



Request for Proposals

Interim Evaluation of the Ontario SPOR SUPPORT Unit

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 an interim evaluation of OSSU. The successful organization is expected to work in conjunction with the OSSU Coordinating Centre and to engage with the 12 OSSU Centres and other OSSU-funded research projects, including OSSU IMPACT Award recipients.

Organizational Overview

Funded in 2013 for 5 years, the Ontario SPOR SUPPORT Unit (OSSU) is a collaboration across 12 leading health Research Centres, 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 (CIHR), 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.

Scope of the Work

OSSU is seeking an external Consultant to undertake an interim evaluation that will cover all the actions and activities of OSSU since its inception in 2013. This interim evaluation is expected to be a formative evaluation that can identify lessons learned from the development of OSSU – with a particular focus on:

- The development of relationships in the Ontario research system for the furthering of SPOR objectives,



- The value-add of bringing OSSU into the existing research excellence in Ontario to produce high-quality patient-oriented research supports,
- The engagement and involvement of key populations in OSSU activities (e.g. patients, decision makers, Indigenous Groups, Francophone Groups),
- The use of Ontario resources to engender a culture change towards patient-oriented research in the province, and
- Any role OSSU has had in steering national or cross-provincial conversations or activities around patient-oriented research.

The evaluation will gather information from OSSU's 12 Research Centres, the Coordinating Centre and OSSU Working Groups on key issues in patient-oriented research, as well as relevant stakeholders outside of OSSU (such as decision makers, patients, etc). 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 representation.

Submitted proposals will outline the organization's track record and capacity to deliver an evaluation report over a 9-month timeframe (July 2016-March 2017).

Approach

OSSU does not have a specific approach to the interim evaluation. It will work with the contractor to ensure that the most appropriate approach is developed for the work. However, certain aspects of the evaluation will need to align with evaluation criteria from OSSU's funders (CIHR, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care -MOHLTC-, Ministry of Research and Innovation -MRI) – these include:

- 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 Canadian Academy of Health Sciences (CAHS) research ROI Framework – Appendix B).
- The use of a multi-method approach to the evaluation that can capture qualitative and quantitative information on OSSU.



- An evaluation approach that can allow OSSU to build on findings from the interim evaluation to deliver on the goals of OSSU and SPOR in the future.

Contractor requirements

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

1. Develop an evaluation approach tailored for OSSU's interim evaluation. This approach should include:
 - The development of a logic model that can link to existing logic models used in the assessment of SPOR Support Units and the investments of OSSU's funders (see Appendix C for an exemplar logic model).
 - A plan to engage/access the different stakeholders involved in OSSU activities across Ontario (including patients, researchers, policy makers, research management, etc.).
 - Multiple methods for evaluation that can capture both quantitative and qualitative information.
 - The ability to create useful information on the development and early implementation of OSSU to provide meaningful insights on inputs, processes and impacts of OSSU (key modifiable aspects) that can inform future OSSU activities to achieve both OSSU and SPOR goals.
2. The successful organization should have a proven track record of providing formative and summative evaluations in the health research field. These applicant's track record should demonstrate:
 - The ability to engage multiple stakeholder groups in the evaluation process.
 - Knowledge of the Ontario health research system.
 - An 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 interim 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. findings are 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 \$100,000) 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.

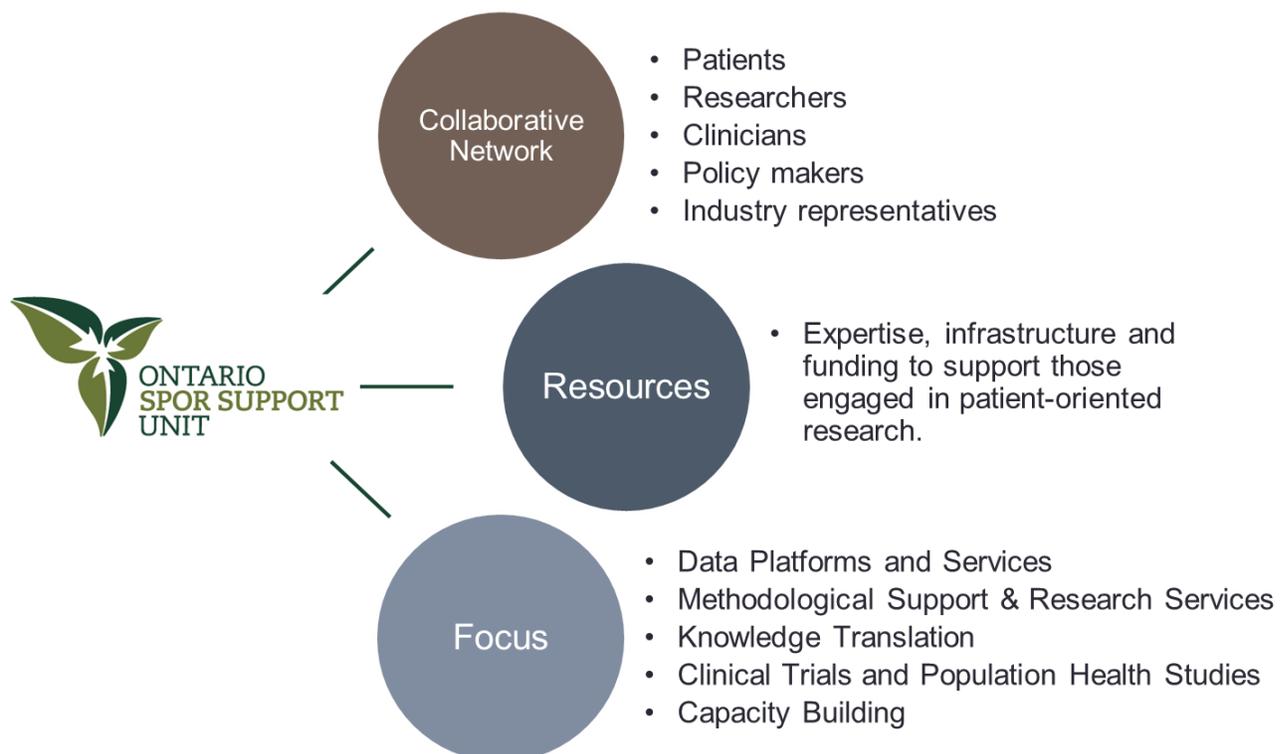
Proposals are to be submitted electronically to OSSU@OSSU.ca by **5:00 pm on Thursday June 30th, 2016**. Please include "OSSU Interim Evaluation" in the subject line. Questions regarding the RFP should be submitted to Eddy Nason (eddynason@ossu.ca) by 5.00pm Monday June 13th, 2016.

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 strategic approach



The OSSU is composed of a Coordinating Centre and 12 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 12 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 12 Research Centres

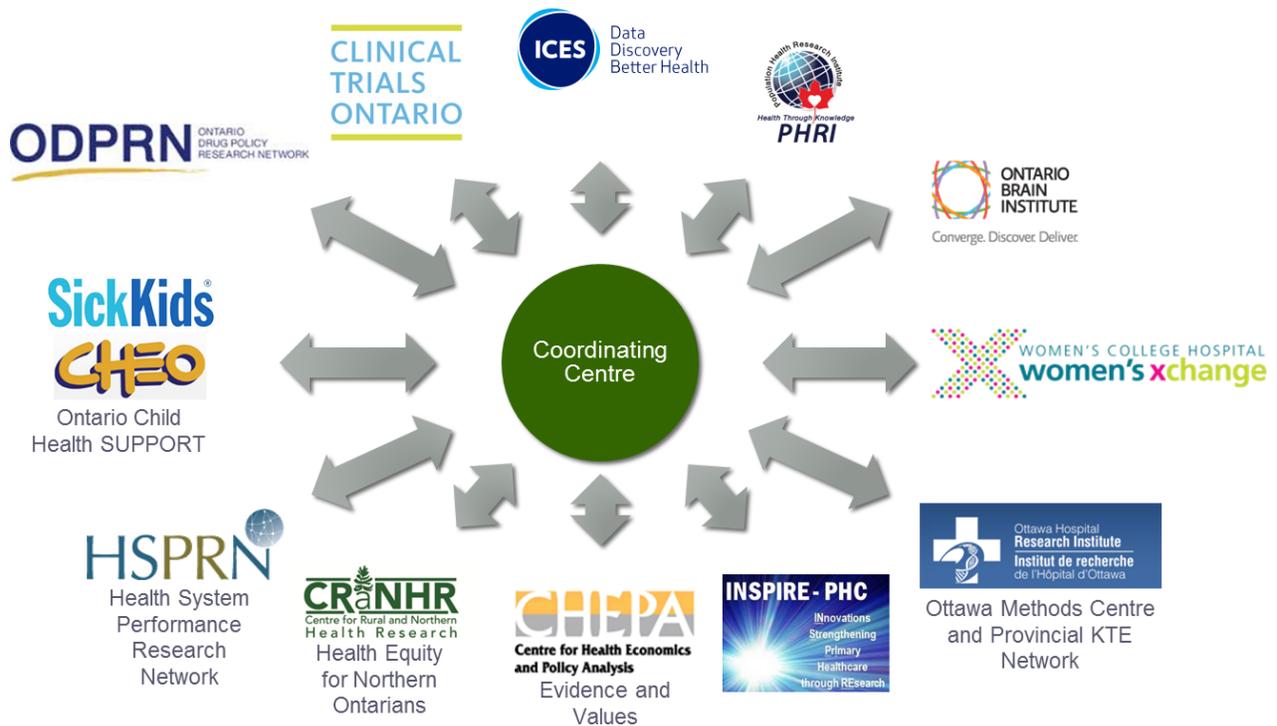
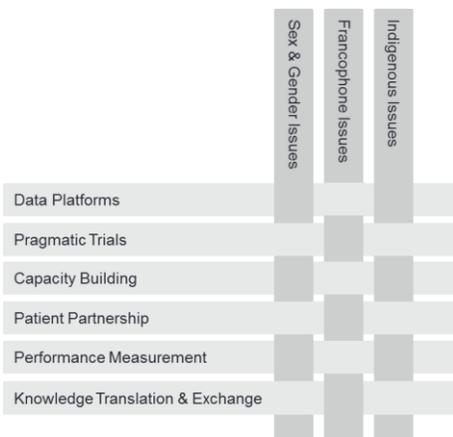


Figure 3. OSSU Working Groups



In addition to these 12 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 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.
- An engaged 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 & 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.

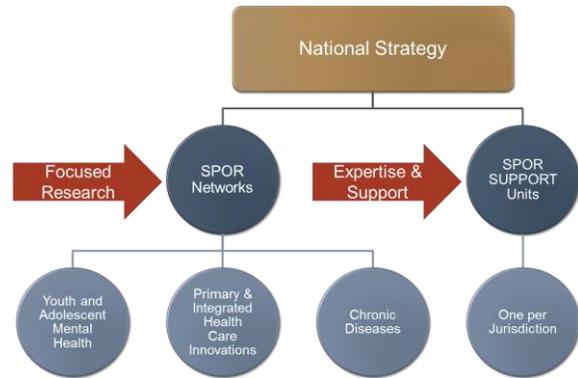


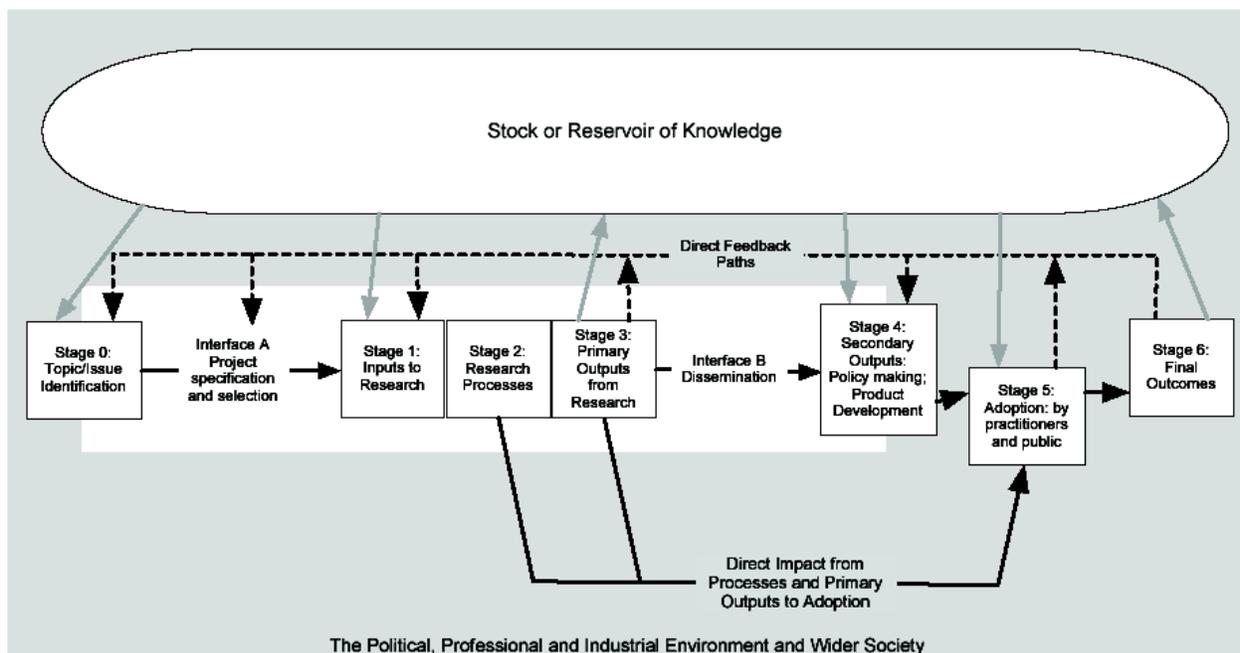
Figure 4. SPOR Components

Appendix B

Existing OSSU evaluation materials

OSSU has not yet conducted any public evaluations, but there are two existing public evaluation frameworks that OSSU has identified in its own literature around evaluation. These are the Payback Framework (figure x) and the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences (CAHS) Framework (figure x). More details on these two frameworks can be found in the links below the figures.

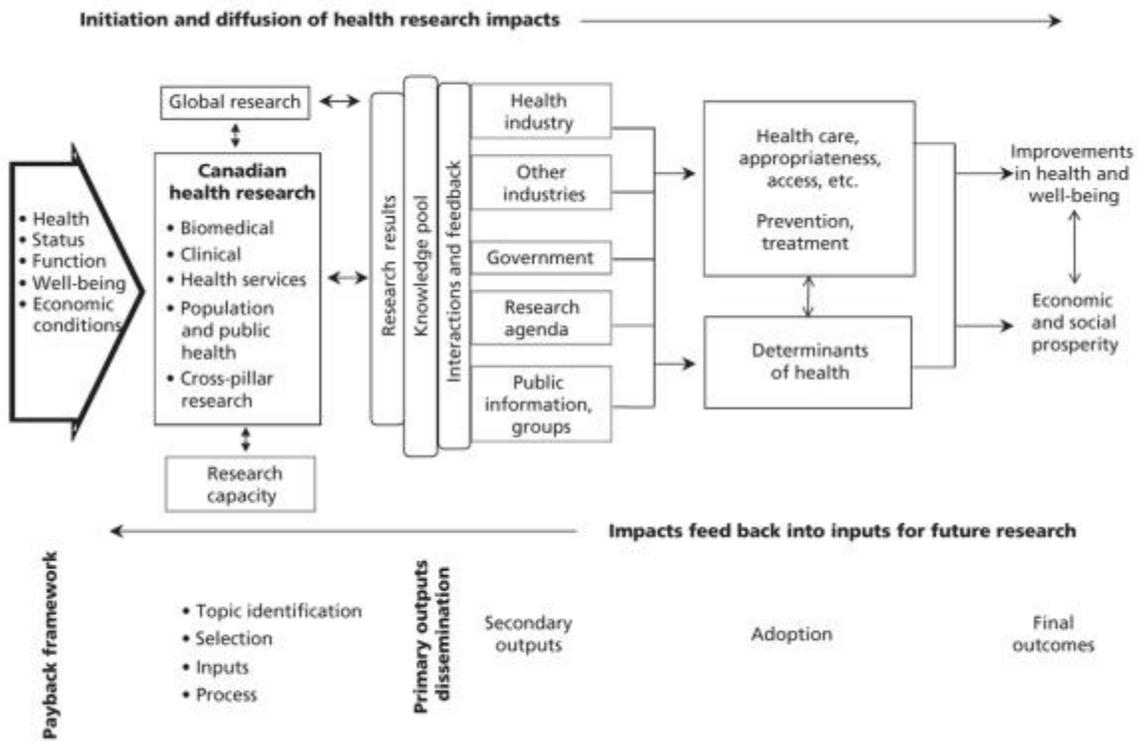
Figure 5. Payback Framework



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

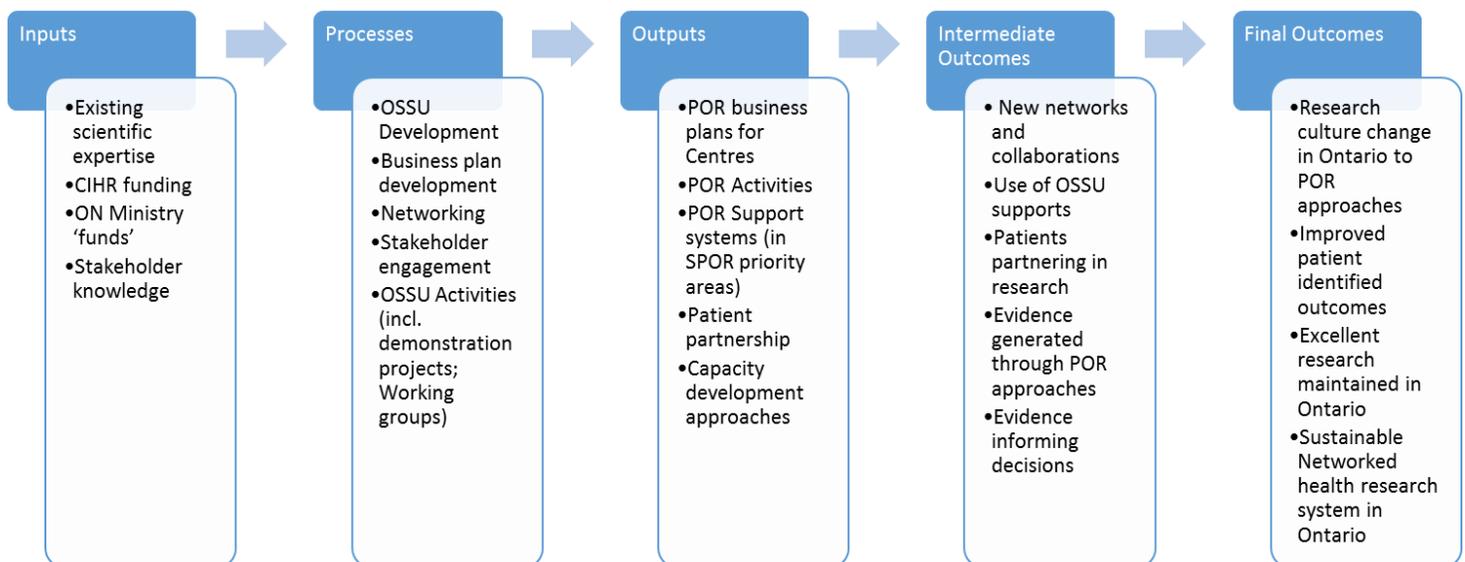


Frank and Nason, 2009. 'Health research: measuring the social, health and economic benefits', *CMAJ*, **180**(5): 528–534. (available at: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2645444/>)

Appendix C

Exemplar Logic Model

Please note this is not the logic model that must be used by the contractor; it is merely an example of the sorts of things OSSU would anticipate might be in the interim evaluation logic model.



This exemplar logic model simply provides an understanding of the sorts of issues that may be contained in a multi-level logic model. It is not prescriptive in either its structure (number of levels) or content (within levels) for any applicant. It is anticipated that the logic model developed for this evaluation would also consider externalities and feedback loops (as well as opportunities OSSU could realize through effective management of activities and KTE).