

INFORMATION GUIDE

VRQ CALL FOR PROPOSALS

PREAMBLE

This call for projects aims to support the commercialization of public research projects from establishments formerly affiliated with Univalor. This call for proposals takes the form of a competition in which \$100,000 will be distributed during each funding period to support 2 to 4 projects. There are two funding periods per year, one in the fall and the other in the spring. Grants range from \$20,000 to \$50,000. The objective is to finance the achievement of key milestones that will enable the project to attract a partner to finalize the maturation and take charge of the commercialization.

SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

This application must be sent no later than **April 3rd, 2026**, to the representatives of your research institute so that they can validate your application, sign it, and forward it to investissements@axelys.ca by April 17th, 2026. The list of representatives for each research institute is shown below. You are encouraged to contact them as soon as possible to discuss how they can support you.

Établissement	Personne contact	Adresse courriel
CCSMTL DEUR	Hafsa Deddi Anne-Marie Larose	hafsa.deddi.ccsmtl@ssss.gouv.qc.ca anne-marie.larose.ccsmtl@ssss.gouv.qc.ca
CHUM	Corinne Benquet Paul Lemire	corinne.benquet.chum@ssss.gouv.qc.ca paul.lemire.chum@ssss.gouv.qc.ca
CIUSS EMTL	Dominique J. Favreau Samir Taga	dominique.favreau.cemtl@ssss.gouv.qc.ca samir.taga.cemtl@ssss.gouv.qc.ca
CIUSS NIM	Stéphane Timothée	stephane.timothee.cnmtl@ssss.gouv.qc.ca
HEC	Thomas Gulian	thomas.gulian@hec.ca
HSJ	Anne-Marie Alarco Julia Rouchet	anne-marie.alarco.hsj@ssss.gouv.qc.ca julia.rouchet.hsj@ssss.gouv.qc.ca
IRCM	Peiman Shooshtarizadeh	peiman.shooshtarizadeh@ircm.qc.ca
Polytechnique	Éric Proietti Roger Miller	eric.proietti@polymtl.ca roger-2.miller@polymtl.ca
Université de Montréal	Cliff Pavlovic Lynda Adam	cliff.pavlovic@umontreal.ca lynda.adam@umontreal.ca

ELIGIBILITY

To validate your eligibility for this funding, you need to answer yes or no to the following questions. To be eligible for VRQ funding, you must answer yes to each question.

<p>The project is derived from activities from Univalor’s affiliated establishments. It has been the subject of a declaration of invention to the establishment or to Axelys.</p> <p>The project must have been the subject of a declaration of invention before the date of submission to Axelys, i.e. April 17th, 2026. The declaration of invention must be attached to the application.</p>	Yes / No
<p>The project is in the valorization phase</p> <p>VRQ funding cannot be used for fundamental research. The purpose is to bring innovations closer to the market. Funds requested must therefore demonstrate that they will be used to valorize the innovation.</p>	Yes / No
<p>The project is not eligible to the technology maturation program (PSO)</p> <p>If you are eligible for PSO funding, you cannot apply for the VRQ funding. For more details on PSO eligibility, please consult the FAQ in the information guide.</p>	Yes / No
<p>The project does not use the funds received as consideration for a public funding program under the jurisdiction of the Government of Quebec.</p> <p>VRQ funding is considered a public contribution in a financing package. Therefore, you cannot use it as a private counterpart for a Quebec government grant. For other public financing packages, you can’t exceed the maximum contribution thresholds set by other funding organizations.</p>	Yes / No
<p>For projects over \$25,000, a letter of support from a partner organization must be included with the application.</p> <p>No letter of support is required for projects under \$25,000. For projects over \$25,000, a letter of support from a partner organization is required. No cash or in-kind contribution is required in either case. Please read the FAQ for more details on what your letter of support needs to include.</p>	Yes / No
<p>The project will run for a maximum of 24 months.</p>	Yes / No

ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Expenses must be linked to project maturation activities. They may include:

- ✓ Salaries of personnel assigned to the project;
- ✓ Purchase of consumables;
- ✓ Fees for external consultants;
- ✓ Field experimentation;
- ✓ Other costs to support project valorization, except for patent costs;
- ✓ Indirect research costs.

Please note that VRQ funding is considered a public grant. It can be combined with other public funding that does not originate from the government of Quebec as long as the threshold of public contribution is not exceeded.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Projects submitted will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

CRITERIA	SCORE
1. Project relevance and impact	/35
1.1. The innovation solves a concrete and well-identified problem. It is not a solution searching for a problem.	15
1.2. The project contributes to enhancing the value of the innovation by bringing it significantly closer to adoption by the user community.	10
1.3. The social, environmental, and economic impact of the innovation is significant and demonstrated.	10
2. Research team and deployment plan	/25
2.1. The research team is credible and can mature the innovation.	5
2.2. The transfer and deployment plan is adequate. Its potential for deployment is described and is adequate.	15
2.3. The intellectual property management plan is sound and compatible with the deployment plan.	5
3. Quality of the project	/40
3.1. The project's overall approach is of high quality.	5
3.2. Project objectives are clear, pertinent, and achievable. The maturation plan is established and realistic.	15
3.3. The budget is coherent with the project objectives and the timeline.	10
3.4. Financial need is demonstrated. VRQ funding makes it possible to achieve objectives that would otherwise be difficult to attain.	10
TOTAL	/100

FAQ

Eligibility

How do I know if my project is eligible for PSO funding?

- ✓ Projects are eligible for PSO when they involve traditional technological maturation. They are typically used to obtain critical results to crystallize a partner's interest in taking or exercising a licensing option on the technology to further develop and commercialize it. VRQ funding is used to finance projects that do not meet the PSO criteria because:
 - They are of a social nature and do not correspond to traditional technological maturation schemes;
 - The project's level of maturity is too low to have attracted an industrial partner who could contribute the 20% of a financial package for a PSO. In this scenario, the VRQ project must be structured to reach a significant milestone that will help attract an industrial partner;
 - Expenses such as the cost of external consultants or access to a CRO do not fit into PSO applications.

Partner

What type of partner is acceptable to support my request for more than \$25,000?

The partner must be on the critical path to commercialization. It must be either a potential licensee or a critical deployment partner. The objective of the partner's letter of support is to demonstrate that there is traction for the innovation. We will therefore give priority to projects whose partners can commit financially to complete the maturation and/or deploy the solution. Letters from research organizations, end-users who can't buy the solution, suppliers, or generic partners will not be given the same weight as a letter from a potential client who can finance the rest of the maturation.

The letter must include the following elements: a description of the partner, a description of the relationship between the partner and the project (e.g. potential licensee, commercialization partner, etc.), a description of what the partner needs to see before committing financially, and a description of their involvement if the key milestones are reached.

Innovation maturity level

What is the minimum maturity level to apply?

The innovation cannot be at a pure research stage. The team must have validated that it meets a specific need for a potential partner and must have taken steps to ensure that the partner becomes involved as a result of the VRQ project.

Financial package

How do I determine if I'm applying for a project over \$25,000 or under \$25,000?

Expectations for applications over \$25,000 are higher. The project must demonstrate that it is one critical experiment away from being able to sign an agreement with a partner to finance the rest of the maturation or to deploy the project in the field. If the project is not at this stage, it should apply for less than \$25,000.

Eligible expenses

Is it possible to include indirect cost of research in the application?

Indirect costs of research are eligible expenses. It is however not recommended that you include indirect costs of research in your application since these are the funds from the universities. However, should you decide to include them, a maximum of 27% of indirect costs of research would be eligible. The total amount requested may not exceed \$50,000.

Communications

When will the results be available?

Results will be announced at the latest on June 19th, 2026.

If you have any additional questions, please contact us at: investissements@axelys.ca