

# 2015 COLLEGE-INDUSTRY INNOVATION FUND

## STREAM 1: RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE

### CALL FOR PROPOSALS

#### DESCRIPTION

The College-Industry Innovation Fund 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. Under Stream 1 of the College-Industry Innovation Fund, the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) accepts proposals that enhance existing applied research and technology development capacity in colleges in any field of the natural and social sciences, engineering, humanities and health sciences. For example, those who have received a five-year Innovation Enhancement (IE) grant under the College and Community Innovation (CCI)<sup>1</sup> Program or research and development funding from provincial, industrial or other sources are encouraged to apply to this stream.

Colleges should submit proposals that demonstrate a strong track record of private sector partnerships that respond to important industrial needs, contribute to enhancing business innovation and focus on an area of institutional priority.

The CFI plans to hold annual CIIF competitions between 2014-15 and 2017-18. For CIIF Stream 1 competitions, Notices of intent (NOI) will be due in January and proposals will be due in May. A call for proposals will be issued for each competition.

#### 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. Participation from enterprises, regardless of their size, is essential to the infrastructure project described in the proposal.

The level of involvement of industrial partners is a key consideration when 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

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<sup>1</sup> 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 Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

engaged throughout the life of the research infrastructure project, including the application stage. The CFI requires Letters of commitment from private sector partners and ultimate beneficiaries or end users from other sectors (if applicable) that demonstrate their tangible involvement in, and contributions to, the project and anticipated benefits.

The fund aims to support partnerships between colleges and the private sector. Nevertheless, participation from other sectors (e.g. public and non-profit), where appropriate, is encouraged as it broadens 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 must provide the necessary documentation<sup>2</sup> 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. In order to facilitate the process and minimize their workload, all colleges who wish to apply should first contact the CFI at [CIIF@innovation.ca](mailto:CIIF@innovation.ca) to verify their eligibility status.

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 NOI deadline. The CFI provides these summaries to committees for review purposes. Please refer to section 5.1.2 of 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 significant research infrastructure made up of a single item or a collection of items. Eligible infrastructure items include equipment, scientific collections, computer software, information databases and communication linkages used, or to be used, primarily for carrying on research. An eligible infrastructure project involves the modernization, acquisition or development of applied research or technology development 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 eligible partners. The infrastructure can 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.

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<sup>2</sup> Refer to section 3.1.1 of the CFI *Policy and program guide* for additional information on the documentation required.

CFI-funded research infrastructure will represent a new capital asset and provide a new or improved applied research or technology development capability for the college.

To be considered eligible, in-kind and cash contributions from external partners and 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 section 4.6 of 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 of the infrastructure.

## **AVAILABLE FUNDING**

The CFI will invest up to \$10 million in infrastructure costs for funded projects in the 2015 CIIF Stream 1 competition. The CFI will fund up to 40 percent of a project's eligible infrastructure costs.

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

The CFI contributes to the operating and maintenance costs of approved proposals through its Infrastructure Operating Fund (IOF). The IOF allocation is equivalent to 30 percent of the total finalized CFI contribution. Please refer to section 4.7 of 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 that sufficient operating and maintenance resources will be available to capitalize on the full potential of the infrastructure over its useful life. The CFI assesses the adequacy of the medium- and long-term operating and maintenance plan as part of its review process.

## **PARTNER FUNDING**

Given that the CFI funds up to 40 percent of the infrastructure cost of a proposal, colleges are required to find financial partners willing to commit to the remaining 60 percent. 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. For more information about eligible and ineligible cash and in-kind partner contributions, please refer to sections 4.8 and 4.9 of the CFI *Policy and program guide*.

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.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

Colleges must first submit a Notice of intent (NOI) containing basic information about their application (e.g. name of project leader, infrastructure to be requested, partnerships to be enabled and suggested reviewers). The NOI is not formally assessed as part of the review process, but assists the CFI in planning the review process and in assembling its review committees. At the same time, colleges must provide a summary of their most recent strategic research plan.

After submitting a Notice of intent, colleges must submit a proposal. The proposal contains all the information relevant to the assessment of the project, including budget information and letters of support from industrial partners. In addition, some baseline information on appropriate performance measures related to the use of the infrastructure is required.

Colleges must complete and submit both the Notice of intent and proposal on the CFI website. Colleges are also required to send hard copies, signed by an authorized signatory, of both documents to the CFI by the deadline.

## TIMELINE FOR THE 2015 CIIF STREAM 1 COMPETITION:

Dates	Activity
January 16, 2015	Deadline for the submission of Notices of intent (NOI)
May 15, 2015	Deadline for the submission of proposals
June to August 2015	Expert committee meetings
September 2015	Multidisciplinary assessment committee meeting
November 2015	CFI Board decisions

## REVIEW CRITERIA

The CFI assesses proposals on the basis of the three criteria listed below. To be funded, a proposal must satisfy all three criteria to a degree commensurate with the size and complexity of the proposal. The application form provides further details on the information required for the review process.

### 1. Contribute to business innovation

- The college has a strong track record in building and maintaining partnerships with the private sector (e.g. contracts, technology transfer, knowledge transfer, etc.)
- The requested infrastructure is essential for maximizing the potential of the described partnerships
- The proposed activities clearly respond to existing needs expressed by private sector partners
- The relevant expertise is available within the college for applied research and technology transfer activities
- The proposed activities have the potential to lead to business innovation

### 2. Enhance the applied research and technology development capacity of colleges

- The requested infrastructure will boost the college's capacity for forging additional valuable partnerships with private sector partners in the future
- The proposed activities are in a specific area in which the college has developed a niche of applied research and technology development excellence
- In the past, the college has provided significant support and shown substantial commitment to applied research and technology development in the area of strategic priority, and will continue to do so
- The college has developed a plan for the sustainability and continuing relevance of the research infrastructure
- The requested infrastructure will create a stimulating and enriched environment for training highly qualified personnel, including hands-on training with state-of-the-art equipment relevant to an industrial setting
- The team demonstrates its ability to constantly remain up-to-date with respect to the current body of knowledge in the area and has the expertise to make effective use of the requested infrastructure

### 3. Provide benefits to Canada

- The activities proposed will lead to socioeconomic benefits to the region and to Canada

## REVIEW PROCESS

The CFI assesses proposals for eligibility and completeness, and may request additional material. The assessment 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 three review criteria.

In order to assess the excellence of a proposal, the CFI seeks input from experts 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). Based on its own assessment and informed by the expert reviews, the MAC is responsible for assessing each proposal against the three review criteria relative to other competing requests.

Members of the MAC are chosen for their capacity to assess the proposals based on the three review criteria. They are also 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 (including, but not limited to small- and medium-sized enterprises).

## FUNDING DECISIONS

All final decisions are made by the CFI Board of Directors by the aforementioned decision date, and those decisions are communicated to the college shortly thereafter. Successful proposals are also listed on the CFI website. The expert reviews and the MAC report for each proposal are provided to the applicant institution.

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 section 6.2 of the CFI *Policy and program guide*).

## PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

The CFI makes national funding announcements related to infrastructure associated with its College-Industry Innovation Fund. 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 awarded a CIIF grant are required to submit annual financial reports. In addition, they have to complete progress reports 18, 36 and 60 months following award finalization.

## **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.

