College-Industry Innovation Fund – Stream 2

Guidelines for completing a proposal

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

These guidelines are intended for researchers and college administrators invited to submit a proposal to the Canada Foundation for Innovation's (CFI) College-Industry Innovation Fund (CIIF) – Stream 2. This stream applies to research infrastructure associated with a grant application to the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada's (NSERC) College and Community Innovation – Build Innovation Enhancement (CCI-Build IE) program. Proposals will only be accepted from colleges invited to submit a proposal following the review of the Letter of Intent for the CCI-Build IE program.

You must use the CFI Awards Management System ([CAMS](#)) to prepare, share and submit proposals for CIIF competitions. Links to the technical instructions for using CAMS, and other useful resources, are listed below.

Helpful links

- [CIIF – Stream 2 Call for Proposals](#)
- [Getting started with CAMS](#)
- [Policy and program guide](#)

Submitting a proposal

If you want to submit a proposal to a CIIF – Stream 2 competition use the submission process outlined below.

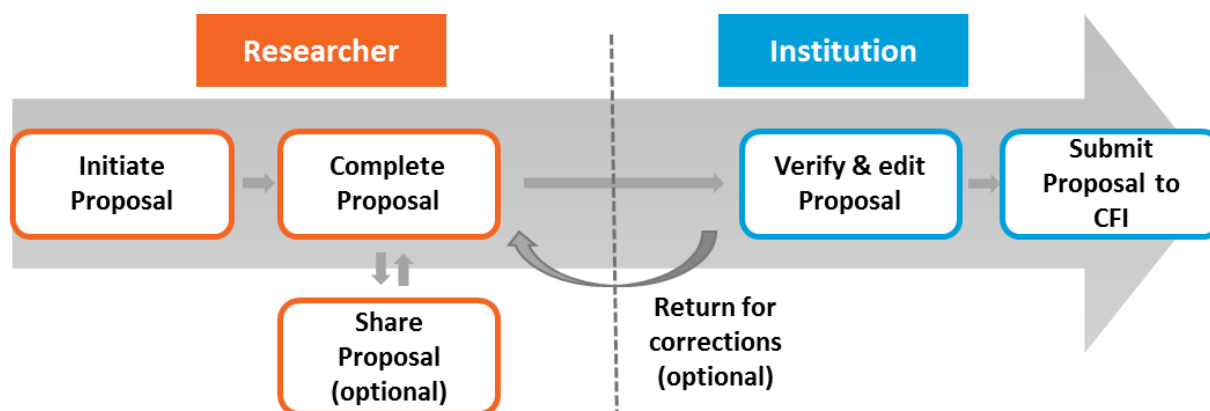Figure 1 shows the steps to submit a proposal in CAMS.

Figure 1 – Proposal submission process

Creating an account

You need a CAMS account to submit a proposal. Follow the instructions on the CAMS website to create one. Once the account is created, you can sign in to CAMS and access the researcher dashboard where you can access all the forms and information you need to manage your proposals and awards.

Creating a new proposal when the form becomes available
From the CAMS Researcher dashboard, you can create proposals for any CFI competition. For this competition, select "College-Industry Innovation Fund – Funding for research infrastructure associated with a CCI-Build IE grant application." Note that **if you initiate a new proposal, you will automatically become the project leader.** Once you've entered essential information like the project title, applicant institution and language of the proposal, you can save the proposal and return to it at a later date.

To facilitate the merge process of the CCI-Build IE full application and the CFI proposal, both components should display the same project leader name and project title.

Adding key participants and sharing a proposal
You can include other key participants in the proposal provided they have created their own CAMS account (see Chapter 3 for more information on key participants). Once you've added them, the key participants will receive an email invitation to participate in the proposal. They must then sign in to CAMS and accept participation in the proposal from their Researcher dashboard. All key participants must accept participation in the proposal before the college administrators can submit it to the CFI.

Key participants will automatically have read-only access to the proposal through their Researcher dashboard. You can also share the proposal with other CAMS account holders, such as your college administrator designated as the CFI liaison, through the project sharing module. You can give different levels of access — from read access to update access — to other users. If you share the proposal with a user who also has access to the Institutional dashboard in CAMS, they must click on "Researcher dashboard" in the left navigation bar before they can access the proposal that is shared with them.

Completing a proposal
Complete all sections of the proposal as outlined in Chapter 3.

Once you've completed all the sections and they are validated by the CAMS system, the proposal status will display as "Completed" (see Figure 2 for statuses). This makes it available to your college administrators who must approve and submit it to the CFI.

Once you've submitted the proposal to your college's administration, you can read it, but you will no longer be able to modify its content.

Action	Proposal status
Project leader creates proposal	In progress
Project leader completes proposal	Completed by researcher
College administrators verify the proposal	Verified by the institution
College administrator with submission privileges submits the proposal to the CFI	Submitted to the CFI

Figure 2 – Proposal statuses in CAMS

Verifying and editing a proposal
This step is done by college administrators through the CAMS institutional dashboard. They will have access to any proposal created by researchers from their college.

Once you have submitted the proposal to your college's administration, they must verify its content and edit it if necessary through the Institutional dashboard. College administrators will also have the option to return the proposal back to the project leader for modifications.

Submitting a proposal to the CFI
Once it is verified, the proposal can now be submitted to the CFI through the Institutional dashboard by an administrator who has submission privileges. Once it is submitted to the CFI, administrators at your college can read it, but they will no longer be able to modify its content. Hardcopies of the proposals are not required.

We will provide the completed CIIF – Stream 2 proposals to NSERC, where they will be combined with the full CCI-Build IE applications for a joint review.

CHAPTER 2 - GUIDELINES FOR ATTACHMENTS

It is important that all proposals conform to the instructions provided on the electronic proposal form as well as those in this guide. We strongly recommended that you carefully review the forms before submitting them to make sure they are complete and that they comply with the guidelines.

Pagination
CAMS will automatically add page numbers to proposals. Do not add page numbers to attachments before you upload them.

Page formatting
Expert reviewers and the CCI-Build IE review committee assess the electronic versions of proposals. It is therefore imperative that you properly and consistently format your proposals. Format attachments in a standard, single-column layout on an 8.5" x 11" page. Avoid using a two-column or landscape format since it can make it difficult to read electronically.

When you're selecting a font for the proposal form, remember that legibility is paramount. **A 12-point, black-coloured font and single line spacing (six lines per inch) with no condensed type or spacing is best.**

Additionally, we expect attachments to conform to the following guidelines:

- Header: Indicate the lead institution in the top left, the title of the section in the middle and the project number on the top right of each page.
- Footer: Do not include any information in the footer as this area will be used for automatic page numbering.
- Page margin: Insert a margin of no less than 2.5 centimetres (1 inch) around the page. The header may be within the margin.
- File format and size: You can only upload PDF files. Convert documents in other formats to PDF and make sure they are not encrypted or password-protected before you upload them. The file size must not exceed twenty megabytes (20 MB).

You must adhere to the page formatting guidelines and requirements above so that your proposal is easy for reviewers to read and so that no applicant has an unfair advantage by using smaller type, line spacing or margins to provide more text in the proposal. If your proposal does not comply with the above recommendations, we may return it to your college administrators for revision.

CHAPTER 3 - PROPOSAL STRUCTURE

The proposal must clearly present the merits of the proposed CIIF project. Provide enough information so that reviewers can evaluate the proposal in accordance with the assessment criterion established by the CFI.

The proposal consists of four separate CAMS modules:

- **Project module**: Provides information about the proposed project and how it meets the objectives and criterion of the CIIF – Stream 2 competition, as well as a justification for the infrastructure items requested in the finance module;
- **Collaborating institutions module**: Identifies other CFI-eligible institutions that will receive requested infrastructure, if applicable.
- **Finance module**: Provides information pertaining to the budgetary details of the proposal.
- **Suggested reviewers module**: Identifies individuals who are qualified to provide an informed and impartial review of the proposal.

The online forms will dictate the maximum number of characters that can be included in each section and the page limits for uploaded files.

Project module
The project module consists of the following sections:

- Project information
- Key participants
- Assessment criterion and budget justification (attachment)
- Financial resources for operation and maintenance

Project information
The project information section captures basic information about the project such as the title, applicant institution and keywords.

Key participants
List up to five key participants, including the project leader associated with the proposal. These participants can be private-sector partners, or associated with your college or other organizations, but must be essential to the proposed activities leading to business innovation.

Key participants in the CIIF proposal must be the same as the ones indicated in the CCI-Build IE proposal.

Your college will not be able to submit the proposal before all key participants have confirmed their participation. Key participants automatically gain read access to the proposal.

While the number of key participants is limited to five, other people can participate in the project. Expert reviewers and the CCI-Build IE review committee will expect the roles and contributions of each participant to be clearly explained in the "Assessment Criterion" attachment of the proposal.

Assessment criterion (maximum 10 pages)
For this section of the online form, upload a PDF document that contains key information on how the proposal meets the objectives and the established assessment criterion, and a budget justification for the infrastructure items requested. Make sure the document follows the guidelines on format, spacing and font use detailed in Chapter 2 of this document.

The assessment criterion contains a number of aspects that you must address in the proposal. The criterion will be evaluated against a standard. Reviewers will be asked to rate the degree to which the proposal meets the standard. If you don't address all the aspects within the criterion, your proposal will be weakened. You must specify if an element does not apply.

The attachment allows you maximum flexibility to address the criterion, including through the use of figures or diagrams, where appropriate.

Infrastructure and budget justification
Criterion standard:

- 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.

Each of the following aspects must be addressed:

- Describe each item and justify why it is needed to conduct the proposed applied research activities. Use the item number, quantity, cost and location found in the "Cost of individual items" table. Provide a cost breakdown for any grouping of items. For construction or renovation, provide a description of the space including its location, size and nature.
- Describe how the institution's existing applied research capacity (currently available equipment and research space) will be enhanced by the requested infrastructure.
- Demonstrate how the infrastructure is industry-relevant and essential for creating and enhancing collaborations with private-sector partners.
- Demonstrate the versatility of the requested infrastructure to respond to immediate and longer-term applied research needs of private-sector partners.
- Describe the overall expertise of the team's key participants regarding the operation of the infrastructure requested, including previous experience with similar equipment.
- Indicate how the infrastructure will be efficiently used and maintained in the short term and sustained over the long term. Specify the institutional commitments towards its sustainability. Refer to the "financial resources for operation and maintenance" section.

For construction or renovation, detailed cost breakdown, timeline and floor plans must be provided in a separate document as part of the finance module.

Budget justification: When you describe each item, be sure to specify the item's main features so reviewers can judge the item's suitability for conducting the proposed activities using the methodology described.

Financial resources for operation and maintenance
This section of the project module captures the annual costs and sources of committed support. This is to make sure the infrastructure is effectively operated and maintained for the first five years after it is implemented.

If the useful life[1] of some of the infrastructure items requested is longer or shorter than five years, provide information in the "Infrastructure and budget justification" section of the proposal regarding the operating and maintenance needs for these items over their useful life.

Do not include costs related to research and/or technology development in the table. If funding sources include the CFI's Infrastructure Operating Fund (IOF)[2], list these under the institutional contribution category.

You must explain estimated costs and sources of support provided in these tables. Do so in the "Infrastructure and budget justification" assessment criterion attachment.

Collaborating institutions module
If applicable, identify the institutions eligible for CFI funding collaborating in this project (other than the applicant institution). A collaborating institution is one that receives part of the infrastructure.

Finance module
The finance module consists of the following sections:

- Cost of individual items
- Floor plans (if applicable)
- Contributions from eligible partners
- Infrastructure utilization
- Overview of infrastructure project funding (generated automatically)

Make sure all requested information has been entered into the relevant fields in each section.

The tables in the section called "Overview of infrastructure project funding" will be automatically populated with information taken from the other sections of the finance module. Note that the amount requested from the CFI is calculated based on the difference between the total contributions from eligible partners and the total eligible costs.

………………………………………......

[1]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 as per the proposal, factoring in normal repairs and maintenance.

[2] The CFI contributes to the operating and maintenance costs of approved proposals through its Infrastructure Operating Fund (IOF). All eligible projects generate an IOF allocation of 30 percent of the maximum CFI amount approved at award finalization.

Cost of individual items

We recommend that you bundle items into functional groupings when completing the cost of individual items section. However, in the "Infrastructure and budget justification" section, list and provide justification for each item within a group.

List only the eligible infrastructure acquisition and development costs as outlined in Section 4.6 of our Policy and program guide. List the full cost of each item or functional groupings. Retain documentation (price lists, quotes, etc.) so that you can provide it to the CFI upon request.

> If the infrastructure will be used for purposes other than research or technology development, list only pro-rated research or technology development costs.
>
> The total eligible costs must include taxes (net of credits received), shipping and installation. However, taxes must not be calculated on the in-kind portion.
>
> When preparing budget estimates, you must follow your college's existing policies and procedures. Costs included in this budget must be close estimates of fair-market value. Refer to section 6.5 of our Policy and program guide for information on how in-kind contributions must be assessed.

Floor plans (if applicable)

For this section of the online form, upload a PDF that contains the following information:

- A detailed breakdown of the overall cost of the construction or renovation project, categorized by cost component (i.e. direct, soft and contingency costs up to 10% of the construction costs);
- A timeline identifying key dates for the various stages of the proposed construction or renovation;
- Floor plans for the proposed area(s), showing the location of the infrastructure and the scale of the plans for projects involving multiple rooms. The floor plans must be legible when printed in black and white on standard letter size paper (8.5" x 11").

The floor plans are a separate attachment and not included in the 10-page maximum for the assessment criterion and budget justification attachment.

> This attachment is intended for floor plans only. If any of the pages of the attachment provide information other than for the intended use, they will be removed from the proposal at the administrative review stage.

Contributions from eligible partners

List all contributions from eligible partners as outlined in Section 4.8 of our Policy and program guide. Do not include the amount requested from the CFI. Provide the partner name and type, as well as a breakdown of contributions (cash and in-kind) for each eligible partner. If partner contributions are expected but have not yet been confirmed, outline the plans for securing these funds (e.g. proposals submitted to provincial partners).

> We encourage you to bundle all expected in-kind contributions from vendors into a single line.
>
> The total in-kind contributions from partners must equal the total in-kind portion of the costs of the items requested.

Infrastructure utilization
This section of the finance module captures the use of the requested infrastructure for CFI-eligible and non-eligible purposes and any applicable prorating of costs.

If the infrastructure is used for non-CFI-eligible purposes, we expect the budget to be prorated proportionally to the percentage of use for applied research.

The requested infrastructure must be primarily used to carry out applied research and technology development activities with private-sector partners. The infrastructure may also be used for training purposes in cases where the training is articulated around an applied research or technology development project aimed at business innovation. In these cases, you may indicate that 100% is for applied research.

Suggested reviewers module
Identify a minimum of six reviewers who are especially well qualified to review the proposal and who are not in a position of conflict of interest.

Your suggestions should include experts from the field of research or technology development. Experts should come from the college applied research community or the private sector, but exclude partners and collaborators.

A conflict of interest may be deemed to exist or perceived as such when reviewers:

- Are a relative or close friend, or have a personal relationship with the project leader or one of the key participants;
- Are in a position to gain or lose financially/materially from the funding of the proposal;
- Have had long-standing scientific or personal differences with the project leader or one of the key participants;
- Are currently affiliated with the project leader's or the key participants' institutions, organizations or companies — including research hospitals and research institutes;
- Are closely professionally affiliated with the project leader or one of the key participants, as a result of having in the **last six years**:
  - Frequent and regular interactions with the project leader or one of the key participants in the course of their duties at their department, institution, organization or company;
  - Been a supervisor or a trainee of the project leader or one of the key participants;
  - **Collaborated, published or shared funding with the project leader or one of the key participants, or have plans to do so in the immediate future**; or,
  - Been employed by the lead institution; and/or,
- Feel for any reason unable to provide an impartial review of the proposal.

The decision whether or not to use your suggestions for reviewers remains with the CFI.

CHAPTER 4 – SUBMISSION PROCESS

We do not require hard copies of proposals. You must submit proposals in CAMS by the proposal submission deadline.