OBJECTIVES OF THE REFORMS

1. Reduce workload and costs for applicants
2. Minimize peer review burden
3. Reduce operational costs
4. Address the lack of consistency across committees
5. Improve review of multi-disciplinary applications
6. Simplify program design
Project Grant Program: supporting defined projects with the greatest potential to advance knowledge, health outcomes or health care delivery

Foundation Grant Program: supporting longer-term innovative and high-impact programs of research that include knowledge translation and capacity building elements
KEY ELEMENTS OF THE DESIGN

1. College of Reviewers
2. Streamlined application
3. Structured review process
4. Application-focused review
5. Remote triage phase
6. Multi-disciplinary face-to-face review phase
1. COLLEGE OF REVIEWERS

- **CIHR Implementation for First Project Grant Competition:**
  - Delayed due to a lack of operational resources

- **Working Group Recommendations for Project Grant Competition:**
  - Maintain plan as a valuable element of design
  - Consider mandatory review for some grantees
  - Applicants should also be reviewers where possible
  - Invite new investigators to final assessment panels to learn review process

- **CIHR Response for Second Project Grant Competition:**
  - Additional resources being directed to the College to speed up development
  - Mandatory review is difficult to operationalize
  - Applicants can review where appropriate (i.e., outside of their cluster)
  - New Investigators will be invited to observe and will be mentored in College
2. STREAMLINED APPLICATION

- **CIHR Implementation for First Project Grant Competition:**
  - Fully implemented
  - Some reviewers found it difficult to adjust to less information (e.g., searched for additional information on-line)

- **Working Group Recommendation for Project Grant Competition:**
  - Increase application length (10 pages with figures and references)
  - Allow unlimited supporting materials (e.g., letters of support)
  - Add a “response to previous reviews” section and examine feasibility of incorporating this between Phase I and Phase II
  - Increase information from CV, lengthen time period to address leave of absence (e.g., paternity leave, illness)

- **CIHR Response for Second Project Grant Competition:**
  - Fully implemented for the second Project Grant Competition
  - Examining the feasibility of a response to reviewers between Phases for future Project Grant Competitions
3. STRUCTURED REVIEW PROCESS

• **CIHR Implementation for First Project Grant Competition:**
  - Fully implemented
  - Training was not mandatory thus some reviewers did not attend sessions
  - Some reviewers did not use each section fully or understand the new scoring system

• **Working Group Recommendation for Project Grant Competition:**
  - Change to a free flowing review
  - Combine “quality and importance of the idea” into one category (25%)
  - Increase weight of “approaches and methods” (50%)
  - Leave “expertise, experience and resources” as is (25%)
  - Convert alpha scoring to numeric out of 100
  - Cluster applications more tightly

• **CIHR Response for Second Project Grant Competition:**
  - Fully implemented for the second Project Grant Competition
4. APPLICATION FOCUSED REVIEW

• **CIHR Implementation for First Project Grant Competition:**
  - Fully implemented
  - Matching and assignment technology performed poorly leading to significant delays and operational pressure to find reviewers

• **Working Group Recommendation for Project Grant Competition:**
  - Continue with CIHR’s new matching process
  - Each Competition Chair should be paired with Scientific Officer
  - Chair/SO to approve all assignments within their cluster

• **CIHR Response for Second Project Grant Competition:**
  - Fully implemented for the second Project Grant Competition
  - New matching process has been positively tested on registration data
  - Optimization technology now built into the system
5. REMOTE TRIAGE PHASE

- **CIHR Implementation for First Project Grant Competition:**
  - Fully implemented although asynchronous discussion process was cumbersome
  - Some reviewers and Chairs disliked the asynchronous discussion
  - Green zone (automatically funded) was overused to address delays

- **Working Group Recommendation for Project Grant Competition:**
  - Remove asynchronous discussion processes
  - Triage 40% to Phase II for face-to-face discussion (top 30% plus 10% reserved for applications with high variance)
  - Eliminate green zone (all applications should be brought to final panels for discussion)
  - Assess all reviews with a Scientific Officer

- **CIHR Response for Second Project Grant Competition:**
  - Fully implemented for the second Project Grant Competition
6. FACE-TO-FACE REVIEW PHASE

- **CIHR Implementation for First Project Grant Competition:**
  - Fully implemented although not enough applications were reviewed by Face-to-Face Panel (i.e., too many were automatically funded through green zone to address delays)

- **Working Group Recommendation for Project Grant Competition:**
  - Significantly increase the number of face-to-face panels in Phase II
  - Two reviewers (out of four) should be members of face-to-face panels to increase accountability and review quality

- **CIHR Response for Second Project Grant Competition:**
  - Fully implemented for the second Project Grant Competition
  - Two reviewers will be chosen out of the four through an optimization process that reduces the number of reviewers needed for each face-to-face panel