



## **Request for Proposals**

### **5-Year Evaluation of the Ontario SPOR SUPPORT Unit (OSSU)**

#### **Invitation**

The Ontario SPOR SUPPORT Unit (OSSU) is soliciting proposals from organizations with demonstrated experience and sector knowledge to evaluate its activities since its inception in 2013. This is a 5-year evaluation of OSSU. The successful organization is expected to work in conjunction with the OSSU Coordinating Centre and to engage with OSSU's Research Centres and other OSSU-funded research projects, including OSSU IMPACT Award recipients.

#### **Organizational Overview**

Funded in 2013 for an initial 5 years, the Ontario SPOR SUPPORT Unit (OSSU) is a collaboration across leading health research centres in Ontario, supported by a Coordinating Centre which facilitates, connects and integrates activities across the network. Jointly funded by the Government of Ontario and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the initiative engages researchers, patients, clinicians, policy makers, industry representatives and other health system professionals to implement Canada's Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research (SPOR) within Ontario.

With world leading expertise in data access, methodological and research services, knowledge translation, clinical trials and capacity building, OSSU provides infrastructure, expertise and support to those engaged in patient-oriented research. It also promotes knowledge transfer and exchange of the latest research evidence, to inform and implement more effective health policy and clinical practices throughout the province.

Further details on OSSU and SPOR are available in Appendix A and at [www.ossu.ca](http://www.ossu.ca).

#### **Scope of the Work**

OSSU is seeking an external Consultant to undertake a 5-year evaluation that will cover all the actions and activities of OSSU since its inception in October 2013. This evaluation is expected to be an impact-driven evaluation that can identify a combination of impacts already developed through OSSU, along with likely future impacts that result from OSSU's activities in its first 5 years. In this evaluation we anticipate a particular focus on:

- A description of the approach and activities of OSSU;



- Linking of outputs and outcomes to the required goals of SUPPORT Units within the broader SPOR strategy;
- Broad pan-provincial evaluation of OSSU's activities and impacts;
- Impacts arising from the work of OSSU, covering:
  - Overview of impacts and typology of impacts,
  - Case studies of impacts
  - Identification of anticipated impacts over a longer timeframe
- A discussion of how the structures, stakeholders and approaches in OSSU link to developing impacts (including assessment of the roles of different stakeholders in ensuring impacts arise);
- An overview of any shift in Ontario's health research system towards one that prioritizes patient oriented research as a valuable approach to impacting health, health care and health policy outcomes;
- Identification of the main lessons that can ensure the sustainability of patient oriented research in Ontario in the future.

This 5-year evaluation should build on the interim evaluation of OSSU that was completed after 3 years of OSSU's activities (in 2016-17). This will include building on the conceptual framework for activities and outcomes from OSSU activities that combines OSSU's strategic goals and patient oriented research impacts (see Appendix B for details).

The evaluation will gather information from OSSU's Research Centres, the Coordinating Centre and OSSU Working Groups on key issues in patient-oriented research. However, it is not an evaluation of individual Research Centres or Working Groups, other than in their contribution to overall goals of OSSU.

The successful group/organization in this RFP will have access to OSSU and SPOR documentation held by OSSU, as well as working with a small steering committee selected by OSSU that includes patient, research, practitioner and decision maker representation.

Submitted proposals will outline the organization's track record and capacity to deliver an evaluation report over a 9 month timeframe (January 2019 to September 2019):

### **Approach**

While OSSU does not have a specific approach to the 5-year evaluation and will work with the contractor to ensure that the most appropriate approach for the evaluation, the proposed evaluation will need to provide evidence-informed impact stories from OSSU's first 5 years of



activities, as well as aligning with evaluation criteria from OSSU's funders (CIHR, MOHLTC, MRIS). Key issues to take into account for the approach are:

- To align the evaluation approach and findings with OSSU's strategic priorities and goals (see Appendix B), as well as those of SPOR as a whole (see Appendix A).
- The use of logic modelling to identify the theory of action for OSSU. The logic model approach will need to align with CIHR's logic model for SPOR Support Units (this will be made available to the selected contractor), MOHLTC's productivity analysis approach and MRI's research performance measurement approach (both grounded in the Payback Framework for research evaluation and the CAHS research ROI Framework – Appendix C).
- The use of a multi-method approach to the evaluation that can capture qualitative and quantitative information on OSSU.

### **Contractor requirements**

Proposals must showcase the contractor's abilities to provide and deliver the following:

1. Develop an evaluation approach tailored for OSSU's 5-year evaluation. This approach should include:
  - A clear link between the proposed evaluation framework and that underpinning OSSU's interim evaluation (Appendix B) and those underpinning CIHR and MOHLTC evaluation frameworks (Appendix C).
  - The development of a multi-method approach to evaluation that can capture both quantitative and qualitative information.
  - A distinct approach to developing evidence-informed impact stories from OSSU activities.
  - A demonstrated ability to access the different stakeholders involved in OSSU activities across Ontario (including patients, researchers, policy makers, research management, etc.).
2. The successful organization should have a proven track record of providing formative and summative evaluations in the health research field. These evaluations should demonstrate:
  - The ability to engage multiple stakeholder groups in the evaluation process.
  - Knowledge of the Ontario health research system.



- Knowledge and understanding of the CIHR Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research.
  - An understanding of the relationships between the health research delivery system and the actors through which health research impacts occur.
3. Findings from the 5-year evaluation should be reported such that they speak to the needs of the multiple stakeholder groups engaged in OSSU. This includes:
- Detailing findings that relate to patients and caregivers (e.g. related to patient needs for research, roles of patients in health research, how health research has affected patients, etc.)
  - Findings that relate to OSSU funders at Federal and Provincial levels.
  - Findings that relate to OSSU's partners in Ontario (e.g. OSSU Research Centres, Ontario stakeholders in the health research system - health professionals, private/charity sectors, health care policy and delivery, etc.)

### **Key Considerations:**

In their proposals, organizations should outline their relevant experience, capacity, and track record, as well as the anticipated cost (not to exceed \$150,000) and timeline to deliver on the work identified in this Request for Proposals. Bidders may collaborate to draw expertise from various organizations, but a single lead organization should be identified on each submission.

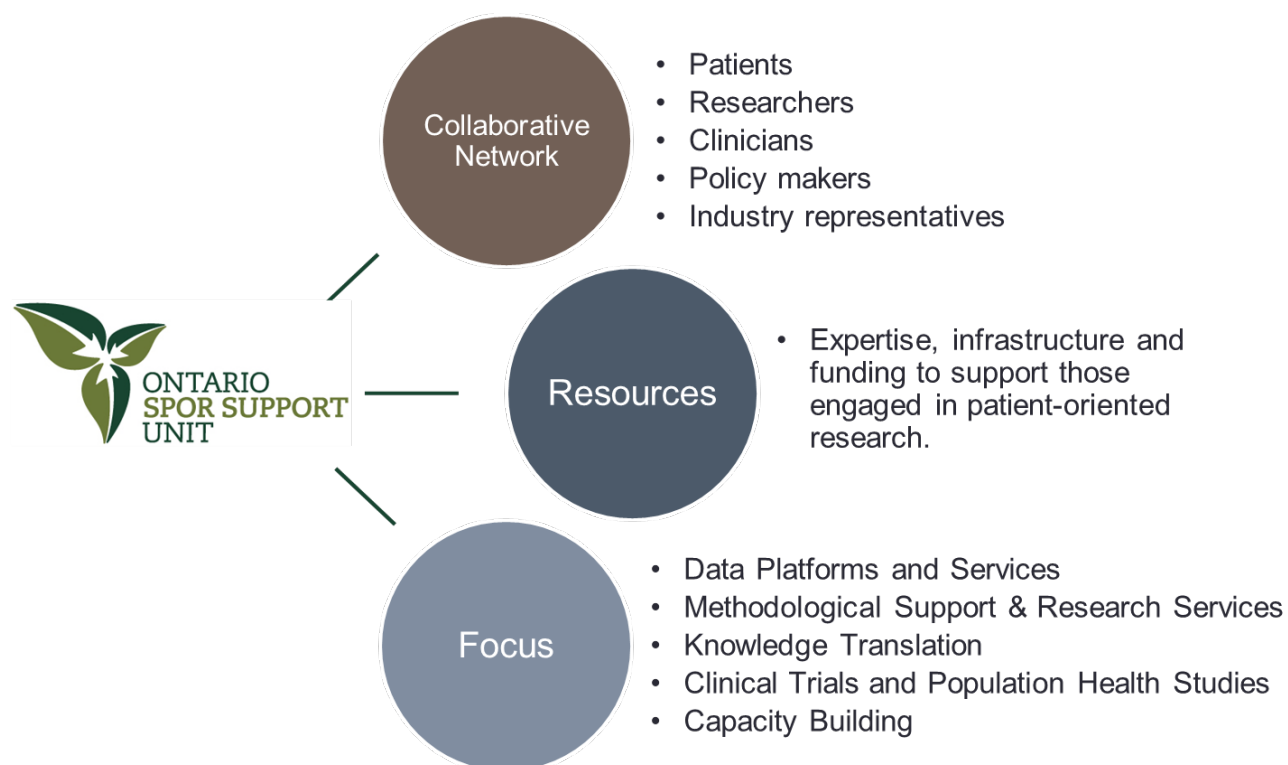
Proposals are to be submitted electronically to [ossu@ossu.ca](mailto:ossu@ossu.ca) by **5:00 pm on Monday December 31<sup>st</sup> 2018**. Please include "OSSU 5-year Evaluation" in the subject line. Questions related to the RFP should be submitted to [ossu@ossu.ca](mailto:ossu@ossu.ca) by 5.00pm on Friday December 14<sup>th</sup> 2018.

## Appendix A

### OSSU Overview

OSSU brings together a diverse stakeholder group engaged with patient-oriented research in Ontario. With this group, OSSU leverages Ontario's wealth of health research resources to align and build upon CIHR's SPOR goals (Figure 1). Using this strategic approach allows OSSU to ensure that the existing high volume of excellent health research in the province gets realigned with the needs of the collaborative network of stakeholders in patient-oriented research in Ontario.

Figure 1. OSSU's strategic approach

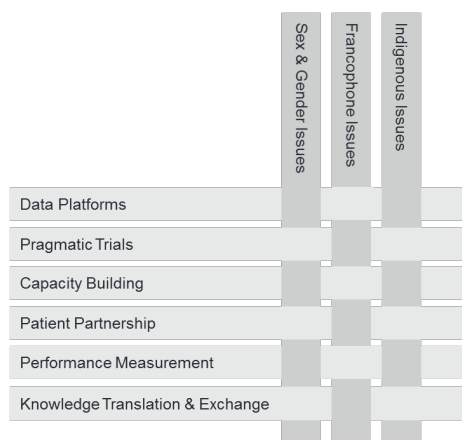


The OSSU is composed of a Coordinating Centre and health research centres/networks with diverse expertise related to patient-oriented research and implementation (Figure 2). The majority of OSSU funding is directed to new activities at these health research centres/networks, including supports and services that they will provide to other researchers, infrastructure/platform investments and capacity building initiatives.

Figure 2. OSSU Coordinating Centre and Health Research Centres



Figure 3. OSSU Working Groups



In addition to these research centres, OSSU has 9 cross-cutting working groups (6 aligned with the SPOR Support Unit priorities laid out by CIHR, and 3 aligning with Ontario POR priorities)(Figure 3).

In terms of research activity (as an illustration of how Ontario health research can utilize OSSU POR supports) OSSU has funded two demonstration projects beginning in 2013, one led by the Ontario Stroke Network (*Implementing Quality Based Procedures for stroke patients*), the second by the Patients Canada (*Patient Partnership Principles and ER PROMs*). In addition to these

two demonstration projects, OSSU is funding a suite of IMPACT Awards - translational research projects that are Innovative, Measurable, Patient-oriented, Appropriate, Collaborative and Transformative (for details see <http://ossu.ca/impact-awards/>).



## SPOR Overview

CIHR states that “**Canada's Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research (SPOR)** is about ensuring that the right patient receives the right intervention at the right time.” SPOR is a 5-year, joint federal, provincial, territorial initiative to foster:

- Evidence-informed health care with system-wide impact.
- Enhanced patient engagement and partnerships.
- Innovative collaboration among researchers, clinicians, patients, health system administrators, policy makers, health charities, industry, etc.
- Engages a coalition dedicated to the integration of research into care and the translation of research results into improved health outcomes.

For SPOR, patient-oriented research refers to a continuum of research that engages patients as partners, focusses on patient-identified priorities and improves patient outcomes. In SPOR, ‘patient’ refers to individuals with personal experience of a health issue and informal caregivers, including family and friends.

SPOR as a whole is built on a number of principles (Box 1) that outline the way SPOR research should be funded, approached, practiced and assessed.

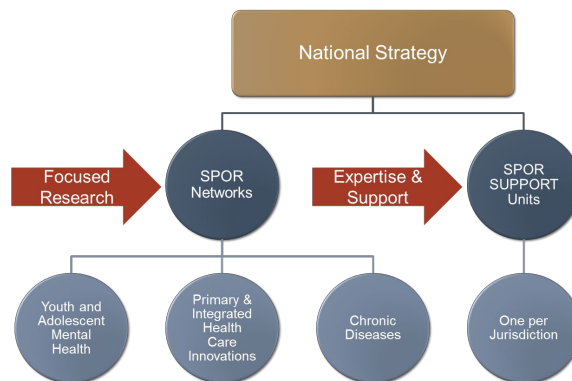
- Patients need to be involved in all aspects of the research to ensure questions and results are relevant and integrated into practice.
- Decision-makers and clinicians need to be involved throughout the entire research process to ensure integration into policy and practice.
- Funding is based on a 1:1 matching formula with non-federal government partners to ensure relevance and applicability.
- Effective patient-oriented research requires a multi-disciplinary approach.
- SPOR is focused on first-in-human (and beyond) research designed to be transformative in nature and improve patient outcomes and the effectiveness and efficiency of the health care system.
- SPOR is outcome driven and incorporates performance measurement and evaluation as integral components of the initiative.

*Box 1. SPOR principles*

SPOR is essentially comprised of two main components that both integrate patient engagement, and training and mentoring activities as core components: SPOR Support Units and SPOR Networks (Figure 4).

**Support Units:** Provincial and/or regional centres providing support and expertise to those engaged in patient-oriented research.

**SPOR Networks:** National collaborations to generate research evidence and innovations designed to improve patient health and health care systems.



*Figure 4. SPOR Components*



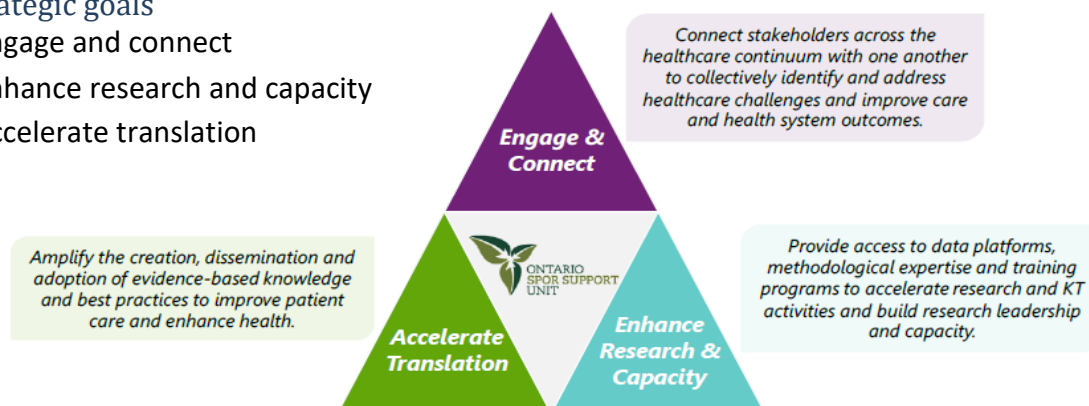
## Appendix B

### Conceptual framework for OSSU interim evaluation.

Key findings in OSSU's interim evaluation were analyzed and reported as an assessment of OSSU's progress against its **strategic goals** and **impacts from health research**.

#### OSSU Strategic goals

1. Engage and connect
2. Enhance research and capacity
3. Accelerate translation



#### OSSU Impacts<sup>1</sup>

1. Advancing knowledge
2. Capacity building
3. Informing decision making
4. Health impacts
5. Social/economic impacts

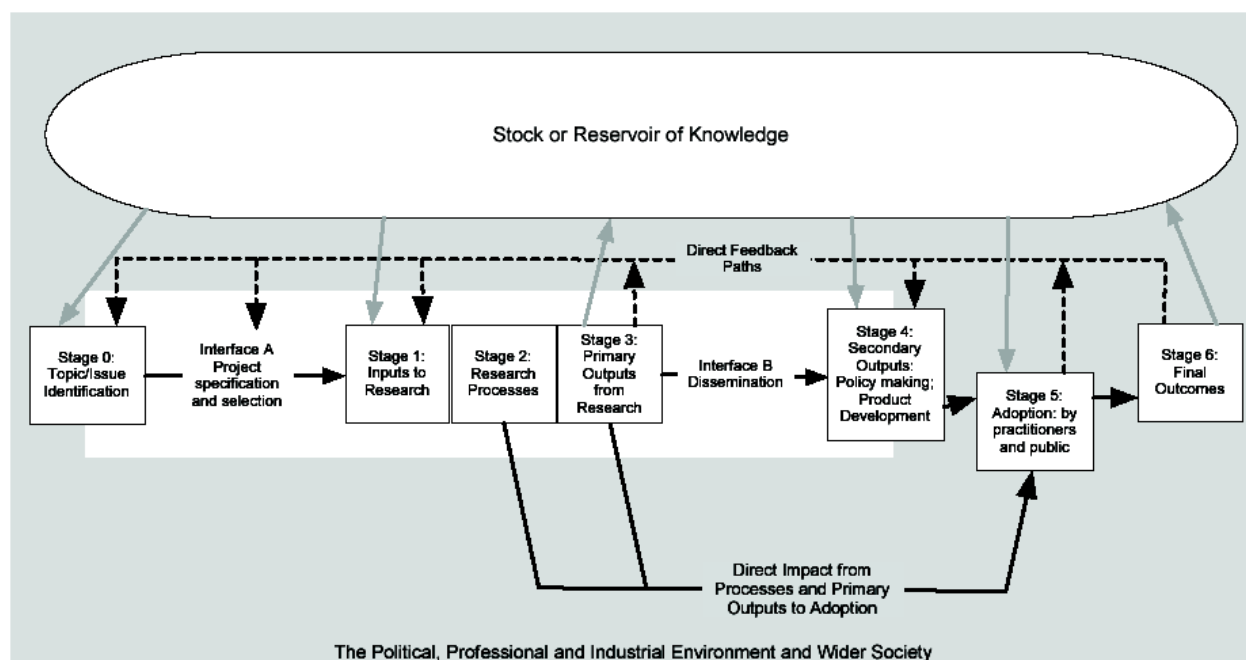
<sup>1</sup> These impact categories flow from those used in the Payback Framework and CAHS Framework for health research evaluation (see Appendix C for details)

## Appendix C

### Logic models underpinning OSSU, MOHLTC and SPOR evaluation frameworks

Underpinning the OSSU evaluation, Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, and SPOR evaluation frameworks are two logic model based frameworks: the Payback Framework (figure 5) and the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences (CAHS) Framework (figure 6). More details on these two frameworks can be found in the links below the figures.

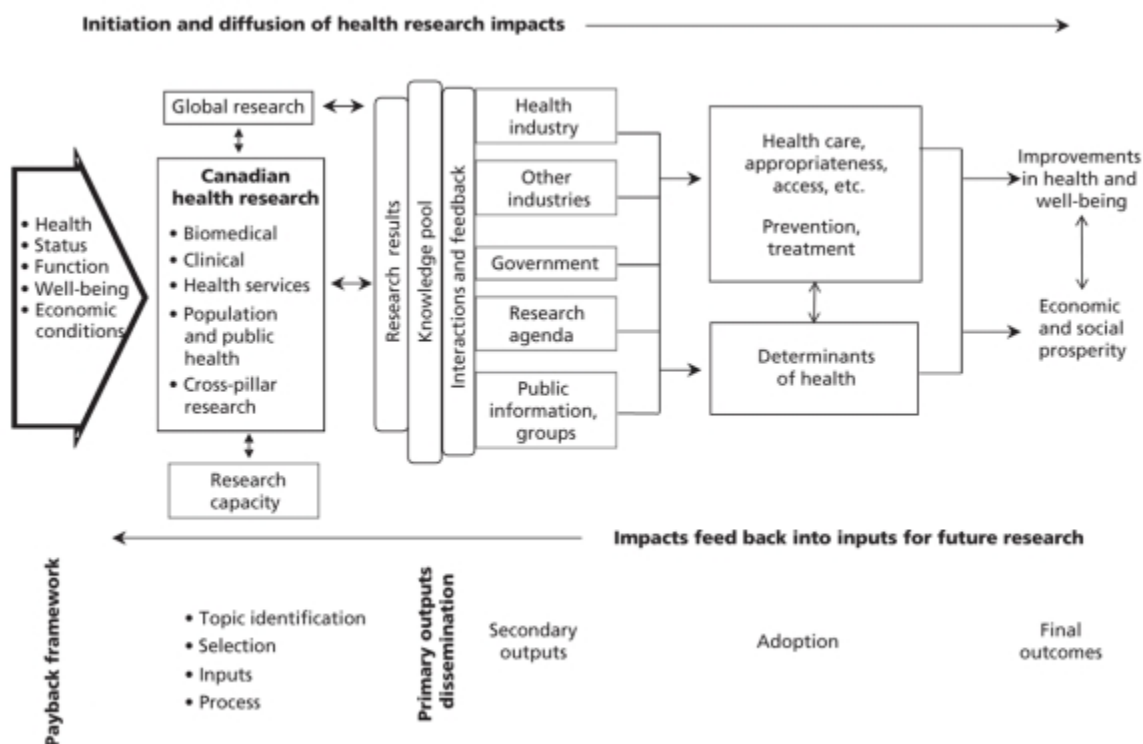
Figure 5. Payback Framework



Donovan and Hanney, 2011. 'The 'Payback Framework' explained' *Research Evaluation*, **20**(3): 181–183

(available at: <http://www.ukcds.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/PaybackFramework.pdf>)

Figure 6. CAHS Framework



Frank and Nason, 2009. 'Health research: measuring the social, health and economic benefits', *CMAJ*, **180**(5): 528–534. (available at: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2645444/>)