



College-Industry Innovation Fund

**Stream 2: Research infrastructure associated with
an application to the Natural Sciences and
Engineering Research Council of Canada for
competition 14 of the five-year College and
Community Innovation Program – Innovation
Enhancement
Grant**

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 a specific area of institutional strategic priority.

The CFI, along with the federal granting agencies, recognize the need and opportunity to enhance the existing applied research and technology development capacity in Canadian colleges, and to maximize its impact. The federal granting agencies strive to coordinate their efforts 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. Toward that end, the CFI participates in the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada's (NSERC) College and Community Innovation Program – Innovation Enhancement Grants ([CCI-IE Program](#))¹ to foster partnerships between colleges and the private sector that will lead to business innovation locally, regionally and nationally.

Under this joint initiative, five-year CCI-IE grant proposals submitted to NSERC can include a request for research infrastructure from the CFI's College-Industry Innovation Fund; allowing colleges to apply for a comprehensive funding package that supports both research costs (through a CCI-IE grant) and research infrastructure (through the CFI's College-Industry Innovation Fund – Stream 2) in a specific area of institutional strategic priority. This is 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-IE proposal.

Given that close collaboration between the college and private sector partners is essential to enabling business innovation, the level of involvement of private sector partners is a key consideration in funding decisions. Colleges should focus on enhancing existing partnerships and stimulating new ones with a range of private sector partners. The CFI expects partners to be actively engaged throughout the course of the applied research infrastructure project, including the application stage. While it must respond to industry needs, the proposed infrastructure should not duplicate existing services or facilities offered in the region.

Although the fund supports partnerships between colleges and the private sector, additional participation from end or ultimate users from other sectors, where appropriate, is encouraged as it may broaden the impact of the proposal at the local, regional and national scale.

Since this initiative aims to enhance the existing applied research capacity at a college over a five-year period, colleges securing an entry-level CCI-IE grant are not eligible to receive CFI infrastructure funding under this initiative.

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

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 must provide the necessary eligibility documentation² no later than two months before the Letter of Intent 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.

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, development or major upgrade of applied research or technology development infrastructure. Eligible infrastructure items include equipment, scientific collections, computer software, information databases and communication linkages used, or to be used, primarily for carrying on research. Construction or renovations essential for housing the CFI infrastructure are also deemed eligible.

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. Please refer to the CFI *Policy and program guide* for additional information on the consultation process with Compute Canada.

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. Please refer to the CFI *Policy and program guide* for additional information on eligible costs.

² Refer to the CFI *Policy and program guide* for additional information on the documentation required.

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 of the research infrastructure.

Available funding

Over the next four years (2016–19), the CFI has allocated up to \$40 million (for capital costs and infrastructure operating funds) for the CIIF – Streams 1 and 2. The CFI will fund up to 40 percent of a project's eligible infrastructure costs.

The CFI also 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. Since the IOF is not intended to cover the entire cost of operating and maintaining the equipment, institutions must demonstrate in the CIIF proposals that sufficient operating and maintenance resources will be available to capitalize on the full potential of the infrastructure over its useful life³. The adequacy of the medium- and long-term operating and maintenance plan will be assessed as part of the review process. Please refer to the CFI *Policy and program guide* for additional information on the IOF.

Colleges may submit a single proposal per competition, requesting up to \$1 million from the CFI.

Contributions from eligible partners

Because the CFI funds up to 40 percent of the infrastructure cost of a proposal, it encourages institutions to work with relevant provincial and territorial funding authorities as potential key 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
- 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

³ 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.

granting agencies (Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (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*.

Application process

The application process involves the following two steps:

Letter of Intent

Colleges must submit the CCI-IE Letter of Intent as per the program guidelines (NSERC Form 186). If a college is planning to request CFI infrastructure along with CCI-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-IE Letter of Intent budget justification section. The CCI-IE Letter of Intent form must be submitted directly to NSERC.

Full application

Colleges invited to submit a CCI-IE full application form must complete the CFI infrastructure component of their proposal using the online forms available through 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 deadline. The CFI will forward the completed application form to NSERC, where it will be combined with the five-year CCI-IE full application for a joint review.

The CFI application 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

	Letter of Intent	Proposal	Decisions
CCI-IE grants, competition 14	May 26, 2016	October 27, 2016	March 2017

Review criteria

The overarching objective of the CIIF is to 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 a specific area of strategic priority to the institution.

As the CCI-IE and the CIIF–Stream 2 components form a complete proposal and are jointly reviewed, the proposals are assessed against both the CCI-IE and CIIF review criteria. As some of these overlap, only the subset of CIIF criteria that are not assessed through the CCI-IE component need to be addressed in the CFI portion of the proposal.

The review criteria for the CIIF component are as follows:

The team

Criterion standard: the team has the required expertise to carry out the proposed activities using the requested infrastructure.

Need for infrastructure

Criterion standard: The requested infrastructure will maximize the potential of the described partnerships and will enhance the college's capacity for forging future partnerships through applied research and technology development activities.

Sustainability of the infrastructure

Criterion standard: the college has developed a suitable plan for maximizing the impact of the infrastructure and for ensuring its long-term sustainability.

Benefits to Canada

Criterion standard: the proposed activities have the potential to lead to business innovation and socioeconomic benefits for the region and for Canada.

In accordance with the CCI-IE and the CIIF review criteria, 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 this initiative. Participation of private-sector partners and contributions to business innovation is of primary importance.

Review process

The CFI first reviews the research infrastructure proposal for eligibility and completeness, and may request additional material from colleges if necessary.

A joint review process has been developed between the CFI and NSERC to lessen the workload for applicants and reviewers. The assessment of each full application will comprise two stages. Each application (comprising both the CCI-IE and CIIF components) is first reviewed by experts in the area. The review reports are forwarded to the College and Community Innovation Review Committee, who then evaluates the CCI-IE proposal, as well as the infrastructure portion of the application according to CCI-IE and CIIF review criteria. The CFI provides clarification, when necessary, to reviewers and committee members on CFI policies and procedures.

Funding decisions and award finalization

NSERC makes the final decisions on the research support portion of CCI-IE proposals. The funding recommendations of the CCI Review Committee for the infrastructure portion of the application are presented to the CFI Board of Directors who makes the final funding decision. It is important to note that if the CCI-IE portion is not funded by NSERC, the CFI component will not be funded either. Colleges are informed of the decision shortly thereafter. Successful proposals are subsequently listed on the CFI website, Innovation.ca. For each proposal, reviewer comments received during the joint review process are made available to colleges by NSERC.

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 (refer to the CFI *Policy and program guide*).

Public announcements

The CFI works closely with NSERC on funding announcements for infrastructure associated with CCI-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 annual financial reports to the CFI for funded infrastructure projects. In addition, they will have to submit periodic CCI-IE progress reports to NSERC after 18 months, 36 months, and three months after the project end date (final progress report). Reporting on performance measures related to the research infrastructure will be required as part of the above-mentioned CCI-IE progress reports.

Use and disclosure of personal information provided to the joint initiative

All personal information collected by the joint initiative 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 the [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 among themselves, 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.