



Networks of Centres
of Excellence

Réseaux de Centres
d'excellence

Centres of Excellence for Commercialization and Research (CECR)

Letter of Intent Guide For the 2009 Competition

The Grants Program for Centres of Excellence for Commercialization and Research (CECR Program) is a key element of the federal government's Science and Technology Strategy. The CECR Program supports the operation of commercialization and/or research centres that bring together people, services, and infrastructure to maximize the benefits of the government's investments in skills and research and to encourage greater private sector investment in science and technology.

The CECR Program is overseen by a tri-agency steering committee (NCE Steering Committee) made up of the Deputy Minister of Industry, the Presidents of the three granting agencies and the President of the Canada Foundation for Innovation (as an observer). A Private Sector Advisory Board (PSAB) will assess the economic and commercial benefits and opportunities of each proposal and provide advice and funding recommendations to the NCE Steering Committee. The PSAB will be informed at the full application stage by international peer review.

Day-to-day administration of the CECR Program is provided by the Networks of Centres of Excellence Secretariat (The NCE Secretariat).

The NCE Steering Committee invites Letters of Intent for the 2009 Competition for CECRs that will create a strategic, long term economic

advantage for Canada. A total of \$52M is available to support centres.

Prospective applicants should refer to the CECR Program Guide for detailed information about the CECR Program.

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Centres of Excellence for Commercialization and Research

Goal

The goal of the CECR program is to create internationally recognized centres of commercialization and research expertise in four priority areas in order to deliver economic, social and environmental benefits to Canadians. As established in the federal government's 2007 Science & Technology Strategy, the priority areas are:

- Environmental Science and Technologies;
- Natural Resources and Energy;
- Health and related Life sciences and Technologies;
- Information and Communications Technologies.

This second competition is seeking to fund proposals in those priority areas that are less well represented in the program, with a high priority on Information and Communications Technologies (ICT), and Environmental Science and Technologies.

Expected Results

The Program is expected to maximize the benefits of government investment in R&D and encourage the private sector to increase its investment in science and technology.

Funded centres shall be world-class and expected to:

- Attract and retain top talent (including internationally recognized researchers, business leaders, post-graduate and post-doctoral students);
- Open up new opportunities for Canadian firms and researchers to access world-class equipment, facilities and research capacity;
- Create, grow and retain companies in Canada that are able to capture new markets with breakthrough innovations;
- Accelerate the commercialization of leading

edge technologies, goods, services in priority areas where Canada can significantly advance its competitive advantage;

- Attract investment (including foreign direct investment and venture capital).

Centres with a strong commercialization orientation are expected to be self-sufficient by the end of the funding period.

Research centres that do not yet have a well developed commercialization agenda shall also be considered for funding. In such instances, it is expected that the centre will help create sufficient scale and focus to position Canada at the forefront of international research breakthroughs that will yield economic, health, social or environmental benefits to Canadians. Centres with a strong research orientation that yield significant public benefits within the funding period may be eligible for subsequent support in the event that the program is extended.

Class of Recipients

Organizations eligible to receive funds are not-for-profit corporations created by universities, colleges, not-for-profit research organizations, firms, and other interested non-government parties.

As a condition of eligibility, organizations applying for CECR funds shall have an established Board of Directors responsible for the approval of its annual financial reports and audits.

Competition Budget and Size of Grants

A total of \$52M is available for the 2009 Competition. Awards of various sizes will be considered. Multiple sources of funding for projects are expected. Total assistance being provided to a project will be carefully monitored to ensure adherence to following matching formula:

- The CECR program may provide up to 50% of total eligible commercialization costs, and up to 75% of the other total eligible costs (as described below).
- Total federal government assistance for eligible expenses of the Centre shall not exceed 75%. The balance in funding must come from non-federal sources.

Competition Process

CECR funding will be awarded following a competitive process in two stages:

Letter of Intent (Stage I)

Centres applying for CECR funding are invited to submit Letters of Intent. Each LOI must describe how the Centre would further the goal of the program.

The deadline for submission is **Tuesday, July 15, 2008, 4:30 PM Eastern Daylight Time (EDT)**.

The PSAB will assess the LOIs against the program selection criteria and recommend a short-list of applicants to the Steering Committee for advancement to Stage II.

Full Proposal (Stage II)

Based on a review of the LOIs, selected applicants will be invited to submit Full Applications for a deadline of **Tuesday, October 14, 2008, 4:30 PM EDT**.

Expert Panels established by the Secretariat and comprised of domestic and international experts will evaluate the project proposals, meet with applicants, and produce in-depth written assessments.

The PSAB will review each Expert Panel report and recommend to the NCE Steering Committee priority centres for approval.

Timetable: 2009 Competition for CECRs

Dates	Milestone
May 13, 2008	Competition Announced
May 30, 2008	LOI Guide Posted
July 15, 2008	LOI Deadline
July-August 2008	Private Sector Advisory Board (PSAB) review of LOIs
July-August 2008	Steering Committee Decision
Mid-August 2008	Invitations for Full Applications
October 14, 2008	Full Application Deadline
October 2008	Expert Panels Review
November 2008	Recommendation by PSAB of projects to be awarded funding
November 2008	Decision by the NCE Steering Committee on selected Centres
November-December, 2008	Treasury Board Submission for funding of selected Centres
January-February 2009	CECR Grant Agreements signed
March 2009	New CECRs Announced

Program Criteria

To ensure that the program objectives are met, proposals are assessed against the three selection criteria outlined below.

I - Benefits to Canada

- The extent to which the Centre's commercialization and/or research program addresses issues of high priority for Canada;
- The potential for the Centre's commercialization and/or research activities to yield significant economic, social, health or environmental benefits to Canadians;
- The likelihood that the Centre will create sufficient scale and focus to brand Canada as the host of an internationally recognized Centre of excellence in the area;
- The likelihood that the Centre will strengthen domestic collaboration and ensure that benefits spill over to a wide array of firms, sectors and regions of the country;
- The opportunity to optimize resources, drawing on existing national and international commercialization and/or research strength, world-class infrastructure, facilities and funding sources to enhance Canadian capacity.

Elements to consider when Commercialization is involved:

- The opportunity to create, grow and retain companies in Canada that are able to capture new markets with breakthrough innovations;
- Evidence that the Centre will help accelerate the commercialization of leading edge technologies, goods, services in priority areas where Canada can significantly advance its competitive advantage.

II - Track Record and Potential of the Applicants

- The achievements of the applicants and their ability to contribute to the Centre's commercialization and/or research program;
- The proven ability of the applicants to train and retain innovative and internationally competitive researchers in areas and technologies critical to Canadian productivity, economic growth, public policy and quality of life;
- The likelihood that the Centre will attract top talent from around the world (researchers, post-graduate and post-doctoral students and internationally recognized business leaders, in the case of Centres with a commercialization mandate);
- The ability of the applicants to attract investment (including, in the case of Centres with a commercialization mandate, foreign direct investment and venture capital).

III - Strength of the Business Plan:

- Excellence, focus and coherence of the commercialization and/or research program;
- The extent to which the partnerships involve various levels of government and the private sector to complement the funding available through the granting agencies and the Canada Foundation for Innovation;
- The effectiveness of the plan to manage, protect and exploit intellectual property resulting from Centre-funded research
- The likelihood for this investment to result in the creation of a sustainable, productive Centre of excellence;
- The quality of the proposed organizational structure with appropriate representation on the Board of Directors and management team;

- Evidence that the applicants have in place an accountability framework likely to result in effective leadership and sound financial decision-making.

Guidelines for Completing a Letter of Intent

The Letter of Intent provides information on the Centre in relation to the goals and objectives of the CECR Program. It will be used in the screening process to determine which groups will be invited to submit Full Applications. It will be evaluated according to the three published CECR program criteria.

The Letter of Intent **must** be developed in collaboration with relevant stakeholders. The applicants must clearly indicate how the Centre's commercialization and/or research activities will address the priorities of industry. Private and public sector participants should be informed that their level of involvement as well as their cash or in-kind commitments will be critical to the success of the Centre.

The letters of support from stakeholder organizations should indicate briefly the nature of the anticipated support and potential involvement in the Centre. Each letter of support **must** not exceed two pages.

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 (1.75 cm) (minimum) all around. Enter the title of the CECR 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.**

The Letter of Intent must include the following:

1. Host Organization covering letter (maximum 2 pages)

A letter, signed by the proposed Centre Director and the President or CEO of the organization that proposes to host the Centre, must be included. This letter should outline the nature of anticipated support from the proposed Host Organization. Host Organizations play an important role in CECR funded Centres, through both direct administrative support and by participating in Centre 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.

2. LOI Application Form

Complete the CECR 2009 LOI Application Form (Excel file) available on the NCE Web site at www.nce.gc.ca.

Section A: General Information (1 page)

Complete and sign Section A of the CECR 2009 LOI Application Form available on the NCE Web site at www.nce.gc.ca. The following information **must** be provided:

- **Centre Director:** name, mailing address, telephone and fax numbers, and, e-mail address for the proposed Centre Director; letters of intent must identify a single Centre Director;
- **Title:** name and acronym of the Centre (in both official languages) as it will be used for publication and communication purposes;

- **Keywords:** up to ten key words related to the Centre;
- **Anticipated number of researchers:** anticipated number of researchers involved in the Centre (excluding graduate students, postdoctoral fellows and research associates);
- **List of Letters of Support** from the unrestricted number of letters of support to be submitted with the application, provide in Section A of the CECR LOI Application Form the name and organizational affiliations of signatories of five key stakeholder letters of support;
- **Budget Grand Total, CECR funds:** the grand total from Section B;
- **Signatures:** The Centre Director and the President or CEO of the proposed Host Organization.

Section B: Preliminary Budget Allocation (1 page)

Use Section B of the CECR 2009 LOI application form to indicate the anticipated expenditures of CECR funds for the Centre. Round all estimates to the nearest thousand dollars. Provide preliminary estimates for years 1 through 5. See the CECR Program Guide for information on eligible expenditures and use of NCE funds.

Section C: Preliminary Budget Details (1 page)

For each of the line items below, give a detailed breakdown, for Years 1 to 5, of how the amounts in the preliminary budget allocation table (Section B of the CECR 2009 LOI Application Form) were calculated. Use only the space provided in Section C.

- **Operating Costs:**
 - a) Core facilities;
 - b) Materials, supplies;
 - c) Equipment.
- **Administrative Costs:**
 - a) Salaries;
 - b) Others (describe).
- **Knowledge dissemination costs:**
 - a) Hosting conferences, lectures and workshops;
 - b) Attending conferences, lectures and workshops;
 - c) Others (describe).
- **Commercialization costs:**
 - a) Capital expenditures;
 - b) Market studies, business development;
 - c) Intellectual property protection;
 - d) Others (describe).
- **Other expenditures**

Section D: Funding (1 page)

Use Section D to indicate, for Years 1 to 5, the anticipated new incremental cash support (lines B to I) and new incremental in-kind support (lines K to R) from all of the other sources.

Section E: Incremental Contributions (Cash and In-kind) from Stakeholders (1 page per contributor)

Using one page Section E per stakeholder, provide details on new incremental cash and new incremental in-kind contributions.

Section F: Summary of the Application for Public Release (1 page)

Use Section F of the CECR 2009 LOI Application Form to provide reviewers with a brief overview of the content of the submission.

3. Articulation of the Centre's Benefits to Canada (Maximum 2 pages)

Describe a vision of what the Centre proposes to achieve, including specific goals and objectives. The vision should describe the expected end-results of the commercialization and/or research activities over and following the course of the funding period, especially with respect to the expected outcomes and impacts on the industry.

Provide an overview of the context within which the Centre is positioned. Define the problem areas, the Centre's proposed commercialization and/or research activities and the incremental economic and social benefits to Canada.

4. Information to help assess the track record and potential of the applicants (Maximum 3 pages)

Background information about the lead applicants is required to assist in the assessment of their commercialization and/or research excellence.

Provide a list (or table) of the names and affiliations of the proposed members of the Centre's Board of Directors.

Biographies are requested for the Centre Director and at least 4 other members of the Board of Directors, including the Proposed Chair (up to 200 words each).

5. Business Plan (Maximum 4 pages)

Centre commercialization and/or research programs must be developed in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, and must integrate industry priorities. Give an overview of the Centre's proposed business plan, highlighting the following elements:

- The excellence, focus and coherence of the Centre's commercialization and/or research program;

- The extent to which the partnerships developed for the center involve various levels of government and the private sector to complement the funding available through the granting agencies and the Canada Foundation for Innovation;
- The effectiveness of the plan to manage, protect and exploit intellectual property resulting from Centre-funded research;
- The likelihood for this investment to result in the creation of a sustainable, productive Centre of excellence;
- The quality of the proposed organizational structure with appropriate representation on the Board of Directors and management team;
- Evidence that the applicants have in place an accountability framework likely to result in effective leadership and sound financial decision-making.

6. Letters of Support from Stakeholders (Maximum 2 pages per letter)

An unlimited number of letters of support may be included from stakeholder organizations. Letters of support must make explicit reference to the Centre, and should:

- Come from a senior executive;
- Make commitments especially in terms of financial and/or in-kind support;
- Indicate how the Centre would help their organization, and
- Indicate current and past associations with the applicant.

Submission Procedures

The deadline for submission of the Letter of Intent is **4:30 PM EDT, Tuesday July 15.**

The following must be mailed or couriered to this address:

Networks of Centres of Excellence
16th floor, Mailroom
350 Albert Street
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
K1A 1H5

1. A CD containing:

- a) The Letter of Intent Application Form in Excel Format which gives a summary report of the proposal and details of the requested CECR Budget (Sections A to F).
- b) The complete LOI Application as a single PDF File containing all the material, including application form, budget and scanned letters of support in order.

2. One set of printed, unbound documents with original signatures.

3. Twenty-five (25) printed copies.

The NCE Secretariat will send an email to the identified Centre Director to confirm receipt of the LOI.

If you do not receive this confirmation in the week following your submission (**by July 22, 2008**), please contact the NCE Secretariat at:

Telephone: (613) 995-6010
Fax: (613) 992-7356
E-mail: cecr@nce.gc.ca

Checklist

A Letter of Intent (including Sections A, B, C, D, F of LOI Application Form but not the letters of support) must not exceed 15 pages, organized by section, as follows.

Suggested number of pages	
1	Host Organization letter
5	Sections A, B, C, D, F of the <i>CECR 2009 LOI Application Form</i>
	Section E of the <i>CECR 2009 LOI Application Form</i> (1 page per Stakeholder)
2	Benefits to Canada
3	Track Record and Potential of Applicants
4	Business Plan (including ½ page organizational chart)
	Letters of Support from Stakeholders (maximum 2 pages per letter)
	<i>Any extra material will be removed</i>