

College-Industry Innovation Fund (CIIF) – Frequently Asked Questions

General questions

For the CIIF, what is the definition of “highly qualified personnel”?

For the CIIF, the CFI has adapted its definition of “highly qualified personnel” to include post-secondary students as well as technicians, research assistants, undergraduate students, graduate students and post-doctoral fellows, bearing in mind that these last categories do not necessarily apply to the college environment.

Can the reviewers suggested by the institution come from outside Canada?

Yes. The suggested reviewers could come from Canada and/or another country.

Can the CFI be asked to exclude certain reviewers?

Yes. When the notice of intent is submitted, the institution may send a letter or an email to the CFI, specifying why particular individuals should not be contacted to review the proposal.

When will the funded institutions begin to receive CIIF funding?

The institutions that receive funding from the second CIIF competition will have access to these funds starting in April 2013, provided that they have submitted the documents required to finalize the contribution.

Submission of notices and proposals

Can a notice of intent or proposal be submitted by email or in hard copy by filling out the PDF forms available on the CFI website?

No. The notice of intent, as well as the proposal, must be filled out and submitted using the CFI Awards Management System (CAMS), which can be accessed by copying the following link into your Internet browser:

<https://www2.innovation.ca/sso/signIn.iface?camsLanguage=en>

CAMS is an updated version of the CFI’s existing online forms. It is a secure Web portal that allows eligible research institutions to apply for CFI funding, upload supporting documents, collaborate with other researchers to submit proposals, and view the progress of, and decisions on, their proposals.

What is the difference between a researcher account and an institutional account when it comes to accessing the CFI Awards Management System (CAMS)?

Both account types are accessed from the same CAMS web page.

However, the two account types differ in their rights levels. The institutional account has additional privileges, such as the right to submit the notice of intent or proposal to the CFI. This cannot be done from a researcher account. In addition, an institution can monitor all of its CFI projects through the institutional account.

Institutional accounts are reserved for those who have signed the institutional agreement. These users will get their user name and password from the CFI.

The project leader and key participants are expected to create their own researcher accounts. This allows the project leader to fill out the notice of intent and/or the proposal online, and then submit it to the institution using his or her researcher account.

Each key participant identified in the notice of intent must create a CAMS account. Within your account, you can create a CV. Is it necessary to fill out a CV in order to submit a letter of intent to the CFI?

No. For the CIIF, only a participant's name and affiliation are necessary at the notice of intent stage. At the proposal stage, each key participant will have to provide a short biography (in the appropriate space provided), but not an online CV.

If the key participants identified in the notice of intent or in the proposal have not confirmed their consent to participate in the project, can the form be submitted to the CFI?

No. All key participants must have accepted their participation in the project — using their online accounts — before the notice of intent or proposal can be submitted to the CFI.

CIIF eligibility

How much time will it take to process a CIIF eligibility application?

It will take between one and two months to process an eligibility request. Institutions are asked to email CIIF@innovation.ca for detailed instructions.

When must an institution provide the summary of its Strategic Research Plan?

The institution must fill out the [Summary of Strategic Research Plan form](#) and send a paper copy to the CFI, postmarked prior to the notice of intent deadline.

If an institution plans to participate in two competition streams, does it need to provide the same strategic plan to both NSERC and the CFI?

Yes. The institution must provide the same document to both NSERC and the CFI.

Does an institution have to send the original copy of the *Institutional agreement* to the CFI or is a digital version sufficient?

The institution must send the original copy of the *Institutional agreement* — not just a digital version — to the CFI, bearing the signatures of the authorized agents.

Can an institution begin writing its stream 1 proposal to the CFI before submitting the notice of intent?

No. The institution must first submit its notice of intent online before it can access the proposal form. The CIIF-stream 1 proposal, as well as the PDF version, will be available online by mid-June 2012.

Eligibility of costs and purchases

Will contributions be retroactive?

Yes, but only as of April 1, 2011. To be eligible, in-kind contributions from partners must have been received, and expenditures incurred, by the institution on or after April 1, 2011. Expenditures are considered incurred once goods are received, services have been rendered or work has been performed.

Can the salary of a technician in charge of the installation of equipment be included in the list of infrastructure costs?

Yes. Salaries (including benefits) paid to professional, technical and management personnel, to consultants as well as to contractors participating directly in the design, engineering, manufacturing, installation, construction or renovation of infrastructure are eligible. Furthermore, the initial training of the principal operators of the research infrastructure is also eligible. Please consult Section 4.5 of the [CFI policy and program guide](#) for further information about eligible costs.

Are salaries of the students participating in the research projects described in the proposal eligible?

No. The remuneration of students and researchers is not eligible. In addition, CFI funding cannot be used to relieve the teaching load of the faculty members.

Is minor renovation and construction work eligible?

Yes. However, only renovations or construction work that is essential for accommodating and using the requested research infrastructure is eligible. Costs associated with the installation of a ventilation system that is required to operate the equipment and the addition of a greenhouse attached to an existing building are examples of eligible costs. On the other hand, the construction of new buildings and major renovations are not eligible. The CFI expects that the costs associated with renovation and construction work would represent a reasonable proportion of the total cost of the project. The institution should contact its CFI Senior Programs Officer prior to submitting the notice of intent in order to discuss the eligibility of its renovation and construction work.

Does the institution need to include the bids/estimates for the purchase of the planned equipment with its proposal?

In preparing to submit a proposal, the institution needs to have estimates of the costs of equipment and renovations/construction in its files in order to be able to forecast the funding package. Although these estimates should not be provided along with the proposal, institutions must be able to provide them to the CFI upon request. The institution must ensure that the costs shown for each of the proposed items in the proposal are as close as possible to their fair market value.

Before purchasing any item, institutions must follow competitive bid procedures, in compliance with their current requests for tender and purchasing policies. This requirement needs to be clearly understood from the outset. In order to ensure that they will be able to launch a competitive bid process before purchasing the eligible items, institutions should not, under any circumstances, commit to purchasing an item from a supplier while they are soliciting confirmation of pricing at the proposal stage.

Please consult Section 6.2 of the [*CFI policy and program guide*](#) for further information on required documentation.

Is the origin of the supplier taken into consideration when evaluating the proposal (e.g., Canadian or international supplier)?

No. Although the CFI encourages purchasing Canadian equipment, it is not always possible to procure certain specialized R & D equipment in Canada.

Eligible projects

Would a new project funded by the CCI-IE program (five years) at the beginning of 2012 be eligible for the CIIF?

Yes. It would be eligible for stream 1 of the CIIF.

Does the project leader need to be a member of the faculty of the applicant institution?

Any individual qualified to carry out research can be designated as project leader.

Could a *Centre collégial de transfert de technologie (CCTT)* apply directly to the CIIF? Could a project leader come from a CCTT?

A CCTT must submit a proposal to the CIIF through its affiliated college. In a case where the CCTT is affiliated with more than one college, only one can be designated as the applicant institution, provided that it is eligible for CFI support. The proposal will have to be signed by the director general or any other authorized signatory of the college — not by the CCTT. If the project leader and/or key participants are from the CCTT, they can indicate their affiliation with the CCTT in the proposal.

Does the proposal need to focus on a specific area of R & D (e.g., industrial design) or can it focus on several research areas (e.g., industrial design and health)?

The institution must be in a position to determine, from a strategic point of view, the sector of activity or the field of research that would benefit most from a large-scale investment in infrastructure. The activities and the projects described in the proposal must be structured around a common line of research. The CFI will not accept a proposal that groups together several projects from unrelated domains (e.g., industrial design and health).

Partners

Is it necessary for private-sector partners to fund part of the requested infrastructure?

No. Although the participation of at least one private-sector partner in the infrastructure project may be essential, that private-sector partner is not required to provide matching funds for the infrastructure, either in cash or in kind. The CFI does, however, expect private-sector partners to be actively involved in the project from the proposal submission stage to the end of the project.

Can a college involve partners other than the private sector (e.g., universities, hospitals, etc.)?

Yes. The participation of other sectors (e.g., public, non-profit) is encouraged since it can increase benefits on a local, regional and national scale. But since the objective of the program is to encourage private-sector innovation, the CFI expects that the majority of partners will be from the private sector. If additional collaborators and partners participate, they should be mentioned in the proposal.

Is it possible to form partnerships and submit a joint proposal with other institutions that are eligible for CIIF? If so, would each institution be required to provide its own strategic research plan?

The main objective of the CIIF is to boost the ability of colleges to support innovation in areas of the private sector that are strategically important for a given college. If an eligible institution wishes to collaborate on the same research theme with another institution, and this collaboration proves to be beneficial to the project, the institutions can submit a joint proposal, provided that the amount requested from the CFI is less than \$800,000.

In such cases, each institution must provide the CFI with a summary of their strategic research plan to demonstrate that the research theme is strategically important to each of them. In addition, only one of the institutions would be designated as the applicant institution.

If the participation of the funding partner is conditional on obtaining funding, is the proposal eligible?

Yes. If the proposal to the CIIF is funded, the institution will have nine months following the announcement of the results to guarantee the partners' contributions.

Are collaborations with large companies accepted in the same way as SMEs?

Yes. The goal of the CIIF is to support partnerships between colleges and companies working in all areas of economic activity, regardless of their size.

In terms of the CFI's funding formula, if 40 percent comes from the CFI and another 40 percent comes from the province, can the remaining 20 percent come from other grant programs?

Yes. The remaining 20 percent can come from other provincial grants, the institution, non-profit organizations, private corporations and businesses, or federal ministries and government organizations (other than the three federal research funding agencies — NSERC, CIHR and SSHRC). Private sector cash contributions declared in the CCI-IE grant application, however, can be included

in the 60 percent matching funds, provided that they are used to cover CFI-eligible infrastructure costs.

Suggested Reviewers

From where should the suggested reviewers originate?

Applicants are asked to suggest at least six reviewers who they believe are especially well qualified to review the proposal. Suggested reviewers can originate from any sector (e.g., University, College, Not-for profit, Government, Industry), however, they should not be in any position of real or perceived conflict of interest, as defined below. The CFI aims to have expert committees with representatives from all stakeholder communities (e.g. private and public sectors); therefore, institutions are encouraged to propose reviewers from multiple sectors.

Note: The decision whether or not to use the suggestions remains with CFI staff.

What constitutes a conflict of interest?

The following are considered to be conflicts of interest:

- current or recent, within the last six years, collaborators
- supervisors of the project leader or the principal users
- reviewers originating from the lead or collaborating institutions or from the industries or organizations involved in the project.

Infrastructure Operating Fund

What is the Infrastructure Operating Fund (IOF) and does it apply to the CIIF?

The Infrastructure Operating Fund (IOF) contributes to operating and maintenance costs in order to ensure optimal use of CFI-funded infrastructure. All projects approved by the CFI for the CIIF will be eligible for the IOF. All eligible projects generate an IOF allocation of 30 percent of the maximum CFI amount approved at award finalization. Once the infrastructure is operational, and based on operational requirements, the institution must make an annual request to the CFI to obtain IOF payments. For a list of eligible costs for the IOF, please consult Section 4.6 of the [*CFI policy and program guide*](#).

Are IOF allocations part of the CIIF \$25 million budget?

No. The CFI has a budget of \$7.5 million, in addition to the \$25 million, to cover IOF allocations associated with the CIIF.

Reporting on Performance Indicators

How are the following technology transfer indicators defined?

Patents: patents issued either in Canada or elsewhere. If a patent is granted in more than one jurisdiction, it should be counted as one patent.

Other IP rights: trademarks, industrial designs or copyrights (excluding patents).

Spin-offs: new companies derived from the CCI-IE/CFI funding.

How are the following knowledge transfer indicators defined?

Impact on protocols: contributions to any existing protocols or new protocols developed. For example, protocols could be a novel scientific methodology or course of medical treatment, or a set of standardized procedures for transmitting or storing data, especially those used in regulating data transmission between computers or peripherals.

Impact on public policies: contributions to any existing public policies (e.g. laws/program measures) or new public policies developed.

Impact on environmental benefits: contributions to any existing regulations/guidelines/norms related to the environment or new regulations/guidelines/norms related to the environment developed.