



## Foundational Projects Programs – Cycle 1 Competitions

### Review and Selection Process

This report outlines the review and selection process for the Cycle 1 Competitions of the Foundational Projects Program. The evaluation was conducted in two stages: a scientific merit review by external peer reviewers and a strategic alignment review by the Strategic Alignment Review Committee (SARC).

**Applications received: 47**

#### Stage 1: External Review

##### Reviewer Sources, Grouping and Assignment:

- Suggestions from applicants and members of D2R's Research Steering Committee (RSC)
- Each application was evaluated by at least two reviewers.
- Each reviewer evaluated up to five applications.
- Applications were grouped by D2R Axes.
- Within each axis, applications were grouped by shared keywords, themes, or focuses.
- Reviewers' expertise was aligned with the review group and free of conflicts of interest (COI).

##### Evaluation Criteria:

- **Scientific merit scores** on four criteria: Originality and Innovation; Research Plan; Project Feasibility; and Team and Training (total score of 20), along with comments.
- **D2R alignment overall rating:** high, medium, or low, with comments.

##### Scoring and Selection:

- Scores were calculated for each application and averaged across reviewers.
- The top 25 Foundational Projects were selected for strategic alignment review.



## Stage 2: Strategic Alignment Review Committee (SARC) Review

**SARC Composition:** Approved by the RSC and includes D2R scientific leadership, McGill and external expert/leadership representatives.

### SARC Evaluation Process and Criteria:

- **Evaluation assignment:**
  - Top 25 applications. Additionally, to evaluate any other applications that were ranked low but the SARC member believed deserved consideration.
- **Evaluation Criteria:**
  - Alignment with D2R's mission and priorities.
  - Innovation within D2R's foundational axes and competitive advantage.
  - Consider external reviewer reports (both scientific merit and alignment).
- **Each SARC member individually evaluated and made recommendations:** Provided overall alignment rating (High, Medium, or Low), comments, and funding recommendation (Yes or No).

### SARC In-Person Discussions and Funding Recommendation:

- Compiled evaluations and funding recommendations were presented.
- Applications were sorted by the number of "Yes" recommendations.
- Applications with mixed recommendations were discussed individually.
- **A list of 17 projects** was recommended for funding based on unanimous agreement.

*Note: Data collected through self-identification surveys completed by the Principal Investigator and the application itself shows that funding is equitably distributed among different equity-deserving groups without any adjustments.*