



3. Activities for September

3.1 Posting of Information to the Extranet

In late August, or early September, NSERC will post important documents on the EG Extranet related to:

- policies and procedures;
- the review process; and
- the upcoming competition.

3.2 Assignment of Reviewers

Members will usually be asked to indicate, on a spreadsheet, their comfort or knowledge level of the area of the potential applications for a given year, e.g., H (high), M (medium), L (low), VL (very low), X (cannot review due to language proficiency) or C (conflict of interest). The program officer will provide each member with a spreadsheet containing information on each “Notification of Intent to Apply for a Discovery Grant” (Form 180). In most cases, this will be sufficient for members to determine their comfort levels. The full Form 180 is also available on the Extranet should the information on the spreadsheet not be sufficient for the member to make a reasonable estimate of comfort.

Using this list of potential applicants, or the Form 180s, along with the comfort ratings from the EG members, the program officer, in consultation with the section chair(s), assigns each application to the members who are the most appropriate to review the application (while balancing the workload). In selecting reviewers, attention must be given to possible conflicts of interest (see Section [6.7.1](#) for rules) and linguistic considerations.

As soon as possible, members must inform the program officer of:

- problems with the assignments, such as linguistic constraints (Form 180 indicates the intended language of the application) or a conflict of interest not previously apparent (family member, personal, etc.);
- an application that also covers areas where the reviewing EG has little or no expertise. In such cases it may be possible to have a joint review with other EGs so as to provide a more fair and complete review;
- any applications that members believe should be reviewed by another EG; and
- any applications that are perceived to fall outside of NSERC's mandate (i.e., research not in the natural sciences or engineering domain).

Note: Members may be asked to review applications that are not in their primary research field.

3.3 Referees

A thorough assignment of referees is critical to the success of the peer review process. This section outlines the general procedures and timetable for this activity.

Various documents/lists/spreadsheets will be made available on the Extranet to assist with the assignment of referees, including a referee databank and electronic copies of Form 180s submitted by applicants.

The first reviewer is responsible for selecting the appropriate referees from the applicant's suggestions on Form 180, the referee data bank and personal knowledge of the community (watching for conflict of interest and linguistic capability of prospective reviewers). Members provide the five most appropriate referees for each application by selecting from the list suggested by the applicant and blending those with their own suggestions. NSERC contacts the five referees identified by the reviewer.

Referees **must** have:

- appropriate expertise to comment with confidence; and
- linguistic skills to review the application.

Referees may be:

- from the industrial/private sector, as well as the university sector; and
- from Canada or abroad. The selection of noted international reviewers with suitable expertise is encouraged and should be given a high priority. In the case of established applicants, who may have many collaborators within Canada, international reviewers should be considered essential.

To avoid any conflict of interest, a referee should not:

(In the case of subatomic physics applications, please refer to the current internal procedures of the Subatomic Physics Evaluation Section.)

- be from the same institution as the applicant or any of the co-applicants;
- have been a research supervisor or graduate student of the applicant or any of the co-applicants, within the past six years;
- be providing letters of support for the application;
- have collaborated with the applicant or any of the co-applicants, within the past six years, or have plans to collaborate with them in the immediate future;
- be an employee of a non-academic organization with which the applicant or any of the co-applicants, has had collaboration within the past six years;
- be in any other potential conflict of interest (e.g., personal, financial).

Referee Selection

- Select the best possible referees for each application, i.e., those closest to the application's field and who are likely to provide a comprehensive, unbiased, critical review.
- Referees must not be assigned more than three proposals for review (NSERC does this verification before sending requests to referees).
- For interdisciplinary research, ensure that the referees selected have (individually or collectively) expertise in all the relevant disciplines and aspects of the proposal. If necessary, indicate on Form 180 which, and how many, referees should be approached to ensure a complete review.
- Use a good cross-section of referees, i.e., from young researchers to well-established ones, from academia and industry (where appropriate).
- Do not rely solely on the list of referees suggested by the applicant. Propose other referees.
- Include at least one of the referees suggested by the applicant, provided that he/she is suitable.
- Some applicants may request the exclusion of a specific researcher as referee on their application. You should consider these requests during the selection of referees, within reasonable limits. Contact the program officer if you have concerns about the appropriateness of the request.
- For each application, avoid suggesting more than one referee from a given organization.

All applications must receive a full and detailed evaluation regardless of the official language of presentation. On occasion, this may entail consultation with NSERC staff to identify referees with adequate linguistic capability.

3.4 Instructions on How to Complete and Submit Referee Suggestions

Attached at the end of this section is a sample of a completed Form 180. The encircled numbers refer to the following tips:

1. EG assignment: Form 180 is sent to the EG suggested by the applicant. The member assigned as first reviewer should advise the program officer of applications that should be considered for transfer to a more appropriate EG. Until this is confirmed at the November executive committee meeting, members should proceed with the selection of referees under the assumption that the application will remain with the EG.

Reviewers should carefully select referees to ensure adequate coverage of all aspects of the proposed research. Clearly indicate if this would require more than five referees to be contacted.

2. Conflict of interest: In this case, Referee “E” was the applicant’s supervisor at the doctoral and postdoctoral level. This referee should not be selected. The publication list attached to Form 180 may also help identify other situations of conflict of interest, such as collaborations. The applicant may have written to indicate that the application should not be refereed by a certain individual for various reasons; this should be taken into consideration. Refer to Section [6.7.1](#) of the *Peer Review Manual* for more information on conflict of interest.
3. Research topics and keywords relate to the proposed research. The Referee Databank may be searched in different ways (e.g., by referees, by research subject codes). NSERC Referee Databanks provides members with the following information for each referee: name, Personal Identification Number (PIN), address (department and university/organization), research subject codes, area of expertise and reading capability.
4. Verify the intended language of the application; it may not be the same as the language used for Form 180.
5. Identify the referees that should be contacted. If one of the referees is unable to do the review, you may be contacted to provide additional suggestions.
6. Once the referee suggestion spreadsheet is completed, it should be submitted to NSERC according to the instructions from the program officer.

Note: If a member discovers that the address given by the applicant or the one in our Databank is incorrect, they should provide the correct address to NSERC.

3.5 Form 180 – Notification of Intent to Apply for a Discovery Grant

See sample at the end of this section.

3.6 EG Membership

Replacement of members in the last year of their term should be discussed as early as possible. EGs should begin thinking about membership early in the competition year and continue over the following months. EGs may decide to create a section in September for the purpose of discussing membership and with the goal of completing the identification of potential new members by February. The chair or program officer will let members know how the EG will function in this regard and how one can contribute. NSERC encourages as many suggestions as possible. Potential new members can be established researchers or new scientists and engineers from large or small universities, and from government or industry. Potential candidates need not be NSERC grantees. In making suggestions for membership, one should examine the recent history and current membership of the EG. The program officer can provide this information.

For more details about the membership process, refer to [Appendix 1](#).

3.6.1 EG Section Chairs

EG section chairs are appointed by NSERC in consultation with EG chairs and, as deemed appropriate, members of the EG and other members of the community. NSERC asks EGs not to make a formal recommendation for chair. Advice on potential chairs should be given to the program officer, team leader or director.



Date 2010/08/13

**Notification of Intent to Apply for a
Discovery Grant**

**Avis d'intention de présenter une demande de
subvention à la découverte**

APPLICANT / CANDIDAT				
Family name / Nom de famille Doe		Given name / Prénom Jane	Initial(s) of all given names / Initiale(s) de tous les prénoms J	Personal identification no. (PIN) / N° d'identification personnel (NIP) 123456
Department / Département Ecology and Evolutionary Biology			Institution / Établissement University of Toronto	
E-mail address / Adresse de courriel j.doe@utoronto.ca				
Degrees Diplômes	Discipline Discipline	Institution Établissement	Supervisor Directeur de travaux	Year Année
Master's / Maîtrise	Integrative Biology	Guelph	George Harrison	2000
Doctorate / Doctorat	Molecular Population Genetics	Toronto	Paul McCartney 2	2003
Postdoctoral experience / Expérience postdoctorale	Genomics/Molecular Population Genetics	Toronto	Paul McCartney	2003 - 2004
EVALUATION GROUP ASSIGNMENT / ASSIGNATION DU GROUPE D'ÉVALUATION				
Suggest the number of the evaluation group you feel should review your application. / Entrez le numéro du groupe d'évaluation qui selon vous devrait évaluer votre demande.				
1502		Biological Systems and Functions		1
APPLICATION INFORMATION / RENSEIGNEMENTS SUR LA DEMANDE			TYPE OF APPLICATION / TYPE DE DEMANDE	
Title of proposal / Titre de la proposition Extent and Genomic Basis of Plant Adaptation			Individual / Individuelle <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
			Team / Équipe <input type="checkbox"/>	
			Subatomic Physics / Physique subatomique <input type="checkbox"/>	
The application will be submitted in / La demande sera présentée en			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> English / anglais <input type="checkbox"/> français / French 4	
Research topic(s) that describe the proposed research / Sujet(s) de recherche décrivant la recherche proposée				
LSB01 - Plant Biology 3				
KEY WORDS that best describe the proposed research / MOTS CLÉS qui décrivent le mieux la recherche proposée				
Evolutionary Genomics, Population Genomics, Floral Evolution, Quantitative Trait Loci, Coalescent Theory, Plant Mating Systems, Inbreeding, Deleterious Mutation 3				

