



College-Industry Innovation Fund

Stream 2: Research infrastructure associated with an application for a College and Community Innovation (CCI)¹ Program – Build Innovation Enhancement (Build IE) Grant, competition 18

Call for Proposals

Description

The Canada Foundation for Innovation's (CFI) College-Industry Innovation Fund (CIIF) seeks innovative projects that will enhance the capacity of colleges to support business innovation in Canada by providing them with state-of-the-art, industry-relevant research infrastructure to foster partnerships with the private sector in specific areas of strategic priority for the institution.

The CFI, along with the federal funding agencies, recognize the need and opportunity to enhance the existing applied research and technology capacity in Canadian colleges, and to maximize its impact. The federal funding agencies strive to coordinate their efforts

¹ The College and Community Innovation (CCI) Program is managed by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) in collaboration with the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

and resources to maximize the impact of their funding, increase value for their deployed resources and streamline the application process for colleges, partners and investigators. To that end, the CFI participates in the [CCI Program](#) to foster partnerships between colleges and the private sector that will lead to business innovation locally, regionally and nationally.

This joint initiative provides an opportunity for colleges to acquire infrastructure for their faculty to undertake the competitive and innovative applied research and technology development projects described in their CCI-Build IE proposal. It aims to foster partnerships between colleges and the private sector, regardless of the size of the enterprise, in order to increase business innovation. It allows colleges to apply for a comprehensive funding package that supports both research costs (through a CCI-Build IE grant) and research infrastructure (through funding from the CFI's College-Industry Innovation Fund – Stream 2) in a specific area of strategic priority for an institution.

Colleges should exercise judgement when offering services to industrial partners using CFI-funded infrastructure, particularly when those services might be in direct competition with other private-sector firms offering similar services. Such proposals do not meet the intent or objectives of the CIIF.

As the aim of this initiative is to enhance a college's existing applied research capacity, only CCI-Build IE proposals can include a request for research infrastructure from the CFI's College-Industry Innovation Fund. Colleges securing an entry-level CCI-IE grant are not eligible to receive CFI funding under this initiative.

The level of involvement of industrial partners is a key consideration in funding decisions. Close collaboration between the college and private-sector partners is considered essential to enabling business innovation. The CFI expects private-sector partners to be actively engaged throughout the course of the applied research project(s), including at the application stage. The CFI expects proposals to clearly demonstrate the commitment from private-sector partners through active participation and contribution to the applied research projects and their anticipated benefits.

While the fund supports partnerships between colleges and the private sector, additional participation from end- or ultimate-users from other sectors (e.g. public and non-profit), where appropriate, is encouraged as it may broaden the impact of the proposal at the local, regional and national scale.

Eligibility

Eligible institutions

Only colleges eligible to receive CFI funding can apply to the College-Industry Innovation Fund. Those who are not currently eligible to receive CFI funding are encouraged to reach out to the CFI as early as possible. The necessary documentation must be provided to the CFI no later than by the Letter of Intent deadline. Refer to the CFI [Policy and program guide](#) for additional information on the documentation required. Depending on the information initially provided, some of the colleges that are already eligible may be required to provide updated documentation by the same deadline. To request

eligibility to apply for CFI funds or to verify the eligibility status, contact the CFI at Eligibility.Admissibilite@innovation.ca.

To be eligible to apply for the College-Industry Innovation Fund, colleges must also provide the CFI with a summary of their most recent strategic research plan by the full application deadline. Please refer to the CFI [Policy and program guide](#) for additional information on the contents of the strategic research plan.

Eligible infrastructure

This fund is intended to support substantial research infrastructure that will further enhance the existing applied research or technology development capability at the college. An eligible infrastructure project involves the acquisition or development of research infrastructure. Construction or renovations essential for housing the CFI infrastructure are also deemed eligible.

The infrastructure must be used to carry out applied research and technology development activities with private-sector partners. The infrastructure may be used for training purposes only in cases where the training is articulated around an applied research or technology development project aimed at business innovation.

Colleges planning to request substantial advanced computing infrastructure should consult with Compute Canada to discuss the scope and needs of the proposed project. The CFI expects all institutions to consult with Compute Canada when planning to request advanced research computing infrastructure. For such cases, please visit [Compute Canada's website](#) for information on the established process to facilitate collaboration with institutions. The CFI expects that new or additional research computing resources that are funded through this competition and that cost more than \$100,000 will normally be housed, managed and operated by Compute Canada.

For infrastructure items to be considered eligible, in-kind and cash contributions from eligible partners and suppliers as well as cash expenditures by the institution must take place no more than 12 months prior to the submission of the proposal. Expenditures are considered incurred when goods are received, services have been rendered or work has been performed.

Please refer to the CFI [Policy and program guide](#) for additional information on eligible costs.

Eligible infrastructure location

CFI-funded infrastructure is normally located at an eligible institution. Infrastructure may be located outside an eligible institution when it can be shown that this is the most effective way to proceed, providing the eligible institution retains majority interest and exercises *de facto* control over the use of the research infrastructure. In addition, the proposed activities and requested infrastructure should not duplicate existing services or facilities in the region, though they should respond to industry needs.

Funding

The CFI will fund up to 40 percent of a project's eligible infrastructure costs.

Colleges can submit up to two proposals per competition under each stream of the CIIF and request up to \$1 million per proposal from the CFI. In the event that a college decides to submit more than one proposal per competition, the two must not fall within the same strategic applied research area.

The CFI will contribute to the operating and maintenance (O&M) costs of funded projects through its Infrastructure Operating Fund (IOF). The IOF allocated will be equivalent to 30 percent of the CFI contribution to the capital cost of projects funded in this competition. Since the IOF is not intended to cover the entire cost of operating and maintaining the infrastructure, institutions must demonstrate in their CIIF proposals that sufficient operating and maintenance resources will be available to capitalize on the full potential of the infrastructure over its useful life².

Contributions from eligible partners

The CFI funds up to 40 percent of the cost of the infrastructure in a successful proposal. For the remaining 60 percent, we encourage institutions to work with potential funding partners at an early stage in the planning and development of proposals. The following partners are eligible to contribute to the infrastructure project:

- Institutional funds, trust funds or foundations;
- Firms and corporations;
- Departments and agencies of the federal government;
- Departments and agencies of provincial, territorial and municipal governments;
- Non-profit organizations; and,
- Individuals.

Only cash or in-kind contributions made to the eligible costs of a project are accepted as eligible partner contributions. Contributions from research partners may be included only if the funds are for the acquisition of CFI-eligible infrastructure. **Cash or in-kind contributions for applied research activities (excluding the purchase of infrastructure) are not considered eligible partner contributions.**

Please note that funding from the federal research funding agencies (Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)), including funding from the College and Community Innovation Program, cannot be used to leverage CFI infrastructure funding. For more information about eligible and ineligible cash and in-kind partner contributions, please refer to the CFI [Policy and program guide](#).

² The useful life of the research infrastructure is considered to be the period of time over which the infrastructure is expected to provide benefits and be usable for its intended purpose, factoring in normal repairs and maintenance.

Application process

The application process involves the following two steps:

Letter of Intent

Colleges must submit the CCI-Build IE Letter of Intent as per the program guidelines (NSERC Form 186). If a college is planning to request CFI infrastructure along with CCI-Build IE funding, they must include a brief description of the infrastructure to be requested (e.g. equipment list, renovations, etc.) and the projected CFI amount requested in the CCI-Build IE Letter of Intent budget justification section. The CCI-Build IE Letter of Intent form must be submitted directly to NSERC.

Proposal

Colleges invited to submit a CCI-Build IE full application form must complete and submit the CFI infrastructure component of their proposal using the online forms available through the CFI Awards Management System (CAMS). The CFI will forward the completed CFI proposal to NSERC, where it will be combined with the full Build IE grant application for a joint review.

The CFI proposal form includes a project module and a finance module. The project module includes information about the proposed project and how it meets the objectives and criteria of the competition while the finance module contains information pertaining to the budgetary details of the proposal and a budget justification for the infrastructure items requested. Detailed instructions can be found in the document called [College-Industry Innovation Fund – Stream 2: Guidelines for completing a proposal](#) available on the [CFI website](#).

Timeline for CCI-Build IE Grants competition 18

Dates	Activity
May 21, 2020 - Revised to June 30, 2020 due to COVID-19	Deadline to submit the CCI-Build IE Letter of Intent
August 2020	Invitation to submit proposals
October 22, 2020 - Revised to November 13, 2020 due to COVID-19	Deadline for the submission of proposals
March 2021	CFI Board decisions on the infrastructure component

Review criteria

In accordance with the review criteria for Build IE grants and the CIIF, proposals are judged in the context of the environment in which the college operates, including its available resources and opportunities, and the commitment of the college to undertake the project. Participation of research partners from the private sector and contributions to business innovation are of primary importance.

The proposals submitted to this joint NSERC-CFI initiative are assessed against both the Build IE grants and CIIF review criteria. As some of these overlap, only a subset of the usual CIIF criteria need to be addressed in the CFI component of the proposal. These have been regrouped under a single “infrastructure” criterion, as follows:

Infrastructure:

- Existing applied research capacity will be further enhanced by the requested infrastructure and associated institutional commitments.
- The requested infrastructure plays an essential role in creating and enhancing collaborations with industrial partners.
- The infrastructure will be optimally used and maintained to ensure continued collaborations with, and relevance to, the partners.

The infrastructure criterion is associated with a number of aspects that the applicant must address in the proposal; refer to the [College-Industry Innovation Fund – Stream 2: Guidelines for completing a proposal](#) for more information regarding these required aspects.

Review process

A joint review process has been developed between the CFI and NSERC to lessen the workload for applicants and reviewers. Throughout this process, the CFI will provide clarification when necessary to reviewers and committee members on CFI’s policies and procedures.

The CFI does an initial review of the infrastructure component of the proposal for eligibility and completeness, and may request additional information from colleges if necessary. The CFI component of the proposal is then combined with the full Build IE grant application. These combined proposals undergo the same two-stage review process as all other Build IE grant applications. In the first stage, each proposal is reviewed by external reviewers. In the second stage, the evaluations of the external reviewers are taken under consideration by the multidisciplinary CCI Review Committee which makes the final funding recommendations. In both stages, combined proposals are assessed against the Build-IE and CIIF review criteria.

Funding decisions and award finalization

NSERC and CFI will make funding decisions following each agency’s approval process. NSERC will make the final decisions on the research support portion of proposals submitted to the joint initiative. The funding recommendations of the CCI Review Committee for the infrastructure portion of the application are presented to the CFI Board of Directors for their consideration and final decision. In no case will a CFI award be made independently of an NSERC award. As such, the CFI component will not be funded if the CCI-Build IE portion is not funded by NSERC.

Colleges are informed of the CFI Board of Directors decision shortly after it is made. Successful proposals are also listed on the CFI website, [Innovation.ca](#). For each proposal, reviewer comments received during the joint review process and a report summarizing the CCI Review Committee’s consensus assessment of the CFI component are made available to colleges.

Both organizations will manage its funding according to its own policies and processes. For projects awarded CFI funding, it is the responsibility of recipient colleges to submit the necessary documents to the CFI in order to finalize the contribution and establish payment schedules in accordance with CFI guidelines (please refer to the CFI [Policy and program guide](#)).

Public announcements

The CFI works closely with NSERC on funding announcements for infrastructure associated with CCI-Build IE grants. In most cases, announcements are organized in collaboration with a recipient institution. Public announcements provide institutions, their researchers and partners, along with government representatives, the media and the CFI, opportunities to highlight the applied research in their communities. Following each national CFI funding announcement, colleges are encouraged to work with local and national media to promote the benefits and impacts of this applied research to Canadians.

Reporting requirements

Colleges will be required to submit periodic progress reports to both the CFI and NSERC as well as annual financial reports to the CFI for funded infrastructure projects. Details on the reports required by the CFI will be communicated to colleges prior to finalization of the award. Please consult the [NSERC-CCI website](#) for details on the NSERC reporting requirements.

Use and disclosure of personal information provided to the joint initiative

All personal information collected by the joint initiative that is related to researchers, company and college employees, community members and others is used to review applications and to administer and monitor awards. Applicants must comply with [CCI program requirements](#) and with the [CFI policy](#) related to the use and disclosure of personal information. The three participating agencies (NSERC, SSHRC and CIHR) and the CFI share information as required to manage the CCI-IE program. By signing and submitting their CCI-IE and CIIF applications to NSERC and CFI, researchers agree to this use and disclosure of their personal information.