants

**Presented by: Frank Nolan and Nicole Whiteway**

Research and Technology Partnerships Division  
Natural Sciences and Engineering Council of Canada  
May 7, 2024

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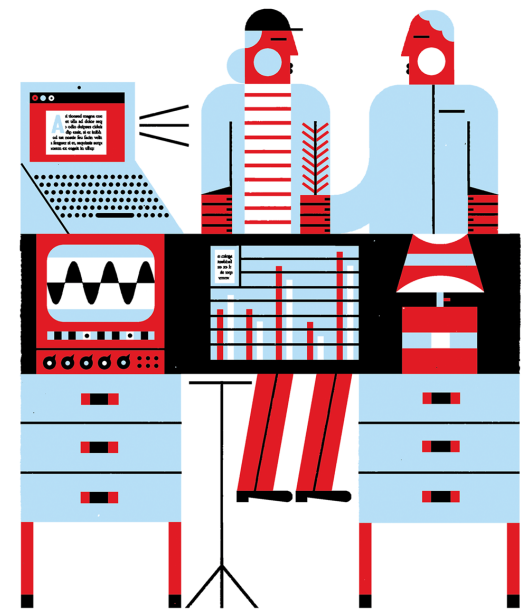
## 1. Alliance Grants

- Alliance Advantage + joint calls
- Alliance Society

## 2. Research Security

- Sensitive Technology Research and Affiliations of Concern Policy

## 3. Useful links





## Supporting research at Canadian universities

The Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) is the **largest provider of grants & scholarships** in Canada in the fields of Natural Sciences and Engineering

\$1.3B annual budget

A light gray map of Canada serves as a background for the statistics. A vertical red line is positioned to the left of the map, and three horizontal red lines extend from the map to the left, connecting to the text on the left side of the slide.

Supporting:

12,000+ researchers

33,000+ students and fellows

4,600 partners

Alliance grants

## Program objectives

### Support

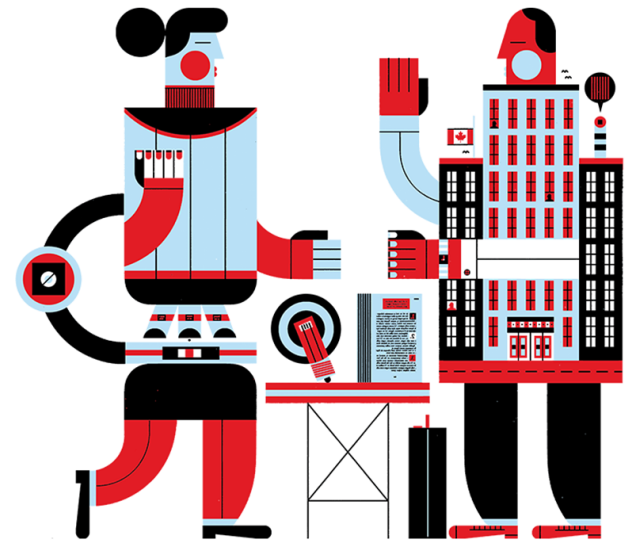
- **Research** in the **natural sciences and engineering (NSE)** led by strong, complementary, collaborative teams
- **Collaborations** with **partner organizations** from multiple sectors (private, public, not-for-profit) as well as with national and international **academic researchers**.
- Projects that will generate new knowledge and accelerate the application of research results **for the benefit of Canadians**

## Alliance grants

# Program objectives

- **Alliance Advantage grants:** Support partner-driven projects. They fund projects focused on the partners' goals, with at least one partner sharing in the costs of research.
- **Alliance Society grants:** Support projects with societal impact as the main driver. They draw on the relevant perspectives and skill sets of active participants that help accelerate the translation and application of research results.
- **Alliance Special calls and joint funding opportunities:** Enable researchers to align their efforts with those of unique partners in specific areas and technologies.

# Alliance Advantage



## Alliance Advantage

### Overview

<b>Who can apply?</b>	University researchers working with partner organizations, co-applicants and collaborators
<b>Essential?</b>	<b>Cash and in-kind contributions from partner organizations</b>
<b>How much?</b>	\$20,000 to \$1 million per year
<b>Cost-sharing?</b>	2:1 leverage
<b>How long?</b>	1 to 5 years
<b>When to apply?</b>	Anytime



## Alliance Advantage

# Partner-driven projects, focused on the partners' goals

### Alliance Advantage objectives:

- Generate new knowledge and technology
- Contribute to Canada's competitiveness
- Train highly qualified personnel in areas that are important to Canada
- Draw on diverse perspectives and skill sets to accelerate the mobilization and application of research results

### Key benefits:

- NSERC funds cover up to 66.7% of the direct costs of the research, up to \$5M over 5 years
- Cost-sharing contributions could be eligible for SR&ED tax credits, further reducing financial risk
- Applications can be submitted anytime.
- Applications that request < \$75,000/year are processed with a decision within 5 to 9 weeks

[https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Innovate-Innover/alliance-alliance/index\\_eng.asp](https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Innovate-Innover/alliance-alliance/index_eng.asp)  
[https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/\\_doc/alliance/Alliance-partner-pamphlet\\_e.pdf](https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/_doc/alliance/Alliance-partner-pamphlet_e.pdf)

## Alliance Advantage

# Role of the partner organizations

The partner organizations involved in your Alliance project can be from the **private, public or not-for-profit sectors**

At least one partner organization must be recognized for cost sharing and make a cash contribution that NSERC will be leveraged at the cost-sharing ratio of 2:1



Each partner organization must be actively involved in the project and support it through in-kind contributions



At least one partner organization must have the ability to exploit the research results and to achieve the desired outcomes



## Producer groups and industrial associations

Role	Producer Groups	Industrial Associations
Coordinating & Funding Research	On behalf of their members and/or to mobilize knowledge to encourage the growth and sustainability of the industry	For the group or sector the organization represents
Collaboration	Through organization's <b>board</b> or <b>committees</b> or through one or more of the <b>organization's members</b>	<b>Directly</b> , or through one or more of the <b>organization's members</b>
In-kind Contributions	<b>Project design, project oversight, meetings, participation of staff, board or committee members or member producers</b>	Typically, by the <b>association members</b> with <b>project management</b> by the association
HQP Training	Through <b>the producer group or its members</b>	Through a member company or companies
Research Results	<b>Disseminates information</b> to all members; translates and mobilizes knowledge from the project to members	Demonstrates availability of resources to <b>implement the results</b> , either <b>directly</b> or <b>through</b> one or more of the <b>organization's members</b>

See [Partner page](#) for full list of requirements

## Alliance Advantage

### Partner organizations :

- Active and engaged in the project
- Contribute to reaching the objectives
- Will exploit the results and generate outcomes

#### Each partner organization completes a one-page profile addressing these two requirements:

- Description of organization, including the nature of its operations in Canada and how it intends to grow them by mobilizing the research results
- Demonstration that the organization has the capacity to achieve the project's expected results (HR, facilities and financial capabilities)

**Are cash contributions recognized for cost sharing?**

[Role of partner organizations](#)

[Partner org. self-assessment tool](#)

[Tri-agency guide on fin. admin.](#)

Reference to partner organization's website is not acceptable in lieu of a comprehensible profile

Refer to the [instructions](#)

## Alliance Advantage

# How to apply

1. Apply at any time by filling out the [proposal template](#).  
No limit on the number of applications you can submit
2. Assess and address potential conflicts of interest to discharge professional and institutional obligations, maintain public confidence and ensure accountability
3. Describe specific, concrete practices that you will put in place to ensure that EDI is intentionally and proactively supported in your project's training plan
4. Complete the [National Security Guidelines for Research Partnership's Risk Assessment Form](#), if your application involves private sector partner organizations
5. Submit a complete application through the [NSERC's online system](#)

### Proposal:

- Follow the [instructions](#)
- Keep the headings and bullets, the font and font size, as well as the margins
- Keep within page limit (includes the template's heading and bullets)
- Any document that is not requested will be removed

### Risk Assessment Form:

- Complete the risk assessment questionnaire and the risk mitigation plan (when applicable)
- Consider the risks associated with each private sector partner organization involved in your project

[https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Innovate-Innover/alliance-alliance/apply-presentez\\_votre\\_demande\\_eng.asp](https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Innovate-Innover/alliance-alliance/apply-presentez_votre_demande_eng.asp)

[https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Innovate-Innover/alliance-alliance/EDI\\_training-EDI\\_formation\\_eng.asp](https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Innovate-Innover/alliance-alliance/EDI_training-EDI_formation_eng.asp)

## Alliance Advantage

# Evaluation process

- 1 Administrative assessment
- 2 Risk assessment (when applicable)
- 3 Merit assessment
  - I. Review mechanisms
  - II. Evaluation criteria
  - III. Determining the overall merit
- 4 Funding decision

Size of project	Small	Medium	Large
<b>Average annual request</b>	\$20k to \$75k	\$75k to \$300k	\$300k to \$1M
<b>Review mechanism</b>	NSERC File Managers or External reviewers *	External reviewers with expertise directly related to the proposal provide a review	
<b>Maximum total number of pages</b>	7	11	27
<b>Expected assessment time</b>	5 to 9 weeks	9 to 18 weeks	

\* If there is no existing NSERC peer review for the applicant or one of the co-applicants (except co-applicants who are early career researchers)

## Alliance Advantage

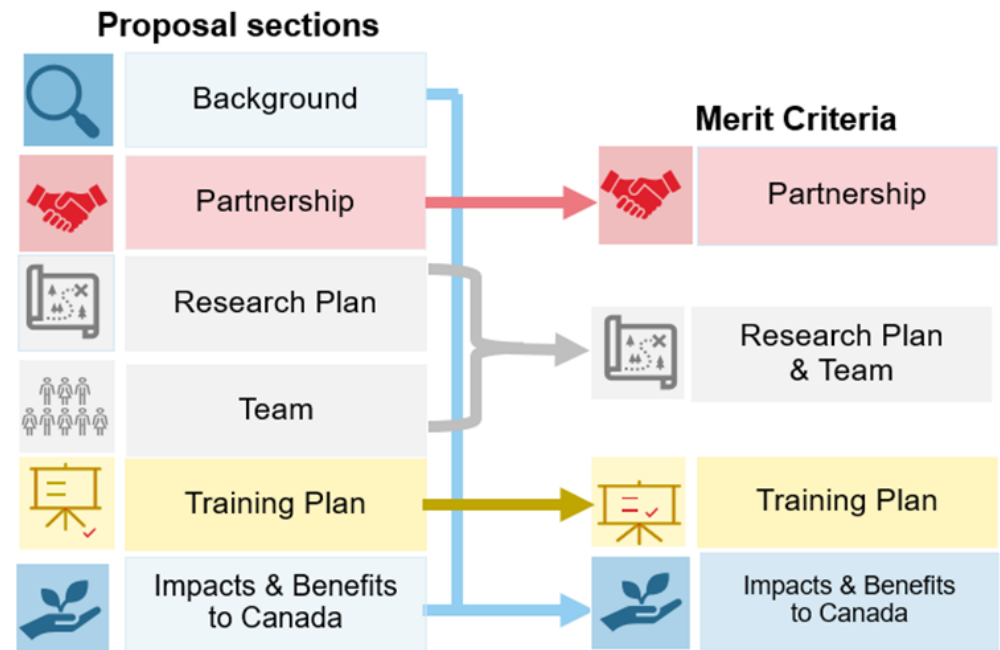
### Evaluation process – merit assessment

The proposal template has been revised and reorganized into six distinct sections :

- guide and help applicants develop more streamlined research proposal
- easier for reviewers and NSERC staff to find needed information

Merit evaluation is based on four criteria

- two sub-criteria per criterion



## Alliance grants

# Recent updates to Alliance Grants

- **Interactions between trainees and partner organizations:** The training plan must include interactions between trainees and partner organizations that enrich their training, provide mentoring and experience relevant to both academic and non-academic research environments.
- **Merit indicator for EDI in the training plan:** Applicants are asked to provide context for the concrete practices they are proposing. Applicants who cite evidence supporting the proposed practices and propose methods for monitoring success will receive higher merit scores.
- **Conflict of Interest (COI) guidelines:** Institutions must manage COI and put mitigation plans in place according to their own policies. PI will be required to attest that all members of the team comply.
- **National Security Guidelines for Research Partnerships:** In the Partnership section of the online application system, you must select yes or no to indicate if your application includes a partner organization from the private sector. If you select “yes” in the Partnership section, you will be required to upload the Risk Assessment Form, in its new dedicated section.



## Merit indicators for EDI in training

	Meets	Exceeds	Exceptional
Describes <b>specific and concrete</b> practices	✓	✓	✓
Provides <b>context</b> for the proposed practices		✓	✓
Addresses <b>multiple aspects</b> of the training plan (e.g., training philosophy, recruitment, training environment, development opportunities for and skills gained by trainees)		✓	✓
Bases plan on <b>evidence</b> of effective practices			✓
Presents non-demographic <b>indicators of success</b> and plans to <b>monitor/adapt</b> as required (e.g., retention, advancement, sense of inclusion)			✓

[Equity, diversity and inclusion in your training plan](#)

## Alliance Advantage

# Vouchers for Early Career Researchers

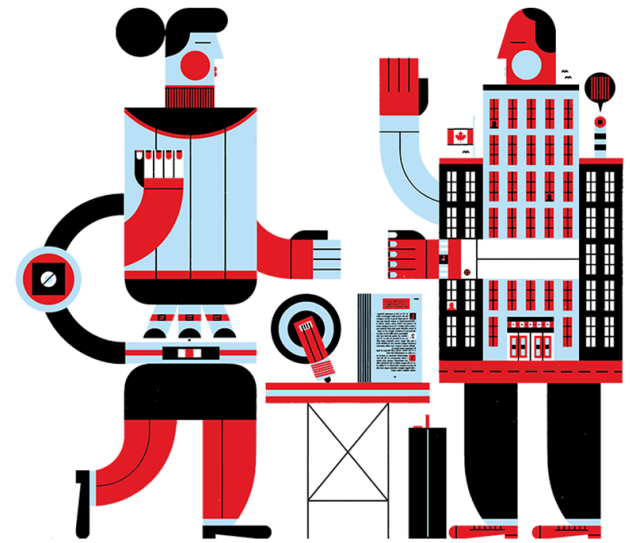
For applicants who have held their first independent academic position within the last five years (plus twice the amount of time taken for any eligible leave).

You can submit an Alliance Advantage application, redeeming your ECR voucher, any time during the 12 months after the voucher is awarded.

A \$10,000 voucher replaces required (or can be added to) cash contributions from partner organizations and is recognized in NSERC cost-sharing calculations.

- Submit an LOI using NSERC's online system before February 22, 2024.
- NSERC eligibility criteria for faculty apply.
- LOI does not require identifying a partner org. or defining a project.
- Submit your completed LOI, including the personal data form with CCV attachment.
- Your CCV must contain the relevant information to verify your ECR status, i.e., date of first independent academic appointment and eligible leaves and delays.
- All eligible applicants will be included in the random selection process.
- The pilot program will provide vouchers to up to 200 eligible researchers.
- If NSERC receives more than 200 Letters of intent, it will choose recipients through a random selection process.
- The ECR voucher amount should be included in the table showing the partner's contribution in the year you wish to claim the voucher.

# Alliance special calls and joint funding opportunities



Alliance Grants - Special calls and joint funding opportunities

## NSERC Alliance-Mitacs Accelerate grants

- Applicants complete an Alliance Advantage application and a Mitacs supplemental form to request additional support through Mitacs Accelerate internships as a component of the training of highly qualified personnel (HQP).
  - As in all Mitacs internships, a cash contribution from an eligible partner is required. Mitacs internships cannot be the only mechanism for HQP training in the joint proposal; HQP should also be supported by NSERC funds.
- Streamlined submission and review process with a single review process at NSERC (Alliance Advantage grants). Funding for up to five years.
  - Applicants must meet both NSERC's and Mitacs' eligibility criteria.
  - Number and role of the Mitacs interns, as well as the supervision and mentorship by the partner organization are described.
  - NSERC and Mitacs communicate the funding decisions to the applicants under separate cover.

Alliance Grants - Special calls and joint funding opportunities

## NSERC Alliance – Alberta Innovates Advance grants (stream II)

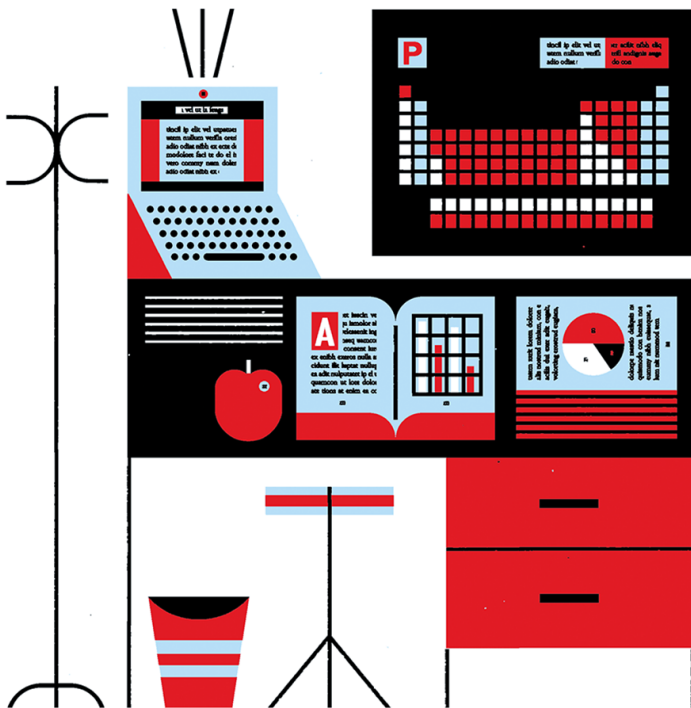
### For projects that advance discoveries to develop emerging technologies

- Project bridge the gap between academic research and technology validation in technology readiness levels (TRL) 2 to 4.
- Projects must advance the readiness of technologies for future market opportunities in the emerging technology areas/topics.
- Alberta Innovates provides up to \$100,000 per year and NSERC matches at a ratio of 50%, up to a maximum of \$50,000 per year, for up to 2 years.

- Funding can be used to engage and train HQP, research associates and technicians on projects, as well as for operational and equipment costs.
- Intellectual property (IP) protection, market assessment and technology transfer activities costs are not eligible expenses in this program.
- Project funding will support activities such as scientific technology assessment and proof-of-concept experimentation, testing potential to work in a laboratory environment.

[https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Innovate-Innover/AI-AI\\_eng.asp](https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Innovate-Innover/AI-AI_eng.asp)

<https://albertainnovates.ca/funding/nserc-alliance-alberta-innovates-advance-program/>



# Questions?

**NSERC Alliance grants team**

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**Research Security Team**

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