



Networks of Centres of Excellence

2013 Business-Led Networks (BL-NCE) Renewal Competition

Full Application Guide

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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2013 BL-NCE RENEWAL FULL APPLICATION GUIDE

Overview

The 2013 BL-NCE Renewal Competition provides an opportunity for current BL-Networks to apply for additional funding to extend and expand their mandate for an additional five-year period. The 2013 BL-NCE Renewal Competition follows a two-stage process that includes a letter of intent (LOI) and a full application (FA). Both stages are mandatory and must be completed by the deadline dates. This guide describes the steps involved in the full application stage of the renewal competition and it should be used in conjunction with the 2013 BL-NCE Renewal Competition Guide and the BL-NCE Program Guide.

Full applications will only be accepted from BL-Networks that continue to meet all of the requirements of the BL-NCE Funding Agreement; that have not previously applied to a BL-NCE Renewal Competition; that can demonstrate a need for additional grant funds and that have submitted a successful 2013 BL-NCE LOI.

Each full application will be reviewed by an Expert Panel established by the NCE Secretariat, who will meet with the Applicant Network and provide the Private Sector Advisory Board (PSAB) with a written assessment (report) detailing the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal against the selection criteria, as well as the appropriateness of the proposed budget. PSAB will review all full applications as well as each corresponding Expert Panel report and make recommendations to the NCE Steering Committee. The NCE Steering Committee will select the successful applicant(s) based on the recommendation of PSAB, the Expert Panel reports, and the BL-NCE standards for excellence. There is no appeal process.

For the renewal competition, the progress made since the original application, i.e. the 2009 application and strategic plan, will also be evaluated. It is recommended that applicants work closely with their NCE Secretariat liaison in preparing a full application to ensure that all sections of the full application are prepared correctly.

Refer to the 2013 BL-NCE Renewal Competition Guide for more information on the competition goal, expected results, process, selection criteria, available funds, eligible expenses, and timetable.

Deadline and Submission Process

All full applications must be submitted online through the NCE pilot application and review Web site **no later than 4:30 p.m. EDT on October 1, 2012**. Eligible applicant network(s) will receive instructions via e-mail on how to access the Web site.

Application Contents and Guidelines

A full application consists of the following components:

1. **Cover Letter**
2. **Summary Information**
3. **Benefits to Canada**
4. **Track Record and Potential of the Applicant Network**
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Successful applicant network(s) will be selected based on the excellence of the proposal, the impact on the major research and development (R&D) and commercialization challenges of the network's vision of the first funding cycle as it relates to their sector, expected impacts over the next five years, and the overall benefit to Canada.

The full application must describe the methods by which the BL-Network will increase private sector investment in R&D and enhance the innovativeness and competitiveness of the sector through plans that address the respective sector-specific challenges and barriers outlined in the LOI application.

The onus is on the applicant network to provide sufficient information regarding the relationship of funds from other sources of support (currently held or applied for) that will enable the Expert Panel and PSAB to recommend the most appropriate funding level for the network.

The number and letter in parentheses below correspond with the specific selection criterion described in the 2013 BL-NCE Renewal Competition Guide.

1. COVER LETTER (WEB FREE FORM)

(Maximum 1,000 words, approximately 2 pages)

In the form of an executive summary, describe the network's vision and expected outcomes, and how the network has and will

meet the goal and purpose of the BL-NCE program:

- The goal of the BL-NCE program is to address private sector R&D challenges in Canadian research priority areas through the creation of business-led research networks that increase private sector investment in R&D, innovation, and competitiveness.

- The purpose of the BL-NCE program is to fund large-scale collaborative networks focusing on industry issues. Each Network will be proposed and led by the private sector with academia and government partners, and be driven to solve private sector needs. The program will focus on impacts, tangible achievements, applications of researcher breakthroughs, and commercialization activities in science and technology priority areas identified by the government.

2. SUMMARY INFORMATION (WEB TEMPLATE)

Provide the following information:

- BL-Network name and acronym;
- Network leader contact information
- Chair of Board of Directors contact information;
- BL-Network sector target(s);
- Primary research area;
- Secondary research area;
- List of ten keywords that best describe the Network;
- Total funds requested from BL-NCE Grant, for years 5 to 9;
- Total cash contributions, for years 5 to 9;
- Total in-kind contributions, for years 5 to 9;
- Signature of network leader and Chair of the Board of Directors;
- Brief overview of BL-network (*Maximum 250 words*).

3. BENEFITS TO CANADA (WEB FREE FORM)

Describe the 5 and 10 year visions of the sector and the major R&D and commercialization challenges of the vision when the network was first established. *(Maximum 500 words, approximately 1 page)*

Discuss any changes to the sector vision and update the R&D and commercialization challenges for the next five years. Identify the challenges the network will focus on during the second funding cycle. (1a) *(Maximum 1,000 words, approximately 2 pages)*

Summarize how the network will increase domestic collaboration in a competitive environment and across a wide array of firms, sectors and regions. Highlight the specific public-private collaborations expected during the second funding cycle that will meet the needs of the private sector partners. (1b, 1g) *(Maximum 1,000 words, approximately 2 pages)*

Outline the current capacity of the small, medium and large enterprises across the sector to engage in R&D activities. Identify how the network will increase this capacity or affect the receptivity of these enterprises to the results of R&D. (1c) *(Maximum 1,000 words, approximately 2 pages)*

Provide an overview of the realized and expected impacts to the growth and retention of Canadian businesses as a result of network activities. Discuss the network's expectations to create new companies and how these companies will contribute to overcoming the challenges to the sector. (1e) *(Maximum 1,000 words, approximately 2 pages)*

Describe the impacts of the network that will affect: the positioning of Canadian firms in high-value segments of the domestic and international production chains; and the ability of Canadian businesses to capture new markets through product innovation. (1d, 1f) *(Maximum 500 words, approximately 1 page)*

4. TRACK RECORD AND POTENTIAL OF THE APPLICANT NETWORK

4.1 Past Progress (web free form)

Restate the expected outcomes of the initial funding cycle and highlight the achievements of the network against those expected outcomes. Provide detailed and specific examples of how the network has: i) contributed to overcoming the R&D and commercialization challenges of the sector during the first funding cycle; ii) maintained, completed or terminated projects, the resulting commercial outputs and the impacts on stage-gate, Technology Readiness Level (TRL), or maturity level; iii) taken on activities outside of the original application, the results of the activities; iv) created successful collaborations between firms and in public-private partnerships; v) increased the receptivity of large medium and small enterprises to the results of R&D; and vi) attracted top talent to the network's research and business functions as a result of network activities. (2a-i, -v, -vi, -viii) *(Maximum 3,500 words, approximately 7 pages)*

Provide up to five specific examples where the research results have led to commercialization (i.e. new products, product service augmentation, licenses, etc.) and/or business application and describe the impacts on the competitive advantage of the private sector partners. (2a-ii) *(Maximum 1,000 words, approximately 2 pages)*

Describe the project selection and review procedure in place at the network including the use and composition of committees, and the roles of the administrative centre and Board of Directors. Outline the process of how the network identifies and manages conflicting interests in the: project selection process, research projects, management and governance. (2a-iii, 2b-v) *(Maximum 1,500 words, approximately 3 pages)*

List the strengths and weaknesses outlined by the initial expert panel report and the report(s) of the PSAB. Summarize the

steps taken by the network to address the recommendations. (2a-iv) *(Maximum 1,000 words, approximately 2 pages)*

Describe how the network administration, management and governance have responded to unexpected changes in the needs and direction of the sector and the strategic plan presented in the initial funding cycle. Explain how these changes have affected the network's ability to deliver on the expected outcomes. Outline the priorities of the network that have been adjusted and any goals that have been abandoned or new goals acquired over the first funding cycle. (2a-vi) *(Maximum 1,000 words, approximately 2 pages)*

Based on the above information, outline the areas/activities (administrative and research) that the network will build upon into the second funding cycle. *(Maximum 1,000 words, approximately 2 pages)*

Table 1 – Overview of Expenditures (excel spreadsheet)

Table 1 illustrates an overview of the network's total budget expenditures for years 1 through to 9 funded by the BL-NCE grant and by matching funds.

For each funding source (i.e. BL-NCE grant, other government funds and non-government funds), provide expenditure information for each category listed below over the first cycle (i.e. year 1 to 4). For the second cycle, only provide the expenditures for administration and networking; the other categories will be automatically populated by the values inputted into Table 2 - Overview of Anticipated Expenditures per Theme or Project.

Refer to the 2013 BL-NCE Renewal Competition Guide and the BL-NCE Program Guide for details on eligible expenses, matching fund requirements, stacking limits, contracts and use of funds.

All expenditures over the second cycle (i.e. year 5 to 9) must be justified in detail in the Business Plan.

Expenditures for Direct Research	
<i>Note: Over the full term (year 1 to 9) of the BL-NCE grant, a) a maximum of 50% of the total research costs can be funded by the BL-NCE grant; b) BL-NCE and other government sources of funding cannot exceed 75% of total funds for research costs.</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salaries of research personnel* 	For example, students, post-doctoral fellows and/or technical and professional assistants.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment and/or facility(ies)* 	For example, purchase or rental, operation and maintenance costs and user fees.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Materials and supplies exceeding \$1,000* 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel expenses* 	For example, conference, field trips, collaboration and consultation, but excluding Annual General Meetings, meetings of the Board of Directors and meetings of its subcommittees.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissemination costs* 	For example, publication costs and other activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal fees associated with intellectual property protection (IPP) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other research related expenditures* 	For example, field pilot projects, technical road mapping and other related studies. These expenditures must be described in the Business Plan.
Expenditures for Administration, Networking and Commercialization	
<i>Note: Over the full term (years 1 to 9) of the BL-NCE grant, a) a maximum of 75% of the total administration, networking and commercialization expenses can be funded by the BL-NCE grant; b) Administration expenses cannot exceed 20% of the overall budget; c) a maximum of 50% of the total IPP expenses can be funded by the BL-NCE grant</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercialization* 	Pre-commercialization support service
	Market studies
	Prototype development
	Other commercialization expenditures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration 	Salary and benefits of the network Leader
	Salaries and benefits for network staff
	Contracting of professional services

	Liability insurance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking 	Communications activities
	Travel accommodation for network personnel, researchers and members of the Board of Directors and its subcommittees

* Expenditures over the second cycle (year 5 to 9) will be automatically drawn from Table 2.

4.2 Potential For Success (web free form)

Describe how and why the network continues to be in the best position to address and overcome the sector R&D and commercialization challenges identified in the Benefits to Canada section. Highlight any major changes to the research or business activities that will enable to the network to deliver. (2b-i, -v) *(Maximum 750 words, approximately 1.5 pages)*

Provide an overview of the research program in terms of the research themes and (if applicable) the titles of research projects, and how the research themes align with each other and to the overall vision of the network. Discuss how the research themes will specifically address the identified R&D and commercialization challenges of the sector. Summarize what elements of the program distinguish the network as unique and excellent. (2b-ii, -v) *(Maximum 1,000 words, approximately 2 pages)*

Describe the strategy to engage post-graduate and post-doctoral HQP in the network research and business programs during the initial funding cycle. Outline the changes to the strategy and the expected outcomes for the second funding cycle that will maximize the HQP exposure in to both the research and business programs of the network. (2b-vi) *(Maximum 1,000 words, approximately 2 pages)*

Discuss the merits of the funding model (project specific, pooled, etc.) used by the network and how the model has enabled the Network to meet the program matching requirements. Outline the strategy of the network to attract new investments into the

research and business activities throughout the second funding cycle. (2b-iii) *(Maximum 1,000 words, approximately 2 pages)*

Describe the network's performance measurement system (i.e. use of project reports, review of reports by sub-committees, tracking of projects impacts, approach to extension or termination of projects, etc.). Highlight the use of metrics specific to the sector and how those metrics translate into impacts. (2b-iv, -v) *(Maximum 1,000 words, approximately 2 pages plus upload a project report template)*

5. BUSINESS PLAN

The combination of the individual business plans together with the business plan overview section make up the strategic plan for the second funding cycle. Applicants must complete an individual business plan for each research theme or project presented in section 4.2 Potential For Success.

5.1 Business Plan Overview (web free form) *(Maximum 3,000 words, approximately 6 pages)*

- Provide an overview of the business approach for the selection of research themes.
- Identify where the overlap exists across the individual business plans for each of the research themes or projects and how the plans fit together.
- Using a market scan, describe the unique position of the Network to deliver on the R&D and commercialization impacts across the individual business plans and identify the competitors who

operate in the same niche as the Network.

- Discuss the merits of the network approach to overcoming the challenges of the sector.
- Describe the process and plan to be used by the network to manage the intellectual property (IP) resulting from the research program.

5.2 Individual Business Plans (web free form)

Provide a separate (individual) business plan for each of the research themes or projects identified above. Each business plan must include the following three sections: 1) Rationale for funding; 2) a description of the benefits to private sector participants; and 3) a description and explanation of the business approach. Include the information below under each respective section:

Rationale for funding

(Maximum 1,000 words, approximately 2 pages)

- Based on the identified sector challenges that the network will address, describe specifically the challenges that this research theme will focus on.
- Describe the expected outcomes of the research theme and aligning each with the challenges above.
- Using the table provided, outline the level of funding from the BL-NCE program, other government and private sector dedicated to the research theme and over the second funding cycle.
- Provide a justification of the expenditures for each category identified in the table provided.
- Beyond the financial contributions, outline how the partners will add-value to the theme.

Description of benefits to private sector participants

(Maximum 1,000 words, approximately 2 pages)

- Provide business cases for the involvement of large, medium and small enterprises in this research theme. Outline the return on investment for the participation of each category of enterprise and how the partnerships will benefit the network.
- Outline how the expected outcomes of the research theme will be applied by the private sector partners.
- Identify the expected linkages between the private sector partners and the research personnel (researchers and HQP) within the research theme. With reference to the HQP engagement strategy, describe how the network will transition HQP into the private sector beyond the research program.

Business Approach

(Maximum 2,000 words, approximately 4 pages)

- Identify the titles of the projects found within this theme and outline the anticipated changes to the technology readiness, stage gate or maturity level of each as a result of the network.
- Describe the path to market for the commercialization of the research results from the research theme. Include a market analysis of how the research results meet the needs of the targeted market.
- Detail the key risks associated with the proposed research theme and the approaches used by the network to mitigate those risks.
- Outline how the research theme will be used to engage new and under-represented entities into the network.
- Under appendix D, include a template IP agreement currently used by the network.
- Describe the specific mechanisms to accelerate the commercialization of research or application of technologies, goods and services into the private sector partners.

Table 2 – Overview of Anticipated Expenditures per Theme or Project (excel spreadsheet)

Table 2 gives an overview of the expenditures funded by the BL-NCE grant and matching funds. Complete a table for each research theme or project over the second cycle (year 5 to 9). The values entered into each Table 2 will also automatically populate the corresponding categories in Table 1 – Overview of Expenditures. Each Table 2 completed should correspond with, and accompany, an Individual Business Plan. A separate table must be completed for each research theme or project.

The expenditure categories in Table 2 include all those in Table 1 except for administration and networking. Applicants should note that the values entered into Table 2 are aggregated and will automatically populate the corresponding cells in Table 1.

Refer to the 2013 BL-NCE Renewal Competition Guide and the BL-NCE Program Guide for details on eligible expenses, matching fund requirements, stacking limits, contracts and use of funds.

All expenditures entered into Table 2 must be justified in detail in the corresponding Individual Business Plan.

Table 3 – List of Researchers and Highly Qualified Personnel (web template)

This section will generate a table that will list all Canadian and International researchers (e.g. academic, industry/not-for-profit, and government) and highly qualified personnel (HQP) that have committed to the proposed research activities of the network over the second cycle (i.e. year 5 to 9). Include the estimated percentage of salaried time that each researcher or HQP will be spending on the network activities.

Organize the table first by research theme or project, then in decreasing order of time commitment.

6. TABLE 4 – SUMMARY OF LETTERS OF SUPPORT (WEB TEMPLATE)

Letters of Support confirm the commitment of partners to the Network and its activities. It is expected that an Applicant Network will receive contributions from Canadian and International partners.

This section will generate a table that will list all partners and the nature of their contribution. For any partners contributing in both the first and second cycle, contributions from both cycles should be captured in this section.

Enter the information in decreasing order of the overall contribution (year 1 to 9), followed by the research theme or project.

7. LETTERS OF SUPPORT (ATTACHMENTS)

All incremental cash or in-kind contributions by industry partners made in the second cycle (year 5 to 9) must be described in the Business Plan; itemized in Table 4 – Summary of Letters of Support; and be accompanied by a Letter of Support that certifies the commitment. Contributions should also correspond with the expenditures itemized in Table 2.

Upload each Letter of Support into the corresponding row in Table 4.

Letters of Support should confirm the expected new incremental contributions, participation by potential partners, and/or anticipated impact on the user sector.

Each Letter of Support should be dated after April 1, 2012, and must:

- Explicitly make reference to the applicant network;
- Be submitted on letterhead of the contributing partner;

- Be submitted in one of Canada's official languages (English or French);
- Be authored and signed by a senior executive with signing authority for the contributions being committed;
- Describe the commitment(s) offered, i.e. level, type (i.e. cash and/or in-kind), nature and duration of the support (see note on in-kind contributions below);
- Explain how the contributor will benefit from partnering with the applicant network;
- Describe the nature of any past partnerships as well as the current partnership;
- Include a table which itemizes:
 - the cash and in-kind contribution per year over the second cycle; and
 - if any, the portion of the contributions specifically dedicated to the research program and/or administrative operations.

Note that the signature of the authorized officer of the industry partner certifies that the industry partner:

- agrees with the content of the application and will provide the committed resources; and
- agrees to publication of the organization's name as a supporter of the BL-Network (if the Applicant Network is successful in receiving BL-NCE funds).

If the Network Director or a Network Investigator is also a principal of a collaborating or supporting organization, another senior official must sign on behalf of that organization.

Neither the Lead Applicant nor any of the researchers associated with the network application may be a signatory on a Letter of Support. Only signatures from senior officials on behalf of the organization will be accepted by the NCE Secretariat.

Letters of Support should not be submitted in a template format standardized by Applicant Network.

Notes on in-kind contributions: For non-academic partners, in-kind contributions may include the cash equivalent of goods or services considered essential to the research that represent an incremental expense the partner would not normally incur and that would have to be purchased by project funds if not otherwise donated. In-kind contributions by non-academic partners may also include the time of the partner's scientific, technical or administrative staff providing direction and/or participating in a project, as well as provision of access to special equipment.

*For academic partners, they may also offer in-kind contributions in the form of access to specialized equipment, facilities or student support. The time committed by faculty at Canadian academic institutions towards the research projects **is not** considered an in-kind contribution. Similarly, costs associated with the laboratory or office space (overhead costs) of academic researchers will not be considered as in-kind contributions.*

8. APPENDICES (ATTACHMENTS)

Upload each appendix as a separate PDF document.

APPENDIX A – Organizational Chart *(Maximum 1 page)*

Describe the project management and governance structure. Illustrate the organizational structure for the management of the network activities and business functions of the program in an organizational chart.

Refer to the BL-NCE Program Guide section on Network Management and Governance for more details.

APPENDIX B – Biographies of Members of the Board of Directors and Subcommittees

(Maximum 1 page per member)

Provide the biographies of each member of the Board of Directors. Address the roles and responsibilities of each member as described in the Network Management and Governance section of the BL-NCE Program Guide.

APPENDIX C – Curriculum Vitae of Key Management Personnel

(Maximum 5 pages per incumbent)

Provide a detailed CV for each key management personnel. CVs should highlight past experiences and accomplishments that justify the incumbent as the ideal candidate for the specified

position. The CV should not exceed five pages.

APPENDIX D – Template of the Network's Current IP Agreement

(No page limit imposed)

Upload the Network Agreement that governs the Network-wide IP management strategy and an example of the IP template agreement used for individual projects amongst Network Partners.

Contact

For more information, please contact the BL-NCE Program, Renewal Competition at:

Telephone: 613-995-6010
Fax: 613-992-7356
E-mail: info@nce-rce.gc.ca

On-line Resources

NCE Web site

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

Information Regarding the Meaning of Signatures

http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/OnlineServices-ServicesEnLigne/Approvals-Approbation_eng.asp

CIHR Grants and Awards Guide

<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/22630.html#1-B3>

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

Privacy Act

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

BL-NCE Program Guide

http://www.nce-rce.gc.ca/ReportsPublications-RapportsPublications/BLNCE-RCEE/ProgramGuide-GuideProgramme_eng.asp

2013 BL-NCE Renewal Competition Guide

http://www.nce-rce.gc.ca/Competitions-Competitions/Current-EnVigueur/BLNCE-RCEE-2013/CompetitionGuide-GuideConcours_eng.asp

2013 BL-NCE Renewal Competition Letter of Intent Guide

http://www.nce-rce.gc.ca/Competitions-Competitions/Current-EnVigueur/BLNCE-RCEE-2013/LOIGuide-GuideLI_eng.asp