



DRI EDIA Champions Pilot Program

2024 Call for Proposals



**Digital Research
Alliance of Canada**

**Alliance de recherche
numérique du Canada**

DRI EDIA Champions: Call for Proposals

DRI: Digital Research Infrastructure | **EDIA:** Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility

Summary

Through the DRI EDIA Champions Pilot Program, the Digital Research Alliance of Canada (the Alliance) will fund and provide project-related training to graduate and post-graduate researchers who self-identify as belonging to equity-seeking groups, or who have a well thought out strategy, to deliver a project of their own design with the goal to connect with members of equity-seeking groups within their research community to promote and facilitate access to Alliance digital research infrastructure (DRI) services.

Successful applicants will work with the Alliance to promote and facilitate access to national Alliance DRI services within the research community to members of equity-seeking groups. Successful applicants will receive training and onboarding to Alliance DRI.

[Appendix A](#) outlines envisioned activities. Applicants will describe and expand upon proposed activities in their application, including how the activities will be undertaken, achieved, measured and reported; and how they will support the objectives of this Pilot Program.

<p>Applicants must be: (full details in Eligibility section)</p> <p>a) An individual who self-identifies as belonging to an equity-seeking group including women, Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Inuit and Métis), persons with disabilities, neurodiverse people, members of visible minorities/racialized groups, members of 2SLGBTQQIA+ communities, geographically isolated or first-generation post-secondary students.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>b) An individual who has a well thought out plan to promote DRI access to an equity-seeking group.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>a) A graduate or post-graduate researcher enrolled at or affiliated with Canadian post-secondary institutions, research hospitals, or non-profit organizations whose activities place them as users of Canada’s DRI ecosystem.</p> <p>OR</p>

b) A student enrolled at a college, CEGEP, institute or polytechnic who is engaged in applied research with industry or community partners (<i>eligible not-for-profit organizations, municipalities, and hospitals</i>)	
Proposed projects:	must promote the awareness and uptake of Alliance DRI to equity-seeking researchers. Appendix A outlines envisioned activities.
Award value:	maximum total of \$35,000 : \$27,000 stipend + up to \$5,000 implementation costs + up to \$3,000 travel costs
Awards available:	90 awards to be awarded
Applications per Individual:	Maximum one award per individual
Application Process:	Full Proposal
Deadline for submission of Proposal:	July 17, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time
Estimated Notice of Award / Eligibility of expenses:	August 2024
Estimated project start date:	August 2024
Project end date:	March 31, 2025

Timeline

Competition	
Activity	Deadline
Announcement of Call for Proposals	June 5, 2024
Information Session – bilingual <i>Please see webpage for details on how to attend</i>	June 27, 2024, at 1:00 p.m. Eastern Time
Deadline to submit questions	July 10, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time
Deadline to submit Application	July 17, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time
Adjudication Process	July 17 - August 19, 2024
Notice of Award / Eligibility of expenses begin	August 2024
Project	
First Disbursement of Award (70%)	October 2024
OLS Training	August 2024 – March 2025 (approx. 16 weeks during this timeframe)
Progress Report Due	December 15, 2024
In-person meeting and Presentation	January 2025
Project Conclusion	March 31, 2025

Final Progress Report and Financial Report Due	April 30, 2025
Second Disbursement of Award (30%)	May/June 2025 (w/in 60 days of report)

Overview

The Alliance is launching a call for proposals for the DRI EDIA Champions pilot program to fund and provide project-related training to graduate and post-graduate researchers who self-identify as belonging to equity-seeking groups, or who has a well thought out plan to promote DRI access to equity-seeking researchers, to deliver a project of their own design with the goal to connect with members of equity-seeking groups within their research community to promote and facilitate access to Alliance DRI services.

This \$3.15 million dollar funding opportunity supports a new equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility (EDIA) initiative focused on increasing awareness and uptake of the Alliance’s DRI by equity-seeking groups, including women, Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Inuit and Métis), persons with disabilities, neurodiverse people, members of visible minorities/racialized groups, members of 2SLGBTQQIA+ communities, geographically isolated or first-generation post-secondary students.

Equitable access to DRI will strengthen the Canadian research ecosystem by ensuring equity-seeking individuals are DRI-informed and capable. The Alliance empowers all researchers to lead, share knowledge and drive discovery.

What is a DRI EDIA Champion

DRI EDIA Champions will work with the Alliance to promote and facilitate access to national Alliance DRI services within the research community to members of equity-seeking groups, as proposed in their application. DRI EDIA Champions will contribute to cultivating equitable DRI access within the Canadian research ecosystem. [Appendix A](#) outlines envisioned activities.

DRI EDIA Champions will propose projects in which they:

- ▶ act as ambassadors, experts and liaisons for Alliance DRI within their home institutions and academic departments.
- ▶ lead and support local DRI training and engagement opportunities targeted to equity-seeking graduate and post-graduate and other researchers as appropriate.
- ▶ leverage their expertise and experience within local communities to help identify and meet DRI needs.

- ▶ help inform and assess DRI training and engagement activities within their home institutions and academic departments, particularly regarding barriers related to equity, diversity, inclusivity and accessibility.
- ▶ engage in a discussion of the Alliance's [Resource Allocation Competition](#) (RAC) and related processes, including a facilitated discussion of ways to improve outcomes in the EDIA context.
- ▶ support capacity building of DRI practices within their communities.

In addition, successful applicants will:

- ▶ participate in a virtual 16-week Open Science training opportunity, tailored for DRI EDIA Champions and delivered by OLS (formerly Open Life Sciences). The content will be similar to [OLS Open Seeds](#), and includes mentorship and training on applying the principles of Open Science. The time commitment is approximately 2-3 hours a week.
- ▶ attend an in-person DRI EDIA Champions meeting in Toronto with the 2024 DRI EDIA Champions, tentatively scheduled for January 2025. Funding of up to \$3,000 is available for travel costs to this meeting.
- ▶ participate in opportunities for the DRI Champions to meet virtually as a cohort throughout the award period.

It is anticipated that a DRI EDIA Champion will spend approximately 3 hours a week on average on all activities over the duration of the project term.

Benefits of participation:

Successful applicants to the DRI EDIA Champions pilot program will:

- ▶ build and hone their DRI capabilities by receiving onboarding and training from the Alliance.
- ▶ gain additional knowledge and training through partner programs, such as OLS's open science learning.
- ▶ participate in a community of practice by meeting and learning from other DRI EDIA Champions during an in-person session.
- ▶ connect with members of equity-seeking groups within their research community to promote and facilitate access to DRI services.
- ▶ provide feedback on how the Alliance can sustain, improve and grow the DRI EDIA Champions model initiated by this pilot, into a potential long-term DRI EDIA Champions Program.

What is digital research infrastructure (DRI)

The Alliance provides DRI in three distinct areas: advanced research computing (ARC), research data management (RDM) and research software (RS). The services and tools offered in these areas equip Canadian researchers with what they need to complete, store and share their work.

ARC encompasses high performance computing, storage and robust systems and standards enabling researchers to perform and record their data. The RDM infrastructure provides researchers with secure, bilingual repositories where they can access and/or store large datasets. RDM also guides the collection, documentation, storage, sharing and preservation of research data. Lastly, RS platforms are made up of tools that help facilitate the manipulation of all types of data across the lifecycle. They also support the sharing of ideas and promote the adoption of open science principles and platforms.

The needs of the Canadian research community are as diverse as they are complex. The Alliance website describes Alliance ARC, RDM and RS here: <https://alliancecan.ca/en/our-services>.

DRI EDIA Champions will receive onboarding and training related to the Alliance DRI tools and services available.

Why Build a Community of DRI EDIA Champions

The DRI EDIA Champions pilot program seeks to support a community of DRI EDIA Champions in collectively addressing inequities in DRI access. DRI EDIA Champions will be supported in using their insights and expertise on the barriers that equity-seeking individuals may face related to EDIA in the context of DRI. This pilot program intends to serve equity-seeking individuals by equipping the DRI EDIA Champions with the training, knowledge, and tools to support their research and their research communities.

Current graduate and post-graduate researchers will soon be early career researchers. They also provide support to mid- and late-career researchers as research assistants, laboratory staff, and a variety of other research-related positions. The DRI EDIA Champions Pilot Program will help to ensure that early career PIs who are or work closely with equity-seeking individuals have the DRI skills and knowledge to succeed within their research fields, and to help ensure that DRI access and utilization are not barriers to success.

This funding call provides an opportunity to develop a DRI EDIA Champions model and related Community of Practice in Canada at a national scale.

Desired Outcomes

Successful applicants will receive training and onboarding to Alliance DRI with the following goals:

- ▶ to create awareness of existing DRI.
- ▶ to gain knowledge of DRI access options and opportunities.
- ▶ to build capacity to utilize DRI.
- ▶ to develop insight on opportunities and barriers to leveraging DRI.

Outcomes of the projects will be determined by the DRI EDIA Champions' activities identified by applicants. Outputs typically include one or more of:

- ▶ Disseminations, publications, presentations, communications, activities and their underlying data and/or code, documentation, resulting from the Project.

DRI EDIA Champions funding applications will describe and expand upon proposed activities, including how these activities will be undertaken, achieved, measured and reported, and how they will support the objectives of this Pilot Program. This funding call is intended to support new activities or notably expand and/or innovate current activities of the DRI EDIA Champion. As an overarching outcome, this pilot program is intended to foster relationships among cohort members, and to gather and report information to strengthen a DRI EDIA Champions Community of Practice and inform future initiatives.

Measures of Success

- ▶ A cohort of DRI EDIA Champions individually and/or collaboratively develops, promotes, contributes to, and/or delivers on a range of DRI EDIA engagement activities over the course of the Pilot.
- ▶ DRI EDIA Champions activities increase awareness of and engagement with Alliance DRI among equity-seeking researchers, as measured by means identified in the applications.
- ▶ A National Community of Practice is established, relationships are built and information is gathered to inform parameters for a potential future DRI EDIA Champions Program.

Eligibility

Applicant eligibility

This competition is open to graduate or post-graduate researchers who are affiliated with an eligible institution and will propose a project to promote the awareness and uptake of Alliance DRI to an equity-seeking audience.

Equity-seeking includes:

- Women
- Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Inuit and Métis)
- Person living with a visible or invisible disability
- Members of 2SLGBTQQIA+ communities
- Members of racialized groups
- Neurodiverse
- Geographically isolated
- First-generation post-secondary students
- Other, may be suggested in the application form

To be eligible, an Applicant must:

- ▶ Meet **one** of the following criteria:
 - a graduate or post-graduate researcher enrolled at a Canadian university.
 - a student enrolled at a Canadian college, CÉGEP, institute or polytechnic engaged in applied research with industry or community partners.
- ▶ Self-identify as **one** or both of the following:
 - a member of an equity-seeking group
 - an individual with a well-thought-out strategy to reach out to an equity-seeking group.
- ▶ Be affiliated with an eligible Canadian institution and must maintain such an affiliation for the duration of the award period.
- ▶ Identify a mentor from their institution or audience community, who agrees to provide support with the EDIA aspect of the project. The Applicant is required to demonstrate that EDIA expertise is in place to support the project. The mentor may also provide support with facilitation of other aspects of the project. The mentor may be a colleague or other appropriate individual; it is not required that the mentor be the Applicant's supervisor.

- ▶ Submit only one application; multiple applications will not be accepted.

Applicants are **not** required to hold Canadian citizenship or permanent resident status.

Eligible Canadian institutions

The following are eligible Canadian institutions or organizations (“institution”) which includes the designation of one individual at the vice-president level to be responsible for the oversight of the award funds:

- ▶ Post-secondary institutions (universities, colleges, CEGEP, institute or polytechnic)
- ▶ Research hospitals
- ▶ Non-profit organizations that are positioned within the DRI ecosystem

We welcome and encourage submissions from Applicants affiliated with small institutions, Indigenous research groups, and other organizations that are not traditionally heavy users of the Alliance’s DRI resources.

Federal Government institutions and agencies (Federal departments, agencies or Crown corporations, including their research facilities), provincial or municipal organizations, and non-profits situated in Canada that are a vested stakeholder of Canada’s DRI and whose activities depend upon the Alliance are encouraged as Project Collaborators. Collaborations with international partners and private sector organizations within the project will be accepted.

The Alliance will not accept "designated projects" as defined in the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2021* ("CEAA") and projects carried out on "federal lands" as defined in the CEAA. Exceptions will be on a case-by-case basis and approval must be obtained from the Minister before any negotiations between the Alliance and the Applicant occurs.

Eligible projects

Applicants must propose a project that promotes the engagement with and uptake of Alliance DRI among equity-seeking researchers. [Appendix A](#) outlines the envisioned activities, which fall under the following categories:

- ▶ Training/mentoring
- ▶ Promoting/advancing DRI
- ▶ Addressing disciplinary challenges
- ▶ Driving culture change
- ▶ Informing future initiatives

- ▶ Other: will be considered

The project must be carried out in Canada.

Project proposals must include appropriate KPIs and Outputs.

Applicants must provide proof, in the form of a letter from their academic supervisor (a template is provided in the application form), attesting that the supervisor is in support of the proposed activities and that the applicant has the capacity to complete the described activities.

Applicants must provide proof, in the form of a letter from their institution (a template is provided in the application form), attesting that the applicant has secured appropriate approvals to submit the proposed project, and that the funding will be applied against eligible costs.

Applicants must identify and provide a letter (a template is provided in the application form) from a mentor from the Applicant's institution or identified community, who agrees to provide support with some facilitation of the project, particularly the EDIA aspect of the project. The mentor may be a colleague or other appropriate individual; it is not required that the mentor be the Applicant's supervisor.

Eligible expenses

The DRI EDIA Champions Program award is intended to be used for the **stipend** of the Applicant in the amount of \$27,000. An additional amount for justifiable project implementation is available up to \$5,000 and an additional travel amount up to \$3,000 is available for travel to the meeting. Implementation costs must be directly commensurate with the planned activities.

Project implementation expenses that exceed the limit of \$5,000 with a strong rationale will be considered on a case by case basis. Project implementation costs are logistical and productional costs related to attending or organizing conferences, workshops, training, consultation meetings, and production of training and engagement material. Costs related to these activities include but are not limited to: conference registration fees, travel and lodging away from home, hospitality expenditures, print and design costs, goods and services purchase for activity implementation, gifts, honoraria and incentives for community members.

Travel expenses are for successful applicants to attend an in-person meeting, to be held in Toronto and include all relevant expenses related to travel (e.g., airfare, accommodation, meals). Funding up to \$3,000 is available for travel costs to this meeting. Travel costs that exceed the maximum with a justifiable reason will be considered on a case by case basis. Travel expense maximums are limited by region as outlined below:

Eligible Travel Expenses by Region

Region	Maximum Travel Allowance
Greater Toronto Area	\$1,500 <i>maximum</i>
Northern and Isolated Regions	\$3,000 <i>maximum may be exceeded upon request in application form</i>
All other regions in Canada	\$3,000 <i>maximum</i>

Summary of Eligible Expenses

Stipend	\$27,000*
Project Implementation costs	\$5,000 <i>maximum</i>
Travel costs to in-person meeting	\$3,000 <i>maximum</i>
Total	\$35,000

Guiding principles:

All eligible expenses must:

- ▶ be a direct cost of the project for which the funds were awarded.
- ▶ be effective and economical. Travel and lodging expenses must be reasonable and at economy rate.

Value and Duration

Approximately 90 awards will be issued; each award has a stipend of \$27,000, plus up to \$5,000 for project implementation costs and up to \$3,000 for travel to the in-person meeting. The final awarded pool of projects will be comprised of a diverse cohort of researchers who will take on the role of DRI EDIA Champions:

Application Process

Applications will be accepted in both official languages (English and French) through the Alliance's online intake here: <https://alliance.smapply.ca/>. Special needs for accessibility will be accommodated for Applicants upon request.

Applicants must complete the application form in accordance with the guidelines set out in this document and with the instructions in the Application Form. Applications must be submitted through the online intake platform by the Applicant.

By submitting an application for funding consideration, the Applicant and its institution acknowledge that the terms and conditions outlined in Appendix B – Award Funding Agreement, are non-negotiable.

Applicants needing assistance while preparing their application **must communicate directly with the Alliance** well in advance of the application deadline to the following email address: programs-programmes@alliancecan.ca. Failure to submit questions or seek assistance through this email address may result in the Applicant’s application becoming disqualified and no longer considered for funding.

Evaluation and Adjudication

Evaluation criteria and scoring

Applications are adjudicated and available funds awarded through a competitive merit-review process. The Alliance bases its funding decisions on the recommendations of the adjudication committee and on the funds available.

Proposals will be funded with a national approach. Funding will cover Canada, with representation from all provinces and territories, as possible, and with official languages included. The Alliance will also prioritize broad representation of institution size and equity-seeking groups.

A preference for projects will be applied when making final award recommendations for projects that focus on the principles of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (“EDIA”) which include the appropriate internationally accepted best practice principles [FAIR](#), [FAIR4RS](#), [OCAP](#), and [CARE](#) Principles.

The adjudication committee may consist of national and international DRI experts and can include experts from other sectors as needed. Participants in the review process, if not in a conflict of interest with the applicant, are asked to evaluate the Application based on the evaluation criteria below.

For Indigenous Applications, [SSHRC’s Guidelines for the Merit Review of Indigenous Research](#) will be referenced to help guide the adjudication committee to build understanding of Indigenous research and research-related activities and to assist committee members in interpreting the Alliance’s specific evaluation criteria in the context of Indigenous research. If the Alliance receives enough Indigenous Applications, it may establish a distinct adjudication committee.

The following criteria and scoring scheme are used to evaluate the applications:

- ▶ Applicant Expertise and Commitment 25%
- ▶ About the Equity-seeking Community Engagement 20%
- ▶ Project Plan, Activities and Feasibility 45%
- ▶ Proposed Project Outcomes 10%

Obligations of a Successful Applicant

- ▶ Within ten (10) working days of receipt of notification of award of funding, the Applicant must provide a fully completed and signed Award Agreement (refer to Appendix B – Award Funding Agreement) with the Alliance by an authorized representative from the institution with which the Applicant is affiliated.
- ▶ Participate in a virtual Open Science training program.
- ▶ Participate in an in-person meeting in Toronto, Ontario, tentatively scheduled for January 2025.
- ▶ Participate in scheduled virtual meetings with the Alliance, both individually and as part of the national cohort, to advance Pilot objectives.
- ▶ Deliver on the obligations outlined in the application during the term of the Agreement.

Reporting

- ▶ Progress report: The DRI EDIA Champion is responsible for updating the Alliance on the project activities and findings in a mid-point report. Due **December 15, 2024**.
- ▶ Final report: The DRI EDIA Champion is responsible for updating the Alliance on the project activities and findings in a final report. Due **April 30, 2025**.
- ▶ Financial reports: Institutions will be required to submit a final financial report to the Alliance on **April 30, 2025**.
- ▶ Indigenous Data Sovereignty: The Alliance is committed to Indigenous data sovereignty. Projects by and in collaboration with First Nations, Inuit, Métis and other Indigenous communities, collectives and organizations must be co-developed and approved by those involved. As appropriate, Project outputs are expected to articulate how they will address Indigenous data sovereignty.

FAQ

Access [Frequently asked questions \(FAQ\)](#) on the Alliance website.

Contact Information

For more information about the application process, contact us at programs-programmes@alliancecan.ca.

Appendix A: Activities Envisioned for DRI EDIA Champions under the Pilot Project

This section highlights some examples of possible proposals to be submitted to the DRI EDIA Champions Pilot. Activities envisioned as part of this funding call could include but would not be limited to those listed below; the examples below are designed to inspire concrete DRI EDIA Champions proposals. While the examples below describe the nature of the DRI EDIA Champions applications for funding, proposals must also expand upon these activities (or other Pilot-aligned activities identified by applicants). How these activities will be undertaken, achieved, measured, and reported on, as well as how they will support the objectives of this Pilot should also be included in your proposal.

Training/Mentoring

Your proposal could:

- ▶ aim at the development of discipline specific DRI training for researchers within your entourage.
- ▶ centre around incorporating aspects of the Alliance DRI tools into the classroom.
- ▶ be geared around the [Open Life Science](#) (OLS) training and make recommendations on how to bring that into your community.
- ▶ centre around [CODATA RDA](#) training and propose ways to mentor students through their use.
- ▶ be surrounding cloud computing and access to its services. Perhaps the proposal could assess its scope and make recommendations that make access to cloud computing more usable by your community.
- ▶ be to assess the use of Jupyter notebooks and facilitate its use for your community.
- ▶ be that you work with individuals or the Alliance to develop focused documentation of DRI services that are relevant to a variety of communities.

Promoting/Advancing ARC, RDM or RS

- ▶ You have long thought that data produced by research projects within your institution could be managed., particularly those data that relate to your equity group. Your proposal could speak to this by proposing to build consensus within your community that could result in recommendations that would promote sets of values, data management

principles and/or governance that respond to the concerns that are gleaned from your community.

- ▶ Your proposal could aim at promoting best practices within your community related to either ARC, RDM or RS.
- ▶ Your proposal could centre around contributing real-world example or narratives that illustrate the impact of the Alliance's DRI has on scientific outcomes in Canada.
- ▶ A proposal related to high performance computing (HPC) could be as simple as identifying the level of awareness for Alliance DRI resources within your community and develop a plan that bridges gaps and enables better access to the Alliance HPC environment.
- ▶ Your HPC proposal could include the development of documentation that is accessible (video, audio etc.) to your community group with the intention of increasing accessibility from your community to the Alliance DRI.
- ▶ Proposals could be to assess the process for submissions to the [Resource Allocation Competition](#) process and make recommendations to the Alliance about how best to improve and/or make accommodations.

Addressing Disciplinary Challenges

- ▶ You are a graduate student working in the Ocean and Rivers research domain. Your proposal could be about how to transcend disciplinary challenges vis-a-vis collaboration with other groups. For example, in order to build a respectful relation with First Nations communities and their traditional knowledge, a solution on how to incorporate Biocultural labels in the data management systems needs to be found.
- ▶ Your proposal could help identify, and take steps, to address challenges associated with the diversity of research practices within and across disciplines.
- ▶ HPC is sometimes a tool that is overlooked by some researcher disciplines. Your proposal could be to identify and address common challenges for its use within your community.

Driving Culture Change

- ▶ Your proposal could aim at fostering relationships that contribute to strengthening the EDIA Champions community within Canada.
- ▶ Your proposal could highlight activities such as exploring, documenting and connecting EDIA Champions. This could include identifying synergies, supporting knowledge transfer and building EDIA capacity in Canada.

- ▶ Promote the positive progression of the culture of RDM practices at your university and, in particular, within your equity group. This could include the development of a DRI EDIA data champion to create awareness of the use of RDM tools at the Alliance including the DMP Assistant.
- ▶ You are a graduate student and have discovered how the use of Galaxy or AI has enhanced your research outputs. Your proposal could be to advance awareness and understanding of how these tools can be leveraged within your community.

Informing Future Initiatives

- ▶ Your proposal could help the Alliance better identify the skills, resources and policy gaps that need to be addressed going forward.
- ▶ You have reviewed the call for participation for partner organizations for the [Controlled Access Management for Research Data](#) project. While the call is in its early stages, you are thrilled at the prospect of offering this to your community. Your proposal could be about stirring interest from your community to participate or, how someone in your community could benefit from it.
- ▶ Your proposal could be about better understanding how the Alliance resources connect with your community and how your proposal could facilitate those connections within your community.

Additional Examples of DRI EDIA Champions Proposals

- ▶ Your proposal could be about conducting a survey aimed at better understanding the awareness the EDIA community have about the Alliance and its resources.
- ▶ You use Alliance DRI and would like to better know who to reach your community so that they too can benefit from these resources. Your proposal would include a plan on how to inform your community.
- ▶ You use the Alliance frequently, but accessibility to certain tools could be optimized using different mechanisms. Your proposal could be about better knowing and addressing accessibility challenges.
- ▶ Parents and caregivers in science struggle with time. Your proposal could focus on many aspects of these challenges including better knowing the common or specific challenges, addressing the challenge by introducing new ways of overcoming structural biases or creating awareness that these challenges exist.

Appendix B – Award Funding Agreement

Access the [Alliance Funding Agreement – English](#)