



# COHA

# ACHO

Canadian Ornamental Horticulture Alliance

*Alliance Canadienne de l'Horticulture Ornementale*

## Ornamentals Cluster 2018 – 2023 Guideline for Full Proposal

**DEADLINE: September 15, 2017 (11:59 EDT)**

### **MISSION:**

The Canadian Ornamental Horticulture Alliance (COHA) is seeking outstanding research proposals for the next Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada cluster program. COHA supports forward-looking research that is relevant and practical to the floriculture, nursery and sod production sectors and their respective value chains.

**THE ORGANIZATION:** The Canadian Ornamental Horticulture Alliance (COHA) is the national voice for the largest and most significant sector of horticulture in Canada. COHA is a strategic alliance of three broad-based organizations which seek to coordinate industry action and research, and contribute to effective public policy with a single voice.

- Canadian Nursery Landscape Association (CNLA)
- Fédération Interdisciplinaire de l'Horticulture Ornementale du Québec (FIHOQ)
- Flowers Canada Growers (FCG)

### **BACKGROUND:**

The ornamentals' sector participated in AAFC's AgriScience Cluster 1 (2008/13) through a strategic partnership with Vineland Research and Innovation Centre. The Cluster 2 program (2013/18) was managed and led by COHA, with administrative support from the Agricultural Adaptation Council (AAC).

With the current Agricultural Policy Framework (APF) ending in March 2018, COHA is developing a new Canadian ornamental cluster for submission to the next generation of research funding initiatives to be announced under the Next Policy Framework (NPF).



Interested researchers are requested to read the following guidelines carefully and to be sure to address all requirements when completing their full research proposals. Incomplete applications and those that do not meet all requirements will not be considered.



The submission of a full research proposal does not guarantee that the proposal will be selected by COHA for inclusion in the final cluster submission to AAFC nor that AAFC itself will select the proposal for funding.

### **UNDERSTANDING AND MEETING PRIORITIES**

The AAFC's cluster program is intended to be a collaborative "partnership" between the respective industry sectors and AAFC under the Industry-Led Research and Development Stream of the AgriInnovation Program. Priorities established by the industry are expected to be consistent with those established by the federal government.



In July 2016, federal, provincial and territorial ministers of agriculture released **The Calgary Statement**, which outlines the key priority areas that will guide the development of the Next Policy Framework. Priority areas outlined in The Calgary Statement that are of importance to COHA include:

#### **Environmental sustainability and climate change**

Support for environmental sustainability initiatives under the next APF will help the agriculture sector address agriculture's impacts on Canada's natural resources, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and mitigate and adapt to the anticipated impacts of climate change (for example, changing growing conditions, extreme weather events, reduced water availability/quality, soil degradation and new and increased pests and disease outbreaks).



#### **Enhancing knowledge and technology transfer activities**

Governments, industry and academia have a role to play in contributing to the advancement of research through knowledge transfer activities that are instrumental in enhancing the resiliency of the agriculture sector and improving sector productivity.

Please refer to [The Calgary Statement](#) for more details on priorities the government expects to see addressed through its research clusters under the NPF.



When completing a full proposal, be sure to include in the Executive Summary (Part 4) how your research focuses on the key priority areas outlined in the Calgary Statement as well as those identified by COHA's research priority setting process.



## INDUSTRY PRIORITIES

Using the Calgary Statement as a guidance document, representative industry members of each of the COHA organizations participated in a strategic research priority-setting workshop in June 2017 to identify key research priorities for the sector. Through that workshop process, the following key priority areas were developed for the sector:

- Using living green infrastructure to mitigate the impacts of climate change and to improve the quality of life
- Adapting the ornamental sector to the new realities introduced by climate change
- Enhancing environmental sustainability through resource optimization
- Driving productivity gains to increase competitiveness
- Responding to market needs and advancing opportunities to strengthen public trust

A more complete summary of the workshop outcomes is included with this Guideline Document (Appendix A). The full report, *SUMMARY REPORT: National Workshop for Setting Research Priorities*, prepared by Intersol (consulting group), outlines more specific industry priorities and is now available on the COHA website. ([www.coha-acho.ca](http://www.coha-acho.ca))

## WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

Eligible applicant include (a) academic or research institutions from Canada with a proven track record of success in completing research projects relative to the horticulture and/or agriculture sectors and (b) commercial enterprises in the sector. Research activities must be carried out by one or more recognized and relevant research organizations.

The lead applicant submitting the proposal is the party with which COHA will enter into a contract should the funding be approved. The lead applicant is then responsible for managing the relationship with collaborators participating in the project including reporting on the research which they are jointly undertaking, obtaining their expense submissions, and reimbursing them for eligible costs funded by the cluster.

## TIME FRAME FOR PROJECTS

The maximum duration for any research project is five years and all work must be scheduled for completion (including reports and financial administration) on or before the end of the AAFC's policy framework (March 31, 2023.) Projects of shorter duration will also be considered.



## SUBMITTING A FULL PROPOSAL

**SMART** principles, a key metric identified by both industry and AAFC, are critical for identifying progress made throughout the research project. All research deliverables associated with project objectives (both short-term, incremental research targets, and final end-point outputs) must follow **SMART** principles. That is, they must be:

- Specific,
- Measurable,
- Achievable,
- Relevant, and
- Time-based

Research proposals shall be submitted using the proposal templates as provided by COHA. They are available on the COHA website: [www.coha-acho.ca](http://www.coha-acho.ca) in both official languages.

Use the *COHA Cluster Full Proposal Template* to complete your submission. Follow the instructions provided within the body of the template as well as guidelines outlined in this document.

Research proposals must articulate (in the **Executive Summary**) how the work will address the COHA research priorities.

All research deliverables associated with project objectives must follow SMART principles (see above).

**Be sure that objectives are very clear, concise and consistent** throughout your proposal as they are critical for the final integrated cluster submission to AAFC (they should form the structure of Parts 5, 7, 8 and 9). Where there are several objectives, please indicate how they all fit together as an integrated package working toward a common goal instead of a collection of several separate projects.

When completing your full proposal, please consider the following:

- Adhere to maximum page limits highlighted in blue in the *COHA Cluster Full Proposal Template* document.
- All outcomes must be attained by the end of the project.
- Each research deliverable must be linked to a knowledge transfer action.
- COHA encourages collaboration to tackle specific research targets; collaboration must be coordinated and demonstrate a team-based approach.
- Applicants should be mindful of the need to develop highly qualified personnel (HQP) when developing their full research proposals, especially where there are current or expected capacity gaps in a particular area of expertise needed to address industry priorities.



## BUDGET

Please complete the Excel file titled “*Detailed Proposal Budget*” and submit in Excel file format (.xls or .xlsx). The form is available for download from the COHA website: [www.coha-acho.ca](http://www.coha-acho.ca)

When completing your budget, please note the following:

- **Fiscal years** - Fiscal years begin April 1st and end March 31st. Researchers should carefully consider their annual budget allocations as it is not possible to move funds between project years.
- **Equipment** - Detail must be provided around all proposed equipment items. Please provide rationale for any capital assets >\$5,000. Every major equipment item should appear as a separate line in the budget. Equipment purchases over \$5,000 must be pre-approved.
- **Travel** - Research-specific travel (i.e., travel to field sites for data collection) must be separated from knowledge transfer or hospitality travel (i.e., conferences, meetings)
- **Overhead** – As of the writing of this guideline, the AAFC Cluster Applicant Guide has not been released. Applicants are therefore requested to limit overhead to a maximum of 15% as per the current *Growing Forward 2* framework.
- **Eligible and non-eligible costs** – Please refer to the AAFC Cluster 2 Guideline for guidance on eligible and non-eligible project costs. It is expected that other than the removal of hospitality expenses, there will not be significant changes to these lists for Cluster 3 projects
- **In-Kind contributions** - In-kind contribution refers to the fair market value attributed to eligible cost of goods and/or services required to complete the project that are provided by the recipient, or other project supporters (governments and/or industry supporters, partners or association members). In-kind contributions do not require a cash outlay and count towards the recipient’s contribution. Verification of all in-kind and other funding must be provided. In-kind contributions are both an expenditure and a source of funds and must be included in both parts of the budget at the same amount.

## FUNDING

It is expected that all research applications will include a portion of additional cash from industry, through suppliers and/or trade associations or the applicant. As the AAFC Cluster 3 Applicant Guide has not been released as of the issuance of this COHA Guideline, please consider the following to be recommendations only and subject to change.



- Additional industry (applicant) cash should be one-third (33-1/3%) of the total value of the project:
  - It is anticipated that the AAFC funding ratio for Cluster 3 projects will be 70:30 (government:industry).
  - COHA's administrative costs associated with the application process will be assessed at 3-1/3 % of the value of eligible expenditures forecast for each year and payable annually in advance.
- The total of in-kind funding (as noted above) can be a maximum of 10 percent of the total project and can count towards the required total industry cash contribution. It is important to note that in-kind contributions must be verified and documented as part of the ongoing financial reporting process.

Project budgets should indicate all sources and amounts of additional funding for the proposed research, including both in-kind and cash, specifying whether each source will be applied for, has been applied for, or has been confirmed. Include only funding that is directly applicable to the proposal and do not include funding for other related projects.

Financial contributions from industry sources, including both in-kind and cash contributions, must be confirmed in writing. Letters to confirm financial support must be included with the application form and make specific reference to the project. They should be on company letterhead and must be signed by an authorized senior executive, include the specific dollar amount of the cash contribution and/or explicit details of in-kind contributions.

#### **COHA FUNDING**

COHA will make available additional industry funding that can be assigned to industry projects that demonstrate a broad industry benefit and which may not be otherwise eligible for all or a portion of the required industry cash funding. COHA reserves the right to allocate this funding to those projects that best meet the following criteria:

- The project has broad industry benefit, across Canada and across floriculture, nursery and sod sectors.
- The project has a high probability of achieving commercial success and includes provisions to share returns from IP with COHA
- The project is novel, innovative and proposes a completely new approach (i.e. the research is original and unique, proposes a solution that has not been explored to date and represents a major shift from past research projects.)
- The project has high potential to develop HQP that will remain in the Canadian ornamentals sector following completion of the project.



## PEER REVIEWS

Full proposals will be subjected to a robust peer-review evaluation, as per guidelines established by AAFC. Proposals must provide enough detail for a reviewer to fully follow the experimental approach to properly assess the quality of the science.

Proposals should include a minimum of three and up to five nominations of potential reviewers. Peer reviewers are defined by AAFC as scientists from industry, academia and/or government that have technical expertise in the subject matter to a degree at least equivalent to that needed for the original work.

COHA will solicit peer reviews and reserves the right to use reviewers nominated in the proposal, or other individuals, as appropriate. A sound rationale must be provided if fewer than three peer reviewers are suggested.

## ADDRESSING APPLICANT QUESTIONS

Applicants/researchers are invited to pose questions specific to the COHA cluster application to the COHA Research Committee, via e-mail. All questions and answers will be posted to the COHA website on an ongoing basis, therefore applicants are encouraged to check the **Our research** tab of the COHA website regularly. Questions will be posted anonymously. They should be addressed to [jamie@fco.ca](mailto:jamie@fco.ca) on or before 1:00 pm August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

## IMPORTANT DATES

- **August 28, 2017 (1:00 pm EDT)**
  - Final date for researchers/applicants to pose questions to the COHA Research Committee via e-mail.
- **September 15, 2017 (11:59 PM EDT)**
  - Deadline to submit full proposals
- **October 2017**
  - Proposals undergo robust scientific peer-review
- **October 2017**
  - For those proposals selected to proceed in the final submission to AAFC, researchers work with Project Manager to incorporate feedback into proposals
- **October 2017**
  - COHA develops cluster application following AAFC guidelines
- **November 1, 2017**
  - Anticipated application submission to AAFC cluster program

*NOTE: Additional round of revisions may be required after AAFC reviews the cluster application.*

**Decisions made by the COHA Research Committee are final.**



## FINAL NOTES

Please ensure you have read and followed the instructions within this document prior to submitting a full proposal. Submissions must be received before the deadline of **Friday, September 15, 2017 (11:59PM EDT)**.

Completed research proposals must be submitted using the “*COHA Full Proposal Template*” and a completed detailed budget **Microsoft Excel** file entitled “*Detailed Proposal Budget*” by email to:

Jamie Aalbers, Research Coordinator, [jamie@fco.ca](mailto:jamie@fco.ca)

All submitted proposals/budgets will receive an email confirming receipt within two to three business days.

**For more information, contact Jamie Aalbers**, Research Coordinator, COHA by phone or email (705) 730-4403 [jamie@fco.ca](mailto:jamie@fco.ca)

## COHA Research Committee

Organization / Contact	E-mail / Phone
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## Canadian Ornamental Horticulture Alliance

### Appendix A

#### Research Priorities for the Ornamentals Sector

Using the Calgary Statement as a guidance document, representative industry members of each of the COHA organizations participated in a strategic research priority-setting workshop in June 2017 to identify key research priorities for the sector. Through that workshop process, the following key priority areas were developed for the sector:

Priority Theme	Sector Need, Challenge, or Problem	Research Outcomes Sought
<b>Mitigating the impacts of climate change and improving life quality through living green infrastructures.</b>	Ornamental products can contribute directly to climate change mitigation by expanding applications of green infrastructure. Ornamentals can be used to moderate erosion, wind impact, and temperature especially in urban environments as well as contributing to air quality and carbon sequestration.	<b><i>We can help!</i></b> Research that leads to expanded application of ornamental products for climate change mitigation and environmental enhancement is a vital priority of the sector.
<b>Adapting the ornamental sector to the new realities introduced by climate change</b>	Climate change can contribute to unprecedented conditions such as (a) more intense and emerging pest and disease pressures and (b) temperature, wind and rainfall extremes that impact winter hardiness and survivability, drought resistance and heat tolerance. Growers and downstream partners in the value chain need solutions.	<b><i>We can adapt!</i></b> Research that enables innovation to address pest and disease pressures as well as extremes in temperature and rainfall is core to effective climate change mitigation and adaptability. Outcomes-based research that lead to enhanced plant health and survivability is a core priority for the sector.
<b>Enhancing environmental sustainability through resource optimization</b>	Advances in sensory technology that enable more precise measurements and feedback are among the innovative tools to be developed and applied to optimize resource utilization. BigData analytics, artificial intelligence and machine learning can be harnessed for our sector. More efficient use of resources and less waste represents steps toward the circular economy.	<b><i>We can advance!</i></b> Research that addresses optimization of nutrient delivery, use and reuse, and which increases the efficiency of water utilization by plants are important outcomes for environmental sustainability. Research that addresses effective ways of first storing and then transporting plants to market with outcomes that result in less energy consumption, loss and less or better packaging will contribute to more efficient use of resources and environmental sustainability.
<b>Driving productivity gains to increase competitiveness</b>	Productivity gains are achieved by enhancing yields relative to the inputs required. Major inputs used by the ornamental horticulture sector include labour and energy as well as nutrients and water.	<b><i>We can compete!</i></b> Research that leads to higher yields or reduced inputs to achieve the same yield will contribute to the competitiveness of producers and the sector.
<b>Responding to market needs and advancing opportunities to</b>	Canada's demographics are changing together with the consumers in the US and other international export markets. Millennial consumers are time-pressed	<b><i>We can grow!</i></b> - A high priority for the ornamentals sector is delivering product innovation that addresses consumer and customer needs, aligned with regulatory

Priority Theme	Sector Need, Challenge, or Problem	Research Outcomes Sought
<b>strengthen public trust</b>	and seek plant products that are easy to care for and which they perceive as being contributors to social change (i.e. pollinator plants, edible ornamentals (eat local) etc. . Merchandisers seek innovation that will differentiate their offerings from their competition and draw consumers. Regulators in many jurisdictions restrict watering for home use and ban chemical pesticides from being used as plant care products.	requirements, and which demonstrates an understanding of those needs and how to motivate consumers to make positive purchase decisions.

**Prioritizing Research Topics**

The research priorities above were developed in response to industry discussion on the following industry research topics, which were developed in consultation with the broader industry for discussion at the workshop. Although all are of importance to the sector, they were grouped into high, medium and lower priority research topics.

**High Priority Research Topics**

- Environmental best practices and Reducing Environmental Footprint
- Water Management and Optimizing Fertilization
- Green Infrastructure and Climate Change

**Medium Priority Research Topics**

- Enhanced Pest Management
- Energy
- Better market knowledge, understanding the consumer

**Lower Priority Research Topics**

- Optimizing work/worker productivity through technology and Product Innovation
- Measuring and improving economic performance of businesses