



COLLEGE-INDUSTRY INNOVATION FUND

Stream 1: Research Infrastructure

Call for Proposals

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Table of Contents

DESCRIPTION..... 3

PARTICIPATION FROM THE PRIVATE AND OTHER SECTORS..... 3

ELIGIBILITY 4

 Eligible institutions..... 4

 Eligible infrastructure..... 4

 Eligible infrastructure location 4

AVAILABLE FUNDING 5

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM ELIGIBLE PARTNERS 5

APPLICATION PROCESS 6

TIMELINE FOR ANNUAL CIIF – STREAM 1 COMPETITIONS..... 6

REVIEW CRITERIA 6

REVIEW PROCESS 7

 Expert reviews..... 7

 Multidisciplinary Assessment Committee (MAC) 7

PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL PARTICIPATION..... 7

FUNDING DECISIONS 8

AWARD FINALIZATION AND OVERSIGHT 8

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT..... 8

College-Industry Innovation Fund – Stream 1: Research Infrastructure

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. Business innovation generated through college and private sector research partnerships is expected to lead to the creation or adaptation of knowledge and technology to develop or improve a product, process or service. Ultimately, business innovation is expected to improve the productivity and competitiveness of a company or an industry.

Under Stream 1 of the CIIF, the CFI seeks proposals that enhance existing applied research and technology development capacity in colleges across all domains of applied research and technology development. Colleges may have developed their applied research capacity through major, multi-year investments in applied research. Funding for building and enhancing applied research capacity at colleges may have been obtained from the College and Community Innovation (CCI)¹ Innovation Enhancement (IE) grants, Technology Access Centres (TAC), or Industrial Research Chair for Colleges grants, or research and development funding from other federal or provincial economic development agencies, industry or other sources.

Colleges should submit proposals that demonstrate a well-established and strong track record of private sector partnerships for joint projects that respond to important industry needs, contribute to enhancing business innovation and focus on an area of institutional priority. 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.

The CFI holds annual CIIF – Stream 1 competitions; deadlines for Notices of Intent (NOIs) and proposal submission are listed in the "Timeline for annual CIIF – Stream 1 competitions" section.

PARTICIPATION FROM THE PRIVATE AND OTHER SECTORS

The purpose of the CIIF is to support partnerships between colleges and a range of private sector partners involved in any area of economic activity. Collaboration with enterprises, regardless of their size, is essential for the infrastructure project described in the proposal.

The level of involvement of industrial partners is a key consideration in making 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 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.

¹ The College and Community Innovation 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).

College-Industry Innovation Fund – Stream 1: Research Infrastructure

Call for Proposals

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible institutions

Only colleges eligible to receive CFI funding can apply to the CIIF. Those who are not currently eligible to receive CFI funding must provide the necessary documentation no later than two months before the Notice of Intent (NOI) deadline. 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 CIIF@innovation.ca.

Colleges must also provide the CFI with a summary of their most recent strategic research plan by the NOI deadline. The CFI provides these summaries to committees for review purposes.

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

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.

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.

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

Eligible infrastructure location

The 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 and access to the research infrastructure

College-Industry Innovation Fund – Stream 1: Research Infrastructure

Call for Proposals

AVAILABLE FUNDING

Up to \$40 million (including capital costs and operating funds) have been allocated between 2016 and 2019 for the CIIF – Streams 1 and 2. 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 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. Please refer to the CFI's [Policy and program guide](#) for additional information on the IOF. Since the IOF is not intended to cover the entire cost of operating and maintaining the equipment, 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; however these may be mentioned in the proposal as evidence of the engagement of partners towards the project(s).

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.

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.

College-Industry Innovation Fund – Stream 1: Research Infrastructure

Call for Proposals

For more information about eligible and ineligible cash and in-kind partner contributions, please refer to the CFI [Policy and program guide](#).

APPLICATION PROCESS

The application process consists of the submission of a Notice of Intent (NOI) followed by the submission of the proposal. Colleges must complete and submit both the NOI and proposal online using the CFI Awards Management System ([CAMS](#)). Colleges are also required to send a proposal submission letter, signed by an authorized signatory, to the CFI by the proposal deadline. Note that the CFI does not require hardcopies of any of the submission documents.

The NOI is not formally assessed as part of the review process, but is used by the CFI to assist the CFI in planning the review process, to recruit committee members, and to identify potential eligibility issues for the infrastructure items requested. Therefore, the NOI should contain accurate information about the infrastructure and its users, the proposed applied research and technology development activities and the expected outcomes.

TIMELINE FOR ANNUAL CIIF – STREAM 1 COMPETITIONS

Dates*	Activity
March 15	Deadline for the submission of Notices of Intent
May 15	Deadline for the submission of proposals
November	CFI Board decisions

* Note: Should a deadline fall on a weekend or statutory holiday, the date will be moved forward to the next business day.

REVIEW CRITERIA

The CFI assesses proposals on the basis of three competition objectives and five assessment criteria. To be funded, a proposal must satisfy all three CIIF objectives to a degree commensurate with the size and complexity of the proposal. The CIIF objectives and their respective assessment criteria standards are listed below.

Objective 1: Create and enhance college-industry partnerships leading to business innovation using industry-relevant, state-of-the-art research infrastructure

- **Contribution to business innovation:** The proposed applied research activities respond to well-identified needs of the private sector and have been developed in collaboration with key industrial partners to ensure they achieve the intended business innovation outcomes.
 - **Infrastructure:** 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.
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College-Industry Innovation Fund – Stream 1: Research Infrastructure

Call for Proposals

Objective 2: Build upon proven applied research capacity and a track record of partnerships with the private sector in an area of strategic priority to the institution

- **Enhancing applied research capacity:** The proposal builds on the institution's proven applied research capacity and key investments in people and infrastructure in the area of strategic priority. Existing applied research capacity will be further enhanced by the requested infrastructure and associated institutional commitments.
- **Partnerships with the private sector:** The institution has demonstrated its ability to build and maintain productive partnerships with the private sector in the area of strategic priority.

Objective 3: Generate socioeconomic benefits in the region and nationally including the development of highly skilled personnel

- **Benefits to Canada:** The proposed activities have the potential to lead to business innovation and socioeconomic benefits for the region and for Canada. The proposed activities will enable the development of highly skilled, qualified personnel.

REVIEW PROCESS

The CFI conducts an administrative review of proposals to assess their eligibility and completeness. The merit review of each proposal comprises two stages: 1) a review by experts, and 2) a review by a Multidisciplinary Assessment Committee.

Expert Reviews

The expert review process is designed to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the proposals in relation to the five assessment criteria.

In order to assess the excellence of a proposal, the CFI seeks input from experts from diverse sectors with specific expertise in the area of the proposal and with a thorough understanding of the business innovation process and the college environment.

Multidisciplinary Assessment Committee (MAC)

The second stage of review entails the assessment of proposals by a Multidisciplinary Assessment Committee (MAC). Members of the MAC are selected for their breadth and understanding of the applied research and technology development environment, their knowledge of the role of colleges in the innovation process and their understanding of the needs of industrial partners.

Informed by the expert reviews, the MAC is responsible for assessing each proposal against the three CIIF objectives relative to other competing proposals and make funding recommendations to the CFI Board of Directors.

PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL PARTICIPATION

In consultation with provinces, territories and institutions, the CFI will coordinate the review processes with the relevant provinces and territories through the sharing of information (e.g. reviewers and committee comments) to avoid duplication of review efforts.

College-Industry Innovation Fund – Stream 1: Research Infrastructure Call for Proposals

FUNDING DECISIONS

All funding decisions are made by the CFI Board of Directors each year in November and those decisions are communicated to the college shortly thereafter. Successful proposals are also listed on the CFI website, Innovation.ca. The expert reviews and the MAC report for each proposal are provided to the applicant institution.

AWARD FINALIZATION AND OVERSIGHT

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 (see CFI [Policy and program guide](#)).

Colleges awarded a CIIF grant are required to submit annual financial reports. Project implementation will be monitored closely by the CFI and progress reports will be required at regular intervals. Reporting requirements will be communicated to colleges prior to finalization of the award.

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

The CFI makes national funding announcements about the CIIF. 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 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.



Research builds communities

La recherche au service des collectivités

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