

Federal Budget 2018

Briefing note for members of the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences

March 1, 2018

Executive summary

Budget 2018 contains good news for the social sciences and humanities.

Heading into Budget 2018, the Federation had been calling on the federal government to take action on the recommendations of the Fundamental Science Review panel, an independent group appointed in 2016 to review federal support for research activities across Canada.

In particular, we emphasized the need for new investments in investigator-led research, a more equitable share of research funding for the social sciences and humanities, and greater emphasis on Indigenous, international and interdisciplinary research.

In Budget 2018, the government delivered major commitments that respond to these priorities:

- This budget includes the largest multi-year investment in fundamental research of any budget in recent history, with significant new investments in the three granting councils, which will support investigator-led research.
- SSHRC will receive a somewhat greater share of this new funding than in past budgets, which will result in a small but long-term increase in the share of tri-council funding going to social science and humanities research.
- Additional funding has been committed to create a new research fund to support international, interdisciplinary, fast-breaking and higher-risk research, to be administered by SSHRC.
- There is funding for the launch of a new national skill-development organization called Future Skills, new investments in Statistics Canada, a multi-pronged commitment to improving equity and diversity outcomes across several government programs, and investments to support bilingualism and Canadian media.
- This budget includes some modest funding announcements that will support Indigenous students and Indigenous research. However, the greater part of funding for Indigenous peoples in Budget 2018 is focused on housing, health, child services and skill development. (This follows substantial investments in Indigenous post-secondary access in Budget 2017.)

Highlights by funding category

Tri-councils and CFI

- Budget 2018 includes **significant new investments to the three granting councils**: the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). These investments are worth \$925 million over five years. Budget 2018 describes this investment as “the single largest investment in fundamental research in Canadian history.”
- **SSHRC will receive a modestly greater share of this increased funding** compared to past budgets (about 23 per cent compared to a historic trend of 20 per cent or less). The research funding system will therefore slowly be rebalanced in favour of the social sciences and humanities.
- In addition to this funding, Budget 2018 announces a **new tri-council research fund** – to be administered by SSHRC – to support international, interdisciplinary, fast-breaking and higher-risk research. The government is committing \$275 million over five years to support this fund. The Federation recommended the creation of a fund similar to this in its 2016 submission to the Fundamental Science Review.
- Budget 2018 also announced that the granting councils will be asked improve the ways in which they collaborate, particularly to support multidisciplinary research and to achieve greater equity and diversity among funding recipients. The government is committing \$6 million over five years to support **improved data collecting** and \$15 million over five years to support **new programs to promote equity and diversity** in post-secondary institutions.
- The government announced \$210 million over five years for the **Canada Research Chairs Program**, with an emphasis on better supporting early-career researchers and increasing the diversity of funding recipients.
- Budget 2018 includes an announcement to increase the **Research Support Fund**, which provides funding to institutions to cover facilities and administration costs associated with research, by \$231.3 million over five years.
- The government commits to providing the **Canadian Foundation for Innovation (CFI)** with \$763 million over five years, including \$160 million for the Major Science Initiatives Fund, and proposes to establish permanent funding for the agency at a rate of \$462 million per year by 2023-24. This has been a longstanding recommendation of the Federation and other research stakeholders.
- The budget calls on NSERC and CIHR to each consolidate several of their granting programs in an effort by government to simplify and improve publicly funded programs aimed at linking businesses and post-secondary researchers.

- The government is investing \$140 million over five years in the **College and Community Innovation Program** to support collaborations between businesses and colleges and polytechnics.

Other research-related announcements

- The government has committed to \$572.5 million over five years to carry out a **Digital Research Infrastructure Strategy** intended to improve nation-wide access to computing and big data. This includes a promise to work on improving access by working directly with players such as CFI, Compute Canada and CANARIE. This follows recommendations sent this year by the Leadership Council on Digital Research Infrastructure, in which the Federation was a member.
- Citing its commitment to evidence-based decision-making, the government announced \$41 million over five years to **Statistics Canada** to support better collection, use and sharing of data. Additional funding is committed to address data gaps in international trade in services and digital products, create a new **Centre for Gender, Diversity and Inclusion Statistics**, and carry out the next Census of Population and Census of Agriculture.
- Several research institutes are slated to receive funding for specific initiatives:
 - The Institute for Research on Public Policy will receive \$10 million to fund the new **Centre of Excellence on the Canadian Federation**, tasked with advancing the study of new economic and social trends in a federal nation such as Canada.
 - The **Institute for Quantum Computing** will receive \$15 million in renewed funding over three years, starting in 2019-20, to advance the development of new quantum technologies.
 - The **Centre for Drug Research and Development** will receive \$48 million over three years, starting in 2019-20, to advance drug research and commercialization initiatives.
 - The **Rick Hansen Institute** will receive renewed funding of \$23.6 million to advance spinal cord injury research, starting in 2018-19 and over three years.
 - The **Council of Canadian Academies**, will receive renewed funding of \$9 million over three years, starting in 2020-21.
- The Budget includes funding to support the first phase of a renewal of federal laboratories, including \$20.6 million over four years for **POLAR Knowledge Canada**.
- The **National Research Council** is slated to receive \$540 million over five years to make improvements in such areas as multi-party initiatives with the post-secondary and business communities, competitive peer-review, and access for smaller educational institutions.

Equity and diversity

- Budget 2018 includes a **gender-based analysis** as well as a commitment to a new whole-of-government Gender Results Framework, to track performance on equity and diversity outcomes. Elements of the framework include:
 - That the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs require gender-based analyses analysis of future budget documents.
 - That this and future budgets track progress on six key diversity areas: i) Education and Skills Development; ii) Economic Participation and Prosperity; iii) Leadership and Democratic Participation; iv) Gender-Based Violence and Access to Justice; v) Poverty Reduction, Health and Well-Being; and vi) Gender Equality Around the World.
 - A commitment to introduce legislation to require gender budgeting in federal financial management processes, including in examination of tax expenditures, federal transfers and existing spending.
- In support of this framework, Budget 2018 includes several funding announcements for **Status of Women Canada**, including \$100 million over five years for the **Women's Program**, which supports a range of community services. Additional funding is being committed to launch a national roundtable on gender-based analysis, a national conversation on gender equality with young Canadians and an engagement strategy for men and boys that promotes equality.
- To help the government better understand the barriers face by different groups, the Budget is committing \$6.7 million over five years to **Statistics Canada** to create a new **Centre for Gender, Diversity and Inclusion Statistics** tasked with improving the collection and use of data related to gender and diversity.
- These efforts will be supported by an additional \$1.5 million over five years, to **Finance Canada** to develop indicators and statistics to track progress on gender equality objectives.
- The government also announced steps to ensure **equal pay for work of equal value**, including through budget implementation legislation.
- The Budget commits \$23 million over two years to support **Heritage Canada's Multiculturalism Program**, specifically to support consultations on anti-discrimination, including that targeted against Indigenous peoples, and women and girls.
- An additional \$2 billion was committed to supporting the previously announced **Feminist International Assistance Policy** (announced in June 2017), dedicated to supporting humanitarian assistance supporting women and girls.

Indigenous peoples and reconciliation

- Budget 2018 commits **\$3.8 million to support SSHRC** in developing methods of doing research with Indigenous communities, including strategies to grow the capacity of Indigenous communities to conduct research and partner with the broader research community.
- The budget includes \$10 million in 2018-19 for **Métis Nation post-secondary education**. It did not include new funding increases to the Post-Secondary Student Support Program, which was a recommendation of the Federation (Budget 2017 included \$90 million over two years for this program).
- The Budget includes a commitment to fully implementing the orders of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal to address the underfunding of services for Indigenous children. This will include providing more than \$1.4 billion in new funding over six years for **First Nations Child and Family Services**.
- The Budget includes an announcement for \$2 billion over five years to support the creation of a new **Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program**, replacing the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy. The new agency will include a stronger focus on higher-quality, better-paying jobs rather than rapid re-employment.
- \$23.9 million is committed over five years to support work by **Parks Canada** to integrate Indigenous views, history and heritage into the national parks and historic sites.
- Statistics Canada will receive \$3.8 million over five years to create the **Indigenous Statistical Capacity Development Initiative**, with a mandate to support data governance and information management capacity of Indigenous governments.

Skill development

- Following a funding announcement in last year's budget (\$225 million over four years), a new organization named **Future Skills** will be launched in spring 2018. This organization will be led by an independent council and work with provinces, businesses, educational institutions and not-for-profit organizations on challenges relating to skill development, supported by a dedicated research lab.
- Budget 2018 commits \$27.5 million over five years from existing resources at Employment and Social Development Canada to support the **Education and Labour Market Longitudinal Linkage Platform**, which will provide users with information on career earnings and skill demands in the labour market.
- The government announced a **horizontal review of federal skills programming** over the next year.

Language, culture and heritage

- The **Action Plan for Official Languages 2018-2023** will receive \$400 million in new funding over five years. Specific programs will be carried out by multiple government agencies and include: community-based services and events, artistic and heritage activities, radio and newspapers serving French- and English-language minorities, interactive French- and English-language learning applications, recruitment and retention of language educators and early learning initiatives.
- The **Canada Media Fund** will receive \$172 million to promote Canadian content, over five years.
- Local **journalism in underserved communities** will benefit from \$50 million over five years.
- While no money is specifically allocated, the government plans to explore **new models of philanthropic support for professional journalism** and local news, based on a report last year by Public Policy Forum.
- **Library and Archives Canada** and the **Ottawa Public Library** will receive \$73.3 million for the construction of a new, joint facility, over six years.
- The **Canadian Museum for Human Rights** will get \$35 million over six years to put toward operations, starting in 2018–19.

Closing

In short, Budget 2018 was good news for the social sciences and humanities. The Federation was pleased to see the government take action on the recommendations of the government-appointed Fundamental Science Review panel, and was encouraged to note that a number of its own specific priorities were reflected in the budget.

Throughout the year, the Federation will continue working in partnership with the federal government to ensure that Canadian scholars have the support they need and that its membership's priorities and concerns remain on policy-makers' radar. To that end, members are encouraged to make their issues known to the Federation at any time via membership@ideas-idees.ca.

About the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences

The Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences promotes research and teaching for the advancement of an inclusive, democratic and prosperous society. With a membership now comprising over 160 universities, colleges and scholarly associations, the Federation represents a diverse community of 91,000 researchers and graduate students across Canada. The Federation organizes Canada's largest academic gathering, the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences, bringing together more than 8,000 participants each year. For more information about the Federation, visit www.ideas-idees.ca.