

Strengthening Canadian research

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Canada must change how it supports science and increase its investment in research to reverse its eroding standing compared to international peers, urges [the final report](#) by the expert panel on Canada's Fundamental Science Review.

"Despite high levels of talent, expertise, and dedication on the part of those serving each [research funding] agency, there is evidence to suggest that the overall stewardship of the federal research ecosystem needs to be strengthened," states the report, "Investing in Canada's Future: Strengthening the Foundations of Canadian Research."

The report highlights several problems affecting science in Canada. The four core funding agencies — Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and Canada Foundation for Innovation — aren't well coordinated and have different funding priorities. Funding in some areas of science, such as multi-disciplinary research, is inconsistent. Also, many researchers early in their careers are struggling, and funding for students and postdoctoral fellows lags that of peer nations.

Strengthening science in Canada, according to the report, will require a "comprehensive agenda" that includes the creation of an independent National Advisory Council on Research and Innovation (who will work with a new Chief Science Advisor) and improved oversight and governance of the four core research funding agencies.

"This report sets out a multi-year agenda that, if implemented, could transform Canadian research capacity and have enormous long-term impacts across the nation," panel chair Dr. David Naylor, a professor of medicine at the University of Toronto, said in a [press release](#).



Early-career researchers in Canada need more support, according to an expert-panel report.

The panel also recommended a multi-year investment to boost investigator-led research operating grants, personnel support for researchers and trainees, spending on infrastructure and equipment, and coverage of institutional research costs. In total, these recommendations would increase annual spending across the four core funding agencies from \$3.5 billion to \$4.8 billion.

The report "puts forth a number of essential recommendations that are ambitious; however, there are times in a nation's history where such bold and visionary proposals meet the political will and resources to get it done," said Deborah Gordon-El-Bihbety, president and CEO of Research Canada. "In my estimation, we are in one of those times because the potential of the research endeavour has never been clearer in the minds of our leaders."

Research is the foundation of an innovative economy, added Gordon-El-Bihbety, and the current government is aware that it will yield long-term social and economic benefits, as well as restore Canada's place in an increasingly competitive global research environment.

"Findings from the review will help our government continue to strengthen Canada's international standing in fundamental science and capacity to produce world-leading research that improves the lives of Canadians," Kirsty Duncan, the federal minister of science, [said in a statement](#). "The panel's recommendations will also help us support researchers and scholars so they are able to make the discoveries and innovations that improve our health, environment, economy and communities."

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