LEF/NIF Regional Projects

Capacity for innovation can be increased in multiple ways, including by encouraging collaborative activities between research groups. The regional project designation was created to favour and extend such collaborations and to avoid the unnecessary duplication of research infrastructure at several institutions in a given region. The regional projects are meant to create platforms that would serve the needs of a group of currently collaborating researchers in a given area.

It is expected that the designation will be given to projects supporting research groups that have been (and will continue to be) actively collaborating for a significant period of time. Consequently, it is not intended to fund service platforms where the users would simply be sharing the facility without carrying out collaborative research projects or proposing to launch such collaborations.

As specified in section 6 of the LEF/NIF Call for Proposals, the lead institution has to submit a letter requesting the regional designation by May 9, 2008. This letter should be **limited to three pages** excluding provincial letters and list of contributions (see below). It should describe the platform and explain how the proposed project meets all the criteria identified in section 6 of the Call for Proposals.

In particular, the CFI expects that the following requirements will be fully met by projects seeking a Regional designation:

1. PLATFORM – the regional project MUST propose the creation of a research infrastructure platform serving a community of researchers at participating institutions. A research platform provides research infrastructure, resources, and services that address the needs of researchers at several institutions. Such a shared resource will eliminate unnecessary duplication of research infrastructure at the regional level. Letters should demonstrate how the proposed platform would meet the needs of the collaborating researchers from at least five participant institutions and how the sharing of resources would be more advantageous.

   A research infrastructure platform is usually centralized in a facility that permits ready access and service to all collaborating researchers and users. In the event that the request is for partially decentralized infrastructure, the letter should provide a compelling rationale for the need to place the equipment across several sites, while still serving as a platform.

2. PRIORITIES – The regional project should be clearly aligned with one or more of the federal S&T strategy's four priority areas (environment, natural resources and energy, health and related life sciences, and information and communication technologies). The project must also be aligned with the provincial S&T priority areas of all the provinces that are represented in the Regional proposal. A letter from each of the provinces' appropriate provincial authority (that is, the government body that sets the S&T priority for the province) should be provided, indicating that the project is aligned with the provincial S&T priorities.

3. INSTITUTIONS – As a minimum, the regional projects must serve the needs of currently collaborating researchers from at least five institutions. Furthermore, all participant institutions must demonstrate that:
   - the project is consistent with all participating institutions' strategic research plans.
   - a commitment to raise or help raising (by committing to submit grant applications for instance) partner funding, as well as operation and maintenance funding.

4. PAST COLLABORATIONS – The groups of researchers from at least five institutions have to demonstrate substantial past collaborative activities. Past collaboration can take several forms; for example, a history of joint funding (i.e. active funding for a significant period of time) or a significant record of co-authored contributions (publications, patents, technical papers, etc.). One additional page with a list of co-authored contributions may be submitted (in addition to the three pages of the letter).

   While the CFI encourages research collaboration, a platform to serve a group of researchers who are not currently collaborating or do not have a well-established collaboration, is not sufficient to allow a project to receive the regional designation. Such projects may be submitted as part of institutional envelopes.

A project receiving the regional project designation will be considered outside of any institutional envelopes. The designation is strictly for administrative purposes (i.e. envelope calculation) and will not confer any additional advantage during the review process. The regional designation of a project will not be considered at any stage of the merit review process.