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How the 2018 Federal Budget Impacts Research in Canada

by Caroline Winter | 17 July 2018 | English, Observations, Observations and Responses | 0 comments



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This observation was written by Kimberly Silk.

At a glance:

Title	How the 2018 Federal Budget Impacts Research in Canada
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The 2018 federal budget, released on February 27, 2018, significantly benefits research in Canada.

The budget includes \$925 million over five years in funding that is committed to the Tri-council agencies: the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). In addition, the Research Support Fund will receive \$231 million over five years to support the indirect costs of research, and \$210 million over five years goes to the Canada Research Chairs (CRC) program, which could potentially add 250 new chairs by 2020-2021. The budget document indicates that this increase will support early-career researchers and increase the number of women who are nominated for CRCs (Government of Canada, 2018).

The 2018 budget addresses several recommendations made in the Fundamental Science Review Report – commonly known as the **Naylor Report** – that was released in April 2017, including the increase in funding to the Tri-council, a new Tri-council fund for interdisciplinary, high-risk research, and proposed stable funding for the Canada Foundation for Innovation. See our **summary of the Naylor Report** to learn more.

The research community has responded positively to the budget, although many have suggested that such an investment is long overdue. As reported in an article in University Affairs, Guy Laforest, president of the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, called the budget “an important down payment” that helps to “reverse years of underinvestment” in social sciences and humanities research (Shen, 2018).

The Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL) also responded positively to the 2018 budget, acknowledging in particular the \$572 million pledged to support a national Digital Research Infrastructure Strategy. In a press release, CARL President Donna Bourne-Tyson states, “Reflecting the recommendations of the Leadership Council on Digital Research Infrastructure, in which CARL played an active role, this new funding will strengthen the DRI ecosystem and help Canadian researchers contribute to a more innovative and internationally competitive Canada in the future” (Morin, 2018).

In terms of how the budget impacts open scholarship, the \$215.5 million pledged to SSHRC over five years will provide support, as will the focus on funding Canada Research Chairs for early-career researchers; the humanities and social sciences, and early career researchers, are among the strongest advocates for open approaches to research in Canada. Such an investment will serve to leverage the positive movements in this direction already underway.

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