



3. Activities for September

3.1 Posting of Information to the Extranet

In late August, or early September, NSERC will post important documents on your 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, i.e., H (high), M (medium), L (low) and an X for no knowledge of the area; this rating will be based on the Topic Areas code and title indicated on the Notification of Intent to Apply for a Discovery Grant (Form 180) received.

Using this list of potential applicants, or the Forms 180, along with the comfort ratings from the Evaluation Group (EG) members, the program officer and/or chair assigns each application to the Evaluation Group members who are the most appropriate to review the application (while balancing the workload). Although members review all applications assigned to them, EG use reviewers (two) who conduct an in-depth evaluation of a proposal. In selecting reviewers, attention must be given to possible conflicts of interest (see Section [6.9.1](#) for rules) and linguistic considerations.

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

- problems with your 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 is in your area of expertise, but also covers areas where your EG has little or no expertise, because it may be possible to consult with other EGs to complement the review;
- any applications you believe should be reviewed by another EG; and
- any applications you believe do not fall within NSERC's mandate (i.e., research not in the natural sciences or engineering domain).

Note: You may be asked to review applications that are not in your 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 Forms 180 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 two or three from the list suggested by the applicant and blending those with their own suggestions. The reviewer also indicates in which order referees should be contacted (i.e., numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5). The reviewer then reposts the form, or returns the form to NSERC by FAX, as per the program officer's instructions.

An electronic version of the referee databank is available on your EG Extranet. A paper copy is available upon request.

NSERC contacts the five referees identified by the reviewer on Form 180.

Referees **must** have:

- appropriate expertise to comment with confidence; and
- linguistic skills to review the application (including a minimum of two reviewers whose first official language is the same as that used in 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. Some should appear within the top three choices, when appropriate. 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:

- 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 mailing 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 in the first three to be contacted, provided that the referee 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 your program officer if you have concerns about the appropriateness of the request.
- For applications that are submitted two years in a row, attempts should be made to select a few different referees each year. Again, contact your program officer if you need more details on the history of the application.

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.

Schedule of Events – Identification of Reviewers and Selection of Referees	
August 1	Deadline for receipt of Forms 180.
August	Members indicate the level of comfort and conflicts of interest with potential applications. Members' language capabilities for each assignment are indicated as well.
Beginning of September	Program officer and/or chair creates the list of reviewers for all Forms 180 received. NSERC posts the Forms 180 of applications for which the member is the first reviewer for selection of referees, on the EG Extranet.
Mid-September	The reviewer returns the selection of referees to NSERC.



September / October / November	Staff enters referee names in NSERC's database, verifies referee workload and mails the applications to referees.
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3.4 Instructions on How to Complete and Submit Your Referee Suggestions

HOW TO COMPLETE YOUR 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. Evaluation Group (EG) assignment: Form 180 is normally sent to the EG that reviewed the last application. A 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 mid-November chairs' meeting, the former EG should proceed with the selection of reviewers and referees under the assumption that the application will remain with the EG.

In consultation with EG Chairs over the next few weeks, staff will identify the appropriate review route for interdisciplinary applications. This could include: (1) review by a discipline EG with a formal consult from another EG(s); or (2) review by the Interdisciplinary EG with formal consult from relevant discipline EG(s). At this stage, as with all applications, reviewers should carefully select referees to ensure adequate coverage of all aspects of the proposed research. Clearly indicate if this would require more than three 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 [6.9.1](#) 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. NSERC will contact the first three listed (priority is from top to bottom of the column). The other names provided will be kept in reserve. If one of the first three referees is overused (i.e., already assigned three applications) or informs NSERC upon receipt of the request that he/she is unable to do the review, staff will send the application to the alternate referees

Note: If you know that the address given by the applicant or in our Databank is incorrect, provide the correct address (indicate if the new address is a permanent change or a temporary one, such as a sabbatical address).

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR REFEREE SUGGESTIONS

a) Submit Referee Suggestions Electronically

1. Select an applicant's Form 180, located in your personal document library.
Example: Evaluation Group_123_White-Catherine_F180_ID#12345678.pdf.
2. From your personal library, identify the Excel spreadsheet associated with the applicant's Form 180. Example: Evaluation Group_123_White-Catherine_Suggestions_12345678.xls.
3. Download the associated Excel spreadsheet.
4. Select the document name. A "File Download" dialogue box appears.
5. Select "Save." A "Save as" dialogue box appears.
6. Select a location to save the document.
7. Select "Save." A "Download Complete" dialogue box appears.
8. Select "Open" to open the document or select "Close" to close the "Download Complete" box.
9. Open the downloaded spreadsheet and **enter your suggestions** in the EVALUATION GROUP MEMBER SUGGESTIONS columns. If you select one of the applicant's suggested referees, write the appropriate code letter (A to E) and the referee's name and, if you find it in the Databank, the PIN in the appropriate space. **Note:** Choose referees who are not suggested by the applicant. If this referee's name is in the Databank, write the name and PIN. If you cannot find the referee's name in the Databank, give the complete name of the university, mailing address and e-mail address (if known).
10. Save the file on your hard drive.
11. Upload the Evaluation Group Member Referee Suggestions Excel document from your hard drive to the Extranet.
12. From your personal document library on the EG Extranet, select "Upload Document," located at the top of the document list. The "Upload Document" page appears.
13. Select "Browse" to find the document you want to add.
14. Highlight the document and select "Open."
15. From the upload menu bar, select "Save and Close."
16. To continue, return to the beginning of the instructions.



b) Submit Referee Suggestions by Fax

1. From your personal document library, select a potential applicant's Form 180 and print the third page.
2. Use the right-hand column to enter the referees that should be contacted. If you select one of the applicant's suggested referees, write the appropriate code letter (A to E) and the referee's name and, if you find it in the Databank, the PIN in the appropriate space. **Note:** Choose referees who are not suggested by the applicant. If this referee's name is in the Databank, write the name and PIN. If you cannot find the referee's name in the Databank, give the complete name of the university, mailing address and e-mail address (if known).
3. Fax the page to 613-947-3847.

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

See sample at the end of this section.

3.6 Information Sessions at Universities

EG members may be asked to participate in an information session organized at their university or at one nearby. NSERC staff will contact you, as required.

NSERC information sessions are **not** used to evaluate applications or researchers. If any individual meetings are arranged with applicants, these should focus on factual information about the review process, the research program or individual circumstances.

There are two main objectives for the information sessions:

- To communicate information to the community about NSERC policies, regulations and review processes. The information conveyed during these sessions will deal with substantive issues related to policy directions, competition data and budget allocations. Those presenting the information must be fully conversant and knowledgeable about these issues and must be able to answer, in a consistent manner, questions requiring the interpretation of policies and rules. This is mainly the responsibility of NSERC staff. Detailed information on the application review process is normally presented by an EG member. Some of the information discussed during the sessions is specific to EGs; EG members therefore participate actively in this aspect, providing valuable information on selection processes and budgetary pressures.
- To maintain dialogue with the community, receiving feedback on applicants' and grantees' experiences with NSERC programs and procedures and discussing issues. The participation of both NSERC staff and EG members is essential; staff



being responsible for following up on policy and administrative issues while EG members contribute to discussions on the peer review process.

3.7 EG Membership

Replacements for members in the last year of their term should be discussed as early as possible. Evaluation Groups 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, you should examine the recent history and current membership of the Evaluation Group. The program officer can provide this information.

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

3.7.1 EG Chairs

EG chairs are appointed by NSERC in consultation with Evaluation Group 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 2009/09/04

**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 John	Initial(s) of all given names / Initiale(s) de tous les prénoms JM	Personal identification no. (PIN) / N° d'identification personnel (NIP) 123456
Department (at the time of application) / Département (au moment de présenter votre demande) Ecology and Evolutionary Biology			Institution (where you will hold your grant) / Établissement (où vous détenez la subvention) 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	University of Guelph	George Harrison 2	2000
Doctorate / Doctorat	Molecular population genetics	University of Toronto	Paul McCartney	2003
Postdoctoral experience / Expérience postdoctorale	Genomics/molecular population genetics	University of 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.			1501 1	
NOTE / Remarque : NSERC makes the final evaluation group assignment. L'assignation finale à un groupe d'évaluation revient au CRSNG.				
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"/> X Team / Équipe <input type="checkbox"/> Project (for Subatomic Physics only) / Projet (pour physique subatomique seulement) <input type="checkbox"/>	
Research topic(s) that describe the proposed research Sujet(s) de recherche décrivant la recherche proposée LSB01, LSA06, LSC04 3		The application will be submitted in / La demande sera présentée en <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> English / anglais <input type="checkbox"/> français / French 4		
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				

Personal Information Bank Number: SER/P-PU-095.
For information on the *Privacy Act*, consult the current NSERC
Program Guide for Professors.

N° du fichier de renseignements personnels : RSG/P-PU-095.
Pour obtenir de l'information sur la Loi sur la protection des renseignements
personnels, consultez le plus récent *Guide des programmes destiné
aux professeurs* du CRSNG.

REFEREE SUGGESTIONS / EXAMINATEURS SUGGÉRÉS**Before completing the following section, refer to the instructions.**Referees **should be** capable of reviewing your application in the language in which it is written.**Avant de remplir la section suivante, consultez les instructions.**Les examinateurs **devraient pouvoir** étudier votre demande dans la langue de présentation.

BY THE APPLICANT PAR LE CANDIDAT	Area(s) of expertise Domaine(s) d'expertise	BY THE EVALUATION GROUP PAR LE GROUPE D'ÉVALUATION	5
A Bungalow (Bill) Plant Evolution University of British Columbia	plant evolution, floral biology, evolution of development	1 C= Jude Hey <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; float: right; margin-top: 10px;">PIN / NIP 11111</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; float: right; margin-top: 10px;">Lang.</div>	
B Rigby (Eleanor) Botany University of Saskatchewan	local adaptation, genetics of adaptation, population genetics	2 Dr. A. Road Plant Evolution Monash University Clayton, Australia 3168 <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; float: right; margin-top: 10px;">PIN / NIP</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; float: right; margin-top: 10px;">Lang.</div>	
C Hey (Jude) Botany Concordia University	plant speciation, evolutionary genomics, population genetics	3 John Lennon <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; float: right; margin-top: 10px;">PIN / NIP 22222</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; float: right; margin-top: 10px;">Lang.</div>	
D Lane (Penny) Biology Duke University	plant evolution, genetics of adaptation, speciation	4 A= Bill Bungalow <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; float: right; margin-top: 10px;">PIN / NIP 33333</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; float: right; margin-top: 10px;">Lang.</div>	
E McCartney (Paul) Molecular Genetics University of Toronto	plant mating systems, plant evolution, evolutionary genetics	5 B= Eleanor Rigby <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; float: right; margin-top: 10px;">PIN / NIP 44444</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; float: right; margin-top: 10px;">Lang.</div>	2