



Government of Canada Gouvernement du Canada

**Networks of Centres
of Excellence**

**Réseaux de centres
d'excellence**

Networks of Centres of Excellence

Letter of Intent Guide 2015 NCE Network Competition

The Networks of Centres of Excellence (NCE) Program is a federal initiative administered jointly through the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) in partnership with Industry Canada and Health Canada.

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Networks of Centres of Excellence Program

2015 NCE Network Competition

Guidelines for Completing a Letter of Intent

This guide is to be used in conjunction with the 2015 NCE [Competition Guide](#).

The LOI provides information on the proposed Network in relation to the goals and objectives of the NCE Program. It will be used in the screening process to determine which applicants will be invited to submit Full Applications. It will be evaluated according to the five NCE Program Criteria, as well as the competition framework.

The LOI should be submitted on behalf of the proposed Network by an academic researcher (i.e., “the applicant”, who is also the proposed Scientific Director for the Network) who is eligible to receive funding from one of the three federal granting agencies, and by the proposed host institution.

The LOI must be developed in collaboration with relevant stakeholders. Applicants must clearly indicate how the proposed Network’s research program will integrate industry, receptor partners, academia, and government priorities. Furthermore, it is imperative that applicants define the problem(s), challenge(s), or opportunity(ies) for which they will generate solutions. The potential social and economic impacts of the Network will be assessed to determine whether the human dimension has been integrated into the Network plan.

Applicants should define the framework and performance indicators for the implementation of the proposed Network.

Furthermore, the Selection Committee will assess whether the appropriate stakeholders are well integrated into the Network plan. Private, public and not-for-profit sector participants should be informed that their level of involvement as well as their cash and/or in-kind commitments will be critical to the success of the Network. These commitments should be clearly indicated in the Application Form. Discussions of eligible in-kind contributions can be found in the 2015 NCE Competition Guide.

Should multiple LOIs be submitted in the same field of research, the Selection Committee *may* suggest that those applicants submit a single joint Full Application.

Deadline

The deadline for the electronic submission of the LOI for the 2015 NCE Network Competition is **August 1, 2013. LOIs must be received by the NCE Secretariat by 4:30 p.m. local time.**

[Applications must be submitted to the NCE on-line electronic application system at https://excellence.nce-rce.gc.ca.](https://excellence.nce-rce.gc.ca)

Applicants must also provide the NCE Secretariat with one unbound original copy by August 9, 2013, containing the original signatures. The unbound copy must be identical to the electronic submission. Inclusion of additional material in the unbound copy will result in the rejection of your application from the competition.

Mailing Address

Networks of Centres of Excellence
2015 NCE LOI Competition
16th Floor, mailroom
350 Albert Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 1H5

General Presentation

Print must be in black ink, of letter quality (minimum standard), with no more than six lines per inch. The type size for fonts measured in points (pts) must be no smaller than 12 pts. If measured in characters per inch (cpi), it must be no more than 10 cpi. Condensed type is unacceptable.

Use white paper, 8½ x 11 inches (21.5 cm x 28 cm), with margins of ¾ of an inch (1.905 cm) (minimum) all around. Enter the title of the Network at the top of every page and number the pages consecutively.

Graphs and illustrations may be included, but will count as part of the page limits set out below. Either single or double column presentation of text, graphs or illustrations is acceptable. **Any extra material will be removed.**

What to Include in the LOI

1. Host Institution Covering Letter (maximum 2 pages)

A letter, signed by the proposed Scientific Director and the President or CEO (or delegate) of the institution that proposes to host the Network administrative centre (i.e., the Host Institution), must be included. This letter should outline the nature of anticipated support from the proposed Host Institution. Host Institutions play an important role in networks, through both direct support of the administrative centre and by participating in network governance through ex-officio voting membership on the Board of Directors.

The signatures on the letter should match the signatures on Section A of the Application Form.

Please review Appendix A for the meaning of signatures.

2. NCE 2015 LOI Application Form

The LOI Application Form is available on the [NCE web site](#).

Section A: Summary Information

Complete and sign Section A of the LOI Application Form for the 2015 NCE Network Competition. The following information must be provided:

- **Scientific Director:** name, personal identification number (PIN) of one of the three federal granting agencies (if available), the preferred language of correspondence and the percentage of the total salaried time committed to the Network by the Scientific Director

- **Network title:** name and acronym of the proposed Network (in both official languages) as it will be used for publication and communication purposes
- **Keywords:** up to ten keywords related to the proposed Network

Anticipated number of:

- **Participating researchers:** involved in Network activities at participating universities, research centers and post-secondary institutions with a research mandate who would be funded by the proposed Network (excluding graduate students, postdoctoral fellows and research associates)
 - **Participating Institutions:** Canadian universities, research centres and post-secondary institutions which have a research mandate and which are eligible to receive funding from one of the three federal granting agencies
 - **Private sector partners:** companies, industries and private institutions collaborating with the Network through signed agreements
 - **Receptor community partners:** hospitals, not-for-profit associations, provincial, federal or municipal government institutions collaborating with the Network through signed agreements
- **Five primary contributing stakeholders:** provide the names of up to five key contributing non-academic stakeholders and the signatories of their letters of support. Also indicate the stakeholders' in-kind and/or cash support committed to the proposed Network.
 - **Signatures:** of the Scientific Director and President or CEO (or delegate) of the proposed Host Institution. Also include the mailing address, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address for the proposed Scientific Director.

Please refer to Appendix A for the meaning of signatures.

Section B: Anticipated Expenditures

Use Section B of the LOI Application Form to indicate the anticipated expenditures of both NCE and non-NCE sources of funds (if applicable) for the proposed Network (years one to five). Round all values to the nearest \$0.1M.

Please note: eligible expenses are the direct costs of research and facility access, stipends for research trainees, the direct costs of research dissemination and science promotion, and other specific expenses associated with the management of an NCE Network (see the NCE Program Guide for more information on eligible expenses).

In general, the regulations of the granting agency into whose domain the Network's research falls will apply to that Network. In addition, networks must adhere to the regulations and administrative policies found in the Tri-agency [Use of Grant Funds](#) document and the [NCE Program Guide](#).

Section C: Anticipated Funding

Use Section C of the LOI Application Form to indicate the cash and in-kind funding available from the non-NCE primary contributing stakeholders listed in Section A, if applicable (years one to five).

Note: at the LOI stage of the competition, it is not required to provide details of all anticipated sources of funding.

Section D: Explanation of Expenditures and/or Funding

Use Section D of the LOI Application Form to provide any required explanation or narrative of the anticipated expenses and/or funding. Use only the space provided.

***Free Form** – using the following sections as headers please complete the free form section of the application respecting the page limits.*

3. Socioeconomic Context (Maximum ½ page)

Provide a summary describing the context within which the Network would be positioned to generate multifaceted solutions to complex Canadian problem(s), challenge(s), or opportunity(ies).

Define the problem(s), challenge(s), or opportunity(ies), and the incremental economic and social benefits to Canada that the Network will provide through its multifaceted program, partnerships and knowledge mobilization activities.

Applicants must demonstrate that the proposed Network is focused on addressing complex challenges facing Canadians from a multidisciplinary perspective. Furthermore, applicants should demonstrate how knowledge generated by the Network will be applied to practical solutions, leading to innovations that produce social and economic benefits for Canadians.

4. Network Vision (Maximum ½ page)

Describe a vision of what the Network proposes to achieve, including specific goals and objectives. The vision should describe the expected end-results and impacts within a five to ten year time frame, especially with respect to the expected outcomes and impacts on partners and on the user sector for the benefit of Canada and Canadians.

5. Management (Maximum 1 page for text and 1 page for organizational chart)

Give an overview of the proposed Network's management, taking into consideration the following points:

- A strong management with clearly defined responsibilities for shaping the strategic plan and direction of the Network is essential.
- Networks must also establish a Board of Directors responsible for the approval of the annual financial reports and audits that are required for all incorporated entities.
- Describe the proposed management structure of the Network.
- Discuss the nature and anticipated extent of involvement of the industrial and user-sector in research planning, direction and management of the Network.

Outline the administrative and operational structures of the proposed Network, with regards to co-ordination of activities, setting schedules, monitoring the Network's progress towards its strategic goals, and allocation of resources.

If the Network Host is to be an industry-led incorporated not-for-profit consortium, present evidence of how the organization has in place the required financial controls, policies, procedures and a history of funding academic research.

6. Excellence of the Research Program (Maximum 5 pages)

Biographies

Provide a list (or table) of the names and affiliations of the individuals who have agreed to participate in Network activities.

Also include brief biographies for each individual (maximum 200 words) to summarize relevant accomplishments.

Research Program Plan

Network research programs must be developed in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, and must integrate industry, receptor partners, academia, and government priorities. New networks would be expected to be multidisciplinary and to involve the participation of researchers whose expertise falls under the domains of two or more of the federal granting agencies, where appropriate.

Applicants should develop research approaches that ensure the effective application of research to solve important problems for Canada by having an appropriate balance within the research continuum and promoting interdisciplinary collaboration to generate solutions.

Applicants must be able to demonstrate that the proposed Network possesses world-class capacity to address the problem(s), challenge(s), or opportunity(ies) described in the Network's research program.

Give an overview of the Network's proposed research program, including:

- a brief review of the current state of knowledge in the field;
- a definition of the problem(s), challenge(s), or opportunity(ies) that the Network will address;
- the scope, focus and general objectives of the Network and how the proposed research program will attain those objectives;
- the integration of research projects and themes into a coherent research program that generates solutions that will be implemented to produce social and economic benefits for Canadians;
- the relationship of the research program to similar work conducted elsewhere in Canada and abroad;
- the extent to which the program will contribute to Canada's abilities and reputation for international leadership in the areas being addressed by the Network;
- the anticipated incremental value of the Network relative to other efforts in the area (e.g., provincial Centres of Excellence, CIHR Institutes, other research consortia or initiatives); and

- a discussion of the existing collaborations necessary to attain the objectives of the Network, and how the proposed Network will build on these existing relationships.

7. Development of Highly Qualified Personnel (Maximum 1 page)

Outline the Network's strategy to capitalize on the Networks' structure to develop highly qualified personnel (HQP). Also outline the Network's strategy to expose HQP to the full range of economic, social and ethical implications of the Network's research by involving them in activities from the initial research discovery to its practical application. Moreover, demonstrate how the Network will add value to training opportunities already available with innovative mentorship programs and initiatives already available through the academic community. Discuss how the Network will enhance HQP capacity in relation to the needs of the receptors.

8. Networking and Partnerships (Maximum 1 page)

Networking is intended to integrate research teams and programs and to promote effective interactions and partnerships with the user-sector outside the academic community. These networking and partnership activities should demonstrably assist the Network in addressing the problem(s), challenge(s), or opportunity(ies) for which they are generating solutions.

- Identify the key proposed partners in the Network and explain the critical capacity that each contributes to ensuring that the Network achieves its objectives.
- Summarize the history of partnerships with complementary organizations. Detail how the proposed network will build on these partnerships and how it will accelerate the development of the proposed network.
- Discuss existing linkages and the Network's proposed strategy to build new linkages among industry, receptor partners, academia and governments across Canada and abroad.
- Indicate the anticipated level of support from sources other than NCE funding and describe the Network's strategy for achieving the projected levels of contribution.
- Discuss the nature and anticipated extent of involvement of the private and user sector in the research.

9. Knowledge and Technology Exchange and Exploitation (Maximum 1 page)

NCE Networks are expected to generate social, economic, technological and wellness benefits by ensuring the rapid flow of ideas and innovations from researchers to receptors. Applicants are expected to demonstrate that the appropriate activities will be undertaken and the appropriate resources allocated to maximize those benefits.

- Discuss the new products, processes or services to be transferred or commercialized by firms operating in Canada as a result of Network activities and the extent to which these will strengthen the Canadian economic base, enhance productivity, and contribute to long-term economic growth and social benefits.
- Discuss how the Network will create an environment that encourages collaboration between the user-sectors; provide concrete examples such as the application of research to technology, market development, health systems or public policy innovations.

- Discuss the anticipated impact of addressing the problem(s), challenge(s), or opportunity(ies) identified by the Network, over a five-year period, on Canada's productivity, environment, health and social systems and/or public policy.

10. Explanation of Overlap (Maximum 1 page, if applicable)

Where there is significant overlap or reasonable potential for perceived overlap between a proposed Network and (a) currently or previously funded initiative(s), provide a short explanation describing, both qualitatively and quantitatively, the differences between the proposed Network and the currently or previously funded initiative(s). Describe how the proposed Network will compliment or build on the activities of the other initiative(s), as well as the incremental value of the proposed Network.

11. Letters of Support from Primary Non-academic Contributing Stakeholders (Up to 5 letters, maximum 1 page per letter)

Letters of Support from the primary non-academic contributing stakeholders listed in the LOI Application Form must be included (if applicable). Up to five letters may be included. Letters should:

- come from a senior executive with influence over a research budget;
- indicate the level, duration, and nature (cash and/or in-kind) of anticipated support for the proposed Network;
- describe potential involvement and added-value of the proposed Network to the stakeholder's current and future activities;
- indicate current and past associations with individuals participating in the proposed Network's activities;
- not be template formatted by the applicant; and
- be dated and signed no earlier than March 2013.

Reminders

The deadline for the electronic submission of the LOI for the 2015 NCE Network Competition is, **August 1, 2013. LOIs must be received by the NCE Secretariat by 4:30 p.m. local time.**

Applications must be submitted to the NCE on-line electronic application system as a single, searchable PDF file at <https://excellence.nce-rce.gc.ca>.

Applicants must also provide the NCE Secretariat with one unbound original copy by August 9, 2013. The unbound copy must be identical to the electronic submission. Inclusion of additional material in the unbound copy will result in the rejection of your application.

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2015 NCE LOI Competition
16th floor, mailroom
350 Albert Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 1H5**

Tables, graphs and figures may be included within the page limits noted above. **Any extra material will be removed.**

The *LOI Guide - 2015 NCE Network Competition*, the *NCE LOI Application Form for the 2014 Competition*, and details about the NCE Secretariat can be obtained at www.nce-rce.gc.ca.

For more information, please contact the NCE Program at:

Chris Kelly, Program Officer
Telephone: **(613) 995-3080**
Fax: **(613) 992-7356**
E-mail: **chris.kelly@nce-rce.gc.ca**

On-line Resources

NCE website

<http://www.nce-rce.gc.ca>

2015 NCE Competition Guide

http://www.nce-rce.gc.ca/Competitions-Competitions/Current-EnVigueur/NCE-RCE-2015/CompetitionGuide-GuideConcours_eng.asp

2015 NCE LOI Form

http://www.nce-rce.gc.ca/docs/competitions/NCE-RCE-2015/LOIApplication_eng.pdf

2015 NCE Full Application Guide

http://www.nce-rce.gc.ca/Competitions-Competitions/Current-EnVigueur/NCE-RCE-2015/FullApplicationGuide-GuideDemandeDetaillee_eng.asp

2015 NCE Full Application Form

http://www.nce-rce.gc.ca/docs/competitions/NCE-RCE-2015/FullApplicationForm-FormulaireDemande_eng.pdf

NCE Network Program Guide

http://www.nce-rce.gc.ca/ReportsPublications-RapportsPublications/NCE-RCE/ProgramGuide-GuideProgramme_eng.asp

Information Regarding In-kind Contribution Eligibility

www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/NSERC-CRSNG/Policies-Politiques/orgpartners-orgpartenaires_eng.asp

<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/3758.html>

Tri-Agency Use of Grant Funds

http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Professors-Professeurs/FinancialAdminGuide-GuideAdminFinancier/FundsUse-UtilisationSubventions_eng.asp

Tri-Agency Responsible Conduct of Research

<http://www.rcr.ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique/framework-cadre/>
http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/NSERC-CRSNG/governance-gouvernance/rcr-crr_eng.asp

Privacy Act

<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/PDF/P-21.pdf>

Environmental Review Policy for Networks Receiving NCE Funds

http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/NSERC-CRSNG/Policies-Politiques/enviroassess-enviroeval_eng.asp

Checklist

Each LOI **must not exceed** 23 pages including the Application Form, and each section must be submitted in the following order. The maximum number of pages permitted for each section is indicated below.

- Host Institution Covering Letter (2 pages)
- NCE 2015 LOI Application Form – Summary Information (Section A) (1 page)
- NCE 2015 LOI Application Form – Anticipated Expenditures (Section B) (1 page)
- NCE 2015 LOI Application Form – Anticipated Funding (Section C) (1 page)
- NCE 2015 LOI Application Form – Explanation of Expenditures and/or Funding (Section D) (1 page)
- Socioeconomic Context (1/2 page)
- Network Vision (1/2 page)
- Management (2 pages: 1 page text, 1 page organizational chart)
- Excellence of the Research Program (5 pages)
 - Biographies
 - Research Program Plan
- Development of Highly Qualified Personnel (1 page)
- Networking and Partnerships (1 page)
- Knowledge and Technology Exchange and Exploitation (1 page)
- Explanation of Overlap (**if applicable**) (1 page)
- Letters of Support from Non-academic Stakeholders (1 page per letter, max. 5 letters)

Appendix A

What do the electronic or original signatures on the application mean?

For the Lead applicant

By signing and submitting my application, I (the Lead applicant):

- certify that the information provided in my funding applications and related documents is true, complete and accurate and that I have represented myself, my research and my accomplishments in a manner consistent with the norms of the relevant field;
- consent to the sharing between the NCE Secretariat and any academic institution to which I am, or may become, affiliated of any and all information, including personal information, in any way related to the application and to the grant/award;
- understand the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act (including the Use and Disclosure of Personal Information Provided to the NCE Secretariat) as they pertain to grant application information;
- attest that participants listed on the application have agreed to be included;
- certify that I am not currently ineligible to apply for and/or hold funds from Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) or any other research funding organization world-wide for reasons of breach of responsible conduct of research policies such as ethics, integrity or financial management policies;
- certify that I respect and comply with the Values and Ethics Code for the Public Service, as required **only** if I am, or was in the last 12 months, a public servant in the federal government;
- accept the terms and conditions set out in NCE Program Guide and the [Agreement on the Administration of Agency Grants and Awards by Research Institutions](#) between the federal granting agencies and Canadian institutions;
- will inform the NCE Secretariat and institutional officials of changes in eligibility status;
- agree to comply with the policies and guidelines described in the Requirements for Certain Types of Research, including:
 - research involving humans;
 - research requiring human pluripotent stem cells;
 - research requiring the use of animals;
 - research involving controlled information;
 - research involving biohazards;
 - research involving radioactive materials;
 - research activities having potential effects on the environment; and
 - other related policies;
- will inform the NCE Secretariat and institutional officials of any changes in the nature of the research that may have an impact on certification or approvals on the same policies as in the previous bullet; and
- understand that maintaining public trust in the integrity of researchers is fundamental to building a knowledge-based society. By submitting this application or by accepting funding from CIHR, NSERC and/or SSHRC, I affirm that I have read and I agree to respect all the policies of these agencies that are relevant to my research, including the Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research. In cases of a serious breach of agency policy, the agency may publicly disclose my name, the nature of the breach, the institution where I was employed at the time of the breach and the institution where I am currently employed. I accept this as a condition of applying for, or receiving, agency funding and I consent to such disclosure.

For academic participants:

By accepting to participate in the Centre, I (the academic participant) also agree to the above.

The signatures of the institutional authorities certify that:

- the institution will abide by the roles and responsibilities as set out in the [Agreement on the Administration of Agency Grants and Awards by Research Institutions](#) with the three federal granting agencies;
- the applicant have met, or will meet, the eligibility requirements;
- the institution obtained written approval from other institutions involved in the application process prior to submission; and
- the institution agrees to comply with NSERC's, CHIR's or SSHRC's data protection requirements and has adequate safeguards in place to protect sensitive information entrusted to it by the NCE Secretariat for the purpose of administering applications and awards.

The signatures of authorized officers of other supporting organizations certify that the organization:

- agrees with the content of the application and will provide the committed resources; and
- agrees to the release of the public summary of the award and to the publication of the organization's name as a supporter of the initiative.

For further information, see the Questions and Answers on the Consent to Disclosure of Personal Information at address <http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca>.