

2026 Federal Budget

CARL Brief to Department of Finance

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Association des bibliothèques de recherche du Canada

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Summary

- **Recommendation 1:** The government support the report of the External Advisory Panel on the Creation and Dissemination of Scientific Information in French by investing \$40 Million per year into a new Research in French Support and Promotion Fund (RFSPF) and dedicate a portion of funding to support library-led dissemination infrastructure and services.
- **Recommendation 2:** That the government invest \$7M over three years through the Tri-Agency and the Research Support Fund to enable Canadian research libraries to build the repository infrastructure and researcher support services required for successful implementation of the revised Tri-Agency Open Access Policy on Publications.
- **Recommendation 3:** Continue to recognize, support and appropriately invest in Libraries and Archives Canada so that it can fulfill its vital role and obligations in preserving Canada's documentary and cultural heritage, providing accessible knowledge, and serving as the enduring memory of the federal government.
- **Recommendation 4:** That the government acknowledge the critical role that research libraries will play in Canada's National Artificial Intelligence Strategy through national infrastructures, data management, information literacy and AI literacy and create mechanisms that enable research libraries to seek financial support as partners in this work.

Introduction

The Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL) is the leadership organization for Canada's research library community. The Association includes the 29 largest university libraries across the country, and aims to foster a sustainable, inclusive and effective Canadian research ecosystem.

Recommendations

Supporting Open Science and Research Sovereignty

Creation and Dissemination of Scientific Information in French

University libraries are a central pillar of Canada's research ecosystem, supporting the creation, dissemination, preservation, and mobilization of scientific knowledge while advancing open science infrastructure, data sovereignty and data security. This integral work goes beyond national endeavours and supports Canada's participation in critical research funding such as Horizon Europe, ensuring Canadian researchers' engagement in international collaborative projects. Despite the rigorous work of librarians and experts to improve access and research services in French, the ubiquitous use of English as the language of science presents important challenges for the vitality and recognition of knowledge in French.

It is important to highlight the challenges for university libraries raised by the Partenariat des bibliothèques universitaires du Québec (PBUQ). These issues are also experienced by institutions across Canada, particularly in French-speaking and French-speaking minority linguistic contexts.

These challenges are experienced in a number of ways.

- Due to reduced access to French language resources and more generally the limited production of scientific sources in French, university library collections tend to overrepresent English content.
- French research is less discoverable because the databases and search engines commonly used within university communities prioritize English-language content. Furthermore the lack of a Francophone discovery layer between institutional repositories reduces discoverability at the national level and decreases visibility of research published in French across Canadian post-secondary institutions and internationally.

- Due to the prevalence of anglophone institutions, a limited number of university libraries co-finance and co-produce French-language titles, implementing joint funding programs to collectively support open access publication initiatives in French face challenges.
- Digitization projects, open access publishing, the production of open educational resources (OER) or scholarly publishing in French receive little specific support because the projects selected in the funding programs for digitization are usually those with a broad scope (thus targeting the largest volume of users).

We support the recent [report](#) of the External Advisory Panel on the Creation and Dissemination of Scientific Information in French, and highlight Recommendation 2 which encourages the government to provide a New Dedicated Investment of \$40 Million Per Year, into a new “Research in French Support and Promotion Fund (RFSPF)”. While we support some of the items identified through “Stream 2: Dissemination Infrastructure and Knowledge Promotion” we would expand those recommendations to include:

Investing in French-language infrastructure for dissemination through support for bilingual, interoperable and accessible institutional repositories with high quality French-language interfaces. Ensuring their interoperability and discoverability with other national and international infrastructures (such as OpenAIRE, ORCID, Dataverse, etc.) so that French-language content is visible, indexed, and reusable on a global scale.

Providing ongoing support to Érudit for the publication, dissemination, indexing and preservation of research in the humanities and social sciences. This infrastructure benefits Francophone researchers as well as users in the rest of Canada and internationally by providing visibility and access to this research.

Studying and taking advantage of the opportunities offered by cutting-edge artificial intelligence (AI) tools which offer possibilities for the development of fluid infrastructures and functionality in the scholarly ecosystem in both official languages. The rapid rise of AI technologies – including natural language processing models, indexing automation, rich metadata generation, and smart recommendation systems – offer powerful levers to modernize and strengthen management practices, dissemination and access to knowledge in French and English.

Sustaining and strengthening the funding of the Répertoire de vedettes-matière (RVM), the national open access indexing standard in the French language, so as to fully support francophone and bilingual libraries in Canada. The RVM, a central pillar of

documentation, offers five specialized thesauri and is subject to continuous enrichment, including an important work of revision of the vocabulary related to Indigenous peoples. In a context where access to resources in French remains a crucial issue for Francophone communities, increased financial support is necessary to ensure viability, updating and adaptation of the RVM to their specific needs. Enhanced funding represents a concrete means to support linguistic equity, promote access to knowledge in French and promote the vitality of francophone institutions at the national level.

Recognizing the work of librarians as contributors to science by valuing their role in research data management, open science and scientific mediation in French. University and college librarians play a strategic role in the ecosystem of contemporary research. Their contribution goes far beyond traditional documentary support: they actively participate in the construction, organization, preservation and dissemination of knowledge.

Recommendation: The government support the report of the External Advisory Panel on the Creation and Dissemination of Scientific Information in French by investing \$40 Million per year into a new Research in French Support and Promotion Fund (RFSPF) and dedicate a portion of funding to support library-led dissemination infrastructure and services.

Library Infrastructure in Support of Open Access to Publicly Funded Research

The forthcoming [revised Tri-Agency Open Access Policy on Publications](#) represents a significant commitment by Canada's federal granting agencies — CIHR, NSERC, and SSHRC — to ensure that peer-reviewed research arising from public investment is freely and immediately available to all Canadians. Where the earlier policy permitted embargo periods of up to twelve months, the revised policy will require immediate deposit of author-accepted manuscripts or versions of record into a Canadian institutional repository at the time of publication, under an open license.

CARL supports the Tri-Agency's ongoing commitment to open access and believes that this updated policy will harmonize Canada's research landscape by aligning with the [Fonds de recherche du Québec \[FRQ\] revised policy](#) which requires immediate access and the use of open licenses. Furthermore it will better position Canada with leading research funders internationally, including the European Commission's Horizon Europe and the U.S. National Science Foundation..

Delivering on this policy requires more than a mandate; it requires infrastructure and enhanced capacity. Research libraries are going to be crucial to operationalizing the

revised policy. They maintain the repositories and associated technological infrastructure that will facilitate compliance, provide the author support services that guide researchers through rights-retention and licensing requirements, and ensure that deposited materials are discoverable, preserved, and accessible over the long term. Immediate deposit requirements, open-licensing compliance, persistent identifier integration, and metadata quality management all place new and ongoing demands on library staff, systems, and technical infrastructure.

Fortunately, CARL member libraries have robust institutional repository infrastructure in place that is well developed to support these requirements. Canada has been working for the last several years to build a strong network of over 60 institutional repositories that collaborate on the adoption of standards and good practices. In addition, a hosted platform for institutional repositories has recently been launched by [Scholars Portal \(Scholaris\)](#), strengthening the repository network through cost-sharing, increased standardization, and economies of scale.

Despite having a strong foundation upon which to build, the revised Policy will put significant additional strain on current library resources as both the volume and complexity of research deposits into institutional repositories will greatly increase. A targeted investment of \$7 million over three years, to be granted through the [Tri-Agency Research Support Fund](#) would allow libraries to upgrade repository infrastructure, expand author support services, and coordinate nationally to ensure consistent implementation across institutions of all sizes.

Recommendation: That the government invest \$7M over three years through the Tri-Agency and the Research Support Fund to enable Canadian research libraries to build the repository infrastructure and researcher support services required for successful implementation of the revised Tri-Agency Open Access Policy on Publications.

Supporting Libraries and Archives Canada essential function in Canadian society

CARL welcomes the Government of Canada's decision to provide Library and Archives Canada with \$22.4 million in permanent annual funding to stabilize its Access to Information and Privacy functions and to continue Proactive Access Block Review activities. This targeted investment will help LAC sustain progress in reducing overdue requests, improve compliance with legislated timelines and maintain proactive access to historical records through Block Review. However, it does not address reductions affecting other parts of LAC's mandate, including the termination of its proactive declassification function and the Documentary Heritage Communities Program.

ATIP services are only one of the critical liberties LAC enables for Canadians. LAC records the nation's governance. They capture, preserve and share records of enduring value from all branches of government, set standards and rules for record-keeping and provide schedules to departments, agencies and other organizations of the government for the transfer of the records' safekeeping responsibility to the archives and for public release of records. LAC holds archival records for 107 active and over 100 defunct government departments and has worked diligently to address the digital shift. They have established new processes for digital content and seek to benefit from operational efficiencies afforded by digital technologies. Their non-partisan role in the collection, preservation and access to government records, including pro-active disclosure of government information fosters transparency and accountability in government practices and builds citizens' knowledge of their history and culture, an imperative in democratic society.

LAC's mission aligns with government values of respecting universal rights, freedoms and civic duty, strengthening Canadian culture and identity and reinforcing Canadian sovereignty. This is achieved through programs such as [Listen, Hear our Voices](#), a digital initiative to support First Nations, Inuit and Metis governments preserve and revitalize Indigenous languages and cultures. The [Documentary Heritage Communities Program \(DHCP\)](#) was similarly notable, providing support to local histories societies and community archives to document, preserve and make accessible local and regional historical content that otherwise would have been lost. Unfortunately, owing to persistent underfunding, LAC has been forced to cease activities such as proactive disclosure and the DHCP itself has ended. These initiatives demonstrate LAC's commitment to preserving Canadian history, promoting Canadian identity, supporting Canada's research enterprise, and serving the public interest, and their loss underscores the need for sufficient, ongoing funding.

Recommendation: Continue to recognize, support and appropriately invest in Libraries and Archives Canada so that it can fulfill its vital role and obligations in preserving Canada's documentary and cultural heritage, making available critical resources for research, providing accessible knowledge, and serving as the enduring memory of the federal government.

The Critical Role of Research Libraries in Canada's National Artificial Intelligence Strategy: AI for All

The Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL) congratulates the Government of Canada on the launch of Canada's National Artificial Intelligence Strategy: AI for All. This

strategy represents a significant and timely commitment to ensuring the interests of all Canadians are considered in the development, deployment, and adoption of AI, and CARL welcomes the Government's ambition to pursue AI on Canadian terms.

The government is to be commended for engaging in broad consultations prior to authoring the strategy and for continuing to seek feedback on key facets of AI, such as transparency. It is gratifying to see some of the core principles from CARL's consultation submissions, including privacy, literacy and equitable access to AI, included in the strategy. The explicit acknowledgement of Canada's French-language communities and the commitment to ensuring AI systems perform equally well in both official languages also reflects an important dimension of the country's linguistic diversity and cultural identity. Research libraries hold a unique and critical perspective in AI and CARL will continue to engage in current and future AI related consultations, including the [Enhancing trust in AI through increased transparency: Consultation on AI transparency, to bring these perspectives to the conversation](#). Providing opportunities for diverse stakeholders to engage in the development ensures that the strategy and any forthcoming regulations, policies, procedures or guidance will reflect Canadian priorities, values and concerns in relation to AI and will assist the government to identify key partners and effectively allocate resources where needed.

As the strategy moves toward implementation, CARL strongly encourages the Government to formally recognize and engage research libraries as critical partners in achieving its objectives. Canada's research library community brings demonstrated expertise across many of the strategy's core priority areas including AI literacy, trusted research infrastructure, data stewardship, knowledge mobilization, development and implementation of AI agents, and equitable access to information. Furthermore, libraries have adopted AI and are active users. AI is helping Canadian research libraries address complex challenges and meet the evolving needs of researchers, educators and students, in areas such as data analysis, resource discovery and personalized user services. Meaningful engagement with research libraries will strengthen the strategy's implementation and help ensure its ambitious goals are realized for the benefit of all Canadians.

The acknowledgement of Indigenous agency in AI development and its commitment to support Indigenous-led initiatives that reinforce cultural expression and linguistic vitality are welcome. Ensuring this commitment is accompanied by dedicated resources will be essential to meaningful implementation and to research libraries, having long built relationships with indigenous communities to develop respectful stewardship of traditional knowledge.

The National AI Literacy Initiative merits particular recognition. The goal of reaching one million entry-level post-secondary students and training thousands of educators represents a meaningful investment in the informed, critical engagement Canadians will

need to navigate an AI-saturated world. Robust training will be essential not only in economic terms, but to the responsible, ethical use of AI and to countering the serious and growing harms of AI-generated misinformation. Research libraries can both support the critical literacy efforts identified in the strategy and leverage their central role in the research ecosystem to secure the data infrastructure, scholarly resources, and information environments on which AI research and education depend. Moreso, CARL member libraries in particular, collaborate across the country to build and sustain research infrastructure in the collective national interest. By pooling expertise, resources, and capacity across jurisdictions, we advance initiatives that no single institution or province could achieve alone.

The strategy's commitment to trust is one of its most important foundations, and one that research libraries are integral to. Research libraries provide access to, create, organize and preserve the scholarly and scientific record that trusted AI must be grounded in. Greater transparency around the provenance of AI training data — including disclosure of the works used to train models — would strengthen rather than undermine the strategy's trust-building ambitions, and would allow Canadians, creators, and institutions to make more informed choices. Literacy cannot do its work without trustworthy content as its foundation.

As the strategy moves toward implementation, the Government should formally recognize research libraries as eligible partners. CARL and its member institutions look forward to working with the Government to realize the strategy's vision.

Recommendation: That the government acknowledge the critical role that research libraries will play in Canada's National Artificial Intelligence Strategy through national infrastructures, data management, information literacy and AI literacy and create mechanisms that enable research libraries to seek financial support as partners in this work.